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Satan's Great Deception

How a Mysterious Ancient Religion Continues to Affect Christians Today!

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Did you know that ancient pagan beliefs and practices in many ways bore a striking resemblance to the beliefs and practices taught and followed by Christ and the apostles? This is the very reason for the most amazing and least-realized fact—which is easily seen by reading through the New Testament—that the teachings and practices of Jesus and the apostles in the original church are not the same as we see in today's churches! This *change* was due to the paradoxical fact of the astonishing *resemblance* between ancient pagan beliefs and those taught by Jesus!

Paganism Resembled Truth

The false often appears as true. It is made to resemble the genuine. Edward Carpenter, in *Pagan and Christian Creeds*, p. 25, says: "The similarity of ancient pagan legends and beliefs with Christian traditions was so great that they excited the attention and undisguised wrath of the early Christian.... [Not] knowing how to explain it, they fell back to the theory that the devil, centuries before, [had] caused the pagans to adopt certain beliefs and practices."

He also quotes *Tertullian*, one of the early church fathers living between A.D. 160 and 220, as saying, "The devil, by the mysteries of his idols, *imitates* even the main part of the divine mysteries." Furthermore, he says, "Cortez, too, complained that the devil had possibly taught the Mexicans the same things that God taught Christendom."

Since the practices of today's churches are not the same as the early true church recorded in the New Testament, it is vital to know if there has been a purposeful *mixing* of the false practices of paganism with the true teachings of Christ, the apostles, and the Bible.

Many writers of history, including Edward Gibbon in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (vol. I, chap. 15), state that there has been a change brought about by great numbers of pagans flocking into the early Christian church and mixing their similar pagan customs and beliefs with those of the true church. The important point, then, is this: As the churches are teaching beliefs and customs not commanded by God and which, although similar, do not really lead to our placing ourselves as obedient servants to Him—being ruled over by Him now so that we may be eligible to obtain eternal life—it is vital that we understand so that we may return from the counterfeit to the right way.

“Christian” Church Attitude

The churches today unwittingly follow a great number of practices originating from ancient pagan Babylon—practices which are entirely opposite of those which Christ and the apostles taught. It is important to notice the attitude toward paganism of the churches that consider themselves completely Christian. The following excerpts from Carpenter’s *Pagan and Christian Creeds* show this attitude: “The Christian church has kept itself severely apart from discussions of heathenism, taking the stand that it, the church, represents a unique and divine revelation and has persuaded mankind of this to such a degree that few people nowadays realize that it has sprung from just the same root as paganism and that it shares by far the most part of its doctrines and rites with the latter” (pp. 11-12).

Notice that today’s churches have sprung from the same root as paganism!

“The common idea is that the pagan gods fled away at Christ’s coming, yet it is well known to every student that this is contrary to fact. At the time of the recorded appearance of Jesus, and for some centuries before, there were temples ... dedicated to Apollo or Dionysius among the Greeks, Hercules among the Romans, Mythra among the Persian, Baal and Astarte among the Babylonians, and temples dedicated to many other gods. An outstanding phenomenon is apparent: notwithstanding great geographical distances, racial differences between cults, and in detail of services, the general outline of creeds and ceremonials were—if not identical—markedly similar” (pp. 19-21).

Pagan Similarities

Not only were these pagan creeds and ceremonies, which had existed centuries before Christ’s coming, markedly similar to each other, they were also *similar to true Christianity*—a fact that cannot be considered accidental. As an example of this, of eleven main deities from seven countries, it was believed of all or nearly all that, “these deities’ births were on or near Christmas, of a virgin mother, in a cave underground, [and] that they led a life of toil for man. They were called light-bringers, healers, mediators, and saviors. They were thought to have been vanquished by the powers of darkness, descended into hell or the underworld, [and] to have arisen and become pioneers of mankind to a heavenly world.... Krishna, the god of India, is an outstanding parallel with the life of Christ” (pp. 21-23).

Carpenter says: “The idea of God sacrificing His Son for the salvation of the world is so remote and remarkable—yet it ranges through all ancient religion and back to the earliest times and is embodied in their rituals” (p. 133). These unusual customs were so similar to the truth that they strongly suggest there must have been some *guiding force* behind them.

It is evident that with such marked similarities to true Christianity, as are shown by the eleven deities from seven countries, one should approach this subject with an open mind to see if a *fusion* of paganism and true Christianity is present today.

In I Thessalonians 5:21, the apostle tells us: “Prove all things. Hold fast to *that which is good*.” Jude 3-4 tell us to “fervently fight for the faith, which once for all *time* has been delivered to the saints. For certain men have stealthily crept in ... ungodly men, who are perverting the grace of our God, *turning it* into licentiousness, and are personally denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.” We are warned of a *turning away* from the truth of God, which was starting to occur even in the time of the apostles.

Consider for a moment: Is it probable that the pagans—who had methods of worship seemingly near in form and belief to that of Christ and the apostles—would come into Christianity and completely *discard* their pagan practices (which often contained very

pleasurable things) for teachings that did not appeal to them as much, even though God has commanded them? Of course not. Paul warned in II Thessalonians 2:7: “For the mystery of lawlessness is already working.” A *mysterious perversion* of the gospel had already started to work even in Paul’s time! The pagans didn’t give up their ideas!

But when was the very beginning of this mysterious force for evil? Its origin dates from the time when Lucifer was created by the Eternal God. He rebelled and became Satan the deceiver. We will now see how of this came about.

How it all Began

God, speaking to Lucifer, the archangel who became “Satan” after he sinned, said in Isaiah 14:12-13: “How you are fallen from the heavens, O shining star, son of the morning! *How* you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart, ‘I will ascend *into* the heavens, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God.’ ”

Now notice Ezekiel 28:12-16, which speaks of the king of Tyre, the *type* of this same Lucifer spoken of above: “You seal up the measure of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You have been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone *was* your covering, the ruby, the topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the turquoise, and the emerald, and gold. The workmanship of your settings and of your sockets was prepared in you in the day that you were created. You *were* the anointed cherub that covers, and I set you so; you were upon the holy mountain of God; you have walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. You *were* perfect in your ways from the day that you were created, until iniquity was found in you. By the multitude of your merchandise they have filled your midst *with* violence, and you have sinned. Therefore I will cast you as profane from the mountain of God, and I will destroy you, O covering cherub, from among the stones of fire.”

Lucifer was created as an archangel to carry out God’s will. But he was not content—he wanted to exalt his throne above the stars of God. He wanted to be God! He ascended above the atmosphere to take God’s place from Him—but Revelation 12:3-4 and Luke 10:18 show that God’s angels met him and cast him down. Note Luke 10:18: “I beheld Satan fall as lightning from heaven.” Lucifer, the archangel God created, *became* Satan when he sinned. He is a *deceiver* of the whole world (Rev. 12:9).

Satan Retains Rule by Deceiving

Satan, however, has been permitted to rule the earth. Christ did not deny this, for Matthew 4:8-9 says that the devil “took [Jesus] to an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, and said to Him, ‘All these things will I give You, if You will fall down and worship me.’ ” They were the devil’s kingdoms to give—he ruled over them. He rules over this earth! See also John 14:30 and 16:11. He was trying to bring Christ under *his* rule—“worship me.”

But notice something else very carefully. It is the key to the understanding of the *method* by which Satan, through the organized churches, is deceiving the world today—a key to the “Mystery of Iniquity” (lawlessness) that was already working in the church in Paul’s time (II Thess. 2:7). In Matthew 4:6, Satan says to Christ, “If You are the Son of God, cast Yourself down; for it is written, ‘He shall give His angels charge concerning You.’ ” God promises to aid those who find themselves in hazardous circumstances not of their own making, but He does not say He will protect those who deliberately place themselves in such circumstances in order to convince others. Thus, Christ replies in verse 7, “Again, it is written, ‘You shall not tempt *the*

Lord your God.’ ”

Notice, Satan suggested an improper action for Christ—an act of disobedience to God—by twisting God’s Word to convince Christ that it was the proper thing to do. Christ corrected him. Had Christ done as Satan suggested, He would have obeyed Satan—been ruled by Satan. So also today, Satan retains rule over individuals by having his agents *misinterpret* the Bible and suggest *false methods* of self-justification to the individual for his or her own evil acts.

Mankind Deceived

Eve was tempted by Satan in the same manner as Christ. Satan suggested an act contrary to God’s command, then twisted God’s word to make it *appear* the right thing to do. God said in Genesis 2:17, “But you shall not eat of the tree of *the* knowledge of good and evil, for in the day that you eat of it in dying you shall surely die.” But the devil twisted this. He said, “In dying, you shall not surely die! For God knows that in the day you eat of it, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be like God, deciding good and evil” (Gen. 3:4-5).

Eve desired (lusted after) the fruit of this tree and obeyed Satan rather than God—he deceived her into doing it. Adam knowingly followed his wife’s suggestion and obeyed her. Thus, mankind came under Satan’s rule. “Don’t you realize that to whom you yield yourselves *as* servants to obey, you are servants of the one you obey, whether *it is* of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (Rom. 6:16).

Had they obeyed God, Adam and Eve could have ruled the world. But, for their disobedience, they were driven from the Garden of Eden where the tree of life was located (Gen. 2:9). They could have eaten from *that* tree and obtained eternal life, but were prevented by cherubim from returning to the Garden (Gen. 3:24). Their chance of obtaining eternal life at the time was gone—they had sinned, disobeyed God—they would not come under His rule; therefore He would not give them the opportunity of obtaining it. They sinned by transgressing God’s laws, which were in force from the beginning, for I John 3:4 says, “Sin is lawlessness,” and Romans 3:23 says, “All”—including Adam and Eve—“have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”

Opportunity of Salvation Revealed to Adam and Eve

A merciful God, He immediately revealed to Adam and Eve that One was to come who would again make it possible for mankind to have the opportunity of obtaining eternal life—for God said to Satan, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He will bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel” (Gen. 3:15).

A male offspring of a woman—by a supernatural conception—was going to make it possible once again for mankind to come under God’s rule and obtain eternal life. Proof of this is in verse 20 of the same chapter. Adam named his wife “Eve,” which means, according to *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance*, “life giver.” This referred to some special life-giving property which would be imparted to mankind through woman alone (as represented by Eve)—eternal life through her divinely begotten Son, Jesus Christ (both Adam and Eve shared equally in the giving of mortal life to their offspring). This is the first reference given by the Bible to the coming of Christ as Savior.

It was by faith and obedience that Enoch (Heb. 11:5), David (Ezek. 34:23), Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Matt. 8:11)—all living in Old Testament times—understood the hope of salvation, and they will rise to meet Christ at His coming (I Thess. 4:16). They obeyed God and came under His government; Enoch “walked with God” (Gen. 5:24). They looked forward by

faith to the Savior who should come—just as we, today, should look backward and believe Him. God spoke to Abraham (Gen. 22:18) of the coming Seed (Christ). The few being called then obtained “a good report through faith” by the same method as we today: they repented of disobedience and believed that the blood of the Savior would pay the debt of their past sins!

This knowledge—by which mankind could have faith in a Savior and, like Enoch, be translated or transferred from Satan’s rule (or “from the power of darkness”) to God’s rule (Col. 1:13 and Heb. 11:5) and ultimately have eternal life—must be *blotted out* by all means if Satan was to retain rule of mankind on this earth.

Pagans Knew of Adam and Eve’s Disobedience

There is evidence that the pagans not only knew of the disobedience of Adam and Eve and that this disobedience was punishable by death, but also of the subsequent offering of Salvation again. Paul wrote in Romans 1:32 that the heathen sinned even though they knew “the righteous judgment of God, that those who commit such things are worthy of death.”

Hislop’s *The Two Babylons*, pages 322-323, says that one of the names of Eve, corresponding to an ancient Babylonian goddess, was *Thalath*, which signifies “the rib” or “a side.” It comes from the verb *thala*, which signifies “to turn aside.” Adam *turned aside* from obeying God because he followed Eve, who was made of a rib. It was in memory of Adam’s “turning aside” from the right way that the pagan priests of Baal supplicated their god to hear them (I Kings 18:26) by limping (turning aside) at the altar, for “limping” is the exact meaning of the Hebrew word rendered “leaped.” This, Hislop states, is also the origin of Vulcan’s lameness—for the pagan god Vulcan, as “father of the gods,” needed to be identified with Adam as well as Nimrod. The pagans knew that this limping or turning aside implied death—eternal death.

Pagans Knew of Promise of Eternal Life

But just as the pagans originally knew of the penalty of death for sin, so they also knew of the promise of life eternal. At the spring festival of Cybele and Attes (other pagan gods that were types of Adam and Eve in mythology), there was great lamentation for the *death* of Attes; but on the Hilaria (or rejoicing festival of the 25th of March), in honor of Cybele the mother of the Babylonian messiah, mourning was turned to joy on the occasion of the dead god being restored to *life* again.

We have seen that Lucifer, placed on earth to carry out God’s rule, wanted instead to take God’s place, but was cast down to earth and became Satan—the adversary. We have also seen how Satan twisted the word of God by presenting to our first parents a counterfeit way, which *appeared* as the truth.

From this point on to the flood, records prove that the devil was very active in deceiving mankind. The earth became full of sin—“all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth” (Gen. 6:12). This brought on the flood to show man the terrible results of disobedience.

Did Satan cease to deceive after the flood? No! Nimrod, under Satan’s influence, founded a great apostasy after the flood—and his wife, Semiramis, introduced the “Mystery of Iniquity” (II Thess. 2:7) that deceives the world today!

Nimrod Starts Apostasy After Flood

Noah and the seven people with him had survived the flood—the great punishment on the inhabitants of the earth for their disobedience to God’s commands. Was there anyone who could

keep the survivors in remembrance of obedience to God? Yes, for II Peter 2:4-5 says, “God ... saved Noah, *the* eighth, a preacher of righteousness.” Psalm 119:172 says, “All Your commandments are righteousness.” Righteousness is obedience. Noah preached obedience to God, and through him the other seven were kept in remembrance of obedience to God.

Everyone on earth after the flood knew of God and why He had drowned the wicked. They feared to do evil—at first. That they had lived under God’s rule for some time is admitted by the ancients. “For many ages men lived under the government of Jove (God) without cities and without laws, and all speaking one language . . . Then discord began” (*Hyginus*, p. 114).

This group, composed of the only people on earth (for the others had all been destroyed by the great flood), began migrating from the mountains of Ararat (Gen. 8:4) where the ark had landed: “And the whole earth was of one language and one speech. And it came to pass, as they traveled from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar. And they settled there” (Gen. 11:1-2). These people—now known as Sumerians (Miller, *Ancient History in Bible Light*, p. 51)—pushed through the mountains of the east and came upon a highly fertile plain built up by deposits of the Euphrates and the Tigris rivers. This land of Shinar is now known as ancient Babylonia (Breasted, *Ancient Times*, p. 107). Here was a land that would produce all they desired in abundance.

Did these people continue to live happily and peacefully under God’s rule—or did they, like Adam and Eve, disobey God and bring trouble upon themselves? The land was productive, but the wild animals were multiplying faster than the people, due to the destruction of the former civilization by the great flood. Because of their primitive weapons, there was a great danger to life and possessions (Ex. 23:28-29). What could be done about it?

Nimrod, the son of Cush, was a large, powerfully-built man who developed into a great hunter. It was he who gathered the people together and organized them to fight the wild beasts: “He was a mighty hunter before the LORD” (Gen. 10:8-9; *KJV*). Nimrod was known everywhere for his might. He emancipated the people of the earth after the flood from their fear of the wild animals. His prestige grew. He became the leader in worldly affairs. He was ambitious.

Cush and Nimrod Build First City—Babylon

There was a better way to protect the people from the wild animals that roamed the earth than by constantly fighting them. Nimrod built a city of houses, surrounded this city with a high wall, and gathered the people within. Thus, the people were protected and Nimrod was able to rule over them. This arrangement was agreeable to the people, for they said “let us establish a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered upon the face of the whole earth” (Gen. 11:4).

The people not only protected themselves from the wild animals by building a walled city, they also established *authority* of their own—“let us establish a name for ourselves.” This was to be a central place of mankind’s authority—and the necessity of their obedience to God was not going to be recognized! Nimrod was their leader. Also, they built a tower that was to reach “into the heavens.” With a tower this *high* they could do as they wished—disobey God and still be safe from His punishment, which had previously drowned the inhabitants of the earth. This was mankind’s first act of *open rebellion* against God after the flood—they thought they had placed themselves out of God’s reach if they wished to disobey Him. They, like Satan, thought that if they could “ascend above the heights of the clouds” they could “be like the Most High” (Isa. 14:14). Cush, Nimrod’s father, also had much to do with the building of this tower and city (*Hislop*, p. 26).

It was then that Nimrod “began to be a mighty one” and a “mighty hunter before the

LORD” in a *ruling sense*. Nimrod became a *tyrant* over the people. He made the laws. He was mighty “before the LORD” (*KJV*) The Hebrew *paniym*, translated “before” here, should be translated “against”—*Strong’s*. Nimrod was mighty *against* God! Conspiracy and sedition were carried on by him (*Epiphanius*, book I, vol. i, p. 7).

Nimrod continued growing in power, but the inborn desire of the people to *worship* needed to be satisfied. Nimrod and his followers had turned against the true God. They wanted to glorify God in their *own* way! They “changed the glory of the incorruptible God into *the* likeness of ... creeping things” (Rom. 1:23)—the snake, and other things God had created. (They should have worshipped God in spirit and in truth and not through idols—John 4:24; Ex. 20:4-5.) With the civil power he wielded, Nimrod set himself up as the priest of the things worshipped by the people—to obtain a still stronger hold on them and gradually put himself in place of the true God.

Nimrod Becomes Priest of Serpent-Sun Worshipers

Mankind immediately after the flood knew God, but they did not like His laws—they did not like to be obedient to Him. Their carnal minds rebelled.

To whom did they turn to worship in His place? They remembered the *serpent* of the Garden of Eden (man’s adversary); they would honor it—for had it not been through the serpent that they obtained the knowledge of good and evil? The serpent had not commanded them to do anything. So it came about that the *serpent* (Satan) was ultimately worshipped as the *enlightener* of mankind (they were deceived!).

The sun, too, became a favorite object of worship because of the light and heat it gives.

This being the case, the *two* “enlighteners” became associated, for just as the serpent was considered to be the enlightener of the *spiritual* world, so also was the sun the enlightener of the *physical* world. Thus, it came about that one of the most common symbols of the sun or sun-god is a disc with a serpent around it (Bunsen, *Hieroglyphics*, vol. I, p. 497). Moreover, the serpent is universally a symbol of the sun (Davies, *Druids*, p. 437).

Now we’re beginning to understand why it is that sun-worship is devil-worship! Satan, by deceptively inspiring mankind, was associating himself with objects mankind tended to worship in such a way to receive the worship himself! Mankind, at this earliest date, knowing God, did not like God’s laws—so they created gods of their own and ascribed to them laws which better suited their own desires.

This is the time referred to by Paul when, speaking to the Romans, he said, “Because when they knew God, they glorified *Him* not as God, neither were thankful; but they became vain in their own reasonings, and their foolish hearts were darkened. While professing themselves to be *the* wise ones, they became fools and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into *the* likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed creatures, and creeping things.... [Thus,] they worshiped and served the created thing more than the one Who is Creator” (Rom. 1:21-25).

The people were then worshipping *creeping things*, the snake—and the *created thing*, the sun! To prevent the worship of the sun, the Eternal’s original name for it was *shemesh*, which means “servant”—but mankind later changed this name to *Baal*, which means “the Lord” (*Johann Clericus*, book II, p. 199 and *Vaux*, p. 8). Fire, giving off light, was regarded by those after the flood as the earthly representative of the sun. It is said that Nimrod himself commenced the worshipping of fire or fire-worship (*Clericus*, p. 199). Do you remember the great red (fiery) “dragon” of Revelation 12:3? The dragon is identified as a *serpent* in verse 14, and is further

identified as the devil and Satan in verse 9. Here, symbolically, we see the *sun*, the great “fire god,” identified with the serpent or Satan! The sun then, becomes the symbol of the devil himself! The Bible says so!

These, then, were the *false beliefs* into which the people in Nimrod’s time, who did not wish to worship the true God, were being led. They were sun-fire-worshippers. These were the beliefs Nimrod championed, which made him more powerful than ever. He became the *priest* of the sun-god or *Bol-Kahn*, which means “priest of Baal.” He did not claim to *be* the sun-god himself, but did spread the worship of this pagan deity. Thus, Nimrod, being the priest of the devouring fire to which human victims (especially children) were offered, was regarded as a great child devourer. He became therefore the priest of devil worship!

Only after his violent death was Nimrod set up as though he had been an immortal deity.

World Cheated Out of Real Happiness

Just as Nimrod had emancipated the people from the fear of the wild beasts, so also he emancipated them from the fear of the Eternal—which is the beginning of wisdom (Psa. 111:10). It is only in His laws that true happiness can be found.

Nimrod was the “mighty one,” the acknowledged leader of the “great ones” or “giants” who, in their great apostasy, rebelled against heaven. He led those on earth to believe that a real spiritual change of heart was unnecessary. Drunken, sexual orgies went hand-in-hand with his expansion of power. It is evident that he led mankind to seek their chief good in sensual enjoyment and showed them how they might enjoy the pleasures of sin without any fear of wrath from a Holy God. In his various expeditions he was always accompanied by troops of women, by music and song, games and revelries, and everything that could please the natural heart and endear himself to the good graces of mankind (*The Two Babylons*, p. 55).

“There is ample reason to believe that in his own day he was the object of high popularity. Though by setting [himself] up as a king ... he invaded the liberties of mankind, yet he was held to have conferred benefits ... that amply indemnified them for the loss of their liberties, and covered him with glory and renown” (*Hislop*, p. 50).

In the carnal mind of man (Rom. 7:14) the Babylonian system was not so bad—it had brought a measure of happiness, they thought. But what did God do—God who knew the full measure of happiness mankind could have by obeying His laws? Was He going to allow man to destroy himself with his own sins before he had enough time to learn his lesson that sin does not bring happiness (Rom. 6:23)?

Confusion of Tongues

“And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men had built. And the LORD said, ‘Behold, the people *are* one and they all have one language. And this *is only the beginning of* what they will do—now nothing which they have imagined to do will be restrained from them. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they cannot understand one another’s speech.’

“So the LORD scattered them abroad from that place upon the face of all the earth. And they quit building the city. Therefore the name of it is called Babel, because the LORD confused the language of all the earth there. And from there the LORD scattered them abroad upon the face of all the earth” (Gen. 11:5-9).

The word *Babel* means “confusion.” God *confused* the language of this place and the city was thus named for that event. God did not destroy it, but He did *slow down* its growth so that

man would have time to learn the error of trying to rule himself. Thus, by giving various groups of people various languages, He caused these groups to *separate*. This was the beginning of the nations as we know them today; the confusion of the tongues divided them “after their nations” (Gen. 10:5, 20, 31). Consequently, the people of Babylon started to migrate outward from that point. Each group took its idolatrous sun-fire-serpent worship with them and the memory of Babylon and Nimrod.

Apostasy Spreads

Did this blow to Nimrod’s plans stop him in his quest for power? No, it made conditions more difficult and his rule less close-knit, but with increased zeal he extended his power. First, he did more construction work on the city of Babel. For the protection of three of the larger groups that had dispersed, he built the cities of Erech, Accad, and Calneh, and these thereby came under his rule. These cities (Gen. 10:10) comprised the beginning of his empire, which was later to expand and cover the known world of that time. From thence he extended his control over much of the land that God had designed for Shem (Ex. 23:31).

It was by such means as this that Nimrod became “a mighty one in the earth” (Gen. 10:8). He “set the world on fire,” as it is said.

Bryant, vol. II, p. 377, says that Nimrod conquered all nations as far as Libya. This indicates that all the area from Babylon to Libya was under his sway—thus including Egypt. This was a large part of the populated world at that time. Upon these his religion and government were imposed. Nimrod, then, was the first to form an army, the first to develop civil, economic, political, and social systems. He set the laws to govern these systems, but in all this he did not include God, for he turned the people to worship Satan.

Shem Slays Nimrod.

But what of Noah, the preacher of righteousness? Did everyone join Cush and Nimrod in their apostasy against God, or did Noah stand firm and gather followers on his side?

Yes, Noah, the preacher of righteousness (II Pet. 2:5), did stand fast and gained a staunch supporter in his son, Shem. While Nimrod was rapidly expanding his kingdom, there was opposition from Shem, the representative of Noah, the great enlightener of the world (*Hislop*, pp. 316-317). Nimrod became representative of the forces of evil in opposing Shem, who took over the position of Noah.

With the aggressive Nimrod expanding his government and religion to include all people in the small world of that time, the two groups were bound to come into conflict. How did the conflict resolve itself? “Ancient traditions relate that the apostates who joined in the rebellion of Nimrod made war upon the faithful among the sons of Noah [Shem and his followers]. Power and numbers were on the side of the fire-worshippers. But on the side of the faithful was the power of God’s spirit. Therefore, many were convicted in their sin, and arrested in their evil career; and victory declared for the saints. The power of Nimrod came to an end, and with it, for a time, the worship of the sun, and the fiery serpent associated with it” (*Hislop*, p. 232).

Shem, a very eloquent person, is said to have obtained the aid of a group of Egyptians to overcome Nimrod. Nimrod fled to Rome, where he was slain. Nimrod’s dead body was then cut into pieces, burnt, and the pieces sent to various areas as a warning against such evil apostatizing (*Hislop*, p. 63).

Was this terrible apostasy against God stopped for all time with Nimrod’s death? Who was as capable as he to carry it on? The carnal nature of mankind was willing to continue the

apostasy—but they needed a leader! Certainly, if a worldwide flood that drowned all but eight people could not stop them, Shem and a few other men could not!

Would Satan allow this worldwide system—which he built up so he could secretly receive the worship of the earth—to crumble? We shall now find the answer!

Semiramis Expands Apostasy

The death of Nimrod seemingly halted the counterfeit pagan worship that he started. The Egyptians hold that Nimrod’s dead body was cut into pieces and sent to many cities throughout the land as a stern warning as to what would happen to others who might desire to apostatize (*Wilkinson’s Egyptians*, vol. V, p. 17). A similar example of this practice is even recorded in the Bible. The dead body of a Levite’s concubine was cut into pieces and a part was sent as a warning to each of the twelve tribes of Israel (Judges 19:29). Another example is recorded in I Samuel 11:7. It was not an unusual practice.

This warning against paganism had a marked effect on would-be apostates. If one as powerful as Nimrod could be slain and disposed of in such a terrible manner, the people rightly reasoned that the same fate could happen to them if it were known that they were adoring and serving forbidden objects—idols. The people were afraid to worship these objects, although they desired to do so. If they were to continue to worship these same forbidden, pagan idols, there was only one way in which it could be done—and that was for someone to initiate a *system* whereby the forbidden things of worship were *represented by something else*.

This system became known as the ancient “mysteries.” The ones initiated into the “mysteries” would know that they, in reality, were worshipping the forbidden *sun* or *serpent* when they worshipped these “new” symbols, but the outsider would not know. It would be a *mystery* to him or her!

Hislop, p. 66, declares: “In these circumstances, then, began ... that system of ‘Mystery,’ which, having Babylon for its centre, has spread over the world.” Let us now see how this *mystery* system actually did come into being and who created it and for what purpose. The world’s religions today—including Christianity—are *deceived* by this very same system! How did this come about?

Here is the answer. At first, it was explained to the worshipper *what* he was actually worshipping when he worshipped various symbols, many of which are widely adored in the professing “Christian” world today. But as time went by this practice was dropped. The people continued to worship the same symbols because of custom. But they didn’t know then, nor do people know now, just *what* is actually being worshipped!

Semiramis Initiates the System

Nimrod had been a man of unbounded ambition. But the ambition of his wife, Semiramis—the future “Queen of Heaven” (Jer. 7:18)—exceeded even his. Nimrod, her husband, had become the greatest and most powerful figure in the world. But he was now dead. Semiramis clearly saw that if she was to continue to have the great position and power that she had exercised by being the wife of the most powerful man on earth, something must be done to assure continuance of her power.

Nimrod’s kingdom, which consisted of most of the populated world of that time, had fallen to her. Much of Nimrod’s power had come from his having set himself up as the human representation (priest) of the sun-god. She must retain this world rule by any and all means. The *religious control* which had given so much power to her husband must be used by her also if she

was to retain the maximum hold on her subjects. She, by way of Noah, the preacher of righteousness, had heard of the woman's prophesied seed who was to come and through whom mankind might obtain eternal life. This gave her a daring idea.

"Though the death of her husband has given a rude shock to her power, yet her resolution and unbounded ambition were in no wise checked. On the contrary, her ambition took a higher flight. 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 ... who was destined to bruise the serpent's head and who, in doing so, was to have His own heel bruised. The patriarchs, and the ancient world in general, were perfectly acquainted with the grand primeval promise of Eden. They knew right well that the bruising of the heel of the promised Seed implied His death and that the curse could be removed from the world only by the death of the grand Deliverer" (*Hislop*, pp. 58-60).

Nimrod and Semiramis Become Gods

Here, then, was a perfect circumstance that Semiramis could use to perpetuate, and even greatly augment, her power! The world had been told of the coming of a *deliverer* whose death would redeem them from eternal death. The world was awaiting such an event. They also believed that this "deliverer" would go about doing good deeds before his death. Nimrod, her husband, the most powerful man on the earth in his day, had been considered a benefactor, as we have seen.

She would combine or fuse sun-serpent worship, which her dead husband had furthered, with the teachings of the Eternal God concerning a coming savior of mankind. She planned to make her dead husband, Nimrod, this savior, and thus procure for herself power over her subjects by posing as the mother of a supernaturally conceived and reborn Nimrod (recall Christ's supernatural conception). A factor of great aid to Semiramis was the popularity of Nimrod and the desire of the people to keep him in their memory.

When the news first spread abroad concerning the violent death of this mighty man, cut off in the midst of his career, it was a great shock and loud were the wails everywhere. Nimrod at the time of his death was favorably known by the groups that had been formed after God confused their various languages at the Tower of Babel. They later formed the large nations of the earth as we know them today by gradually migrating outward to distant areas after Semiramis' time. Nimrod's popularity is shown by the fact that hundreds of years later these nations still *lamented* the violent death of their hero—Nimrod or Tammuz.

Japan, China, India, Scandinavia, and Iceland each have their own gods in whose life this event occurred, and each culture weeps for their god at the proper time. In ancient Iceland and throughout Scandinavia, the idea of "weeping" was that if everyone on earth would weep for their dead god, Balder (Nimrod), he would be restored to life. This practice is still found today in the Lent season.

The central theme of idolatry in Egypt was the violent death of Nimrod or Osiris (the Egyptian god representing Nimrod). As the women of Egypt wept for Osiris and the Phoenicians and Assyrians for Tammuz—their name for Nimrod—so in Greece and Rome the women wept for Bacchus, whose name means "the bewailed," or "lamented one." Japan, China, India, Scandinavia, and Ireland each had their "lamented one" for whom they bewailed annually (*Hislop*, pp. 55-57).

In these bacchanal lamentations, a spotted fawn was used to represent Bacchus (the Grecian name for Nimrod). At certain stages in the mystical celebrations, the fawn was torn in pieces, thus expressing what happened to Bacchus (Nimrod or Tammuz). Remember, Nimrod

was cut in pieces. The way of disobedience to God is very popular with mankind! Even the Israelites in their time wept for the death of Tammuz (Ezek. 8:14). So we see that *in life* the people of the earth had looked upon Nimrod almost as though he were a god.; *in death*, Semiramis would make him the savior of mankind!

The False Messiah

Semiramis' plan was aided by her own great beauty. Her beauty is said to have once quelled a rising rebellion among her subjects on her sudden appearance among them (*Valerius Maximus*, lib. IX, chap. 3, p. 2). "The scheme, thus skillfully formed, took effect. Semiramis gained glory from her dead and deified husband; and in the course of time, both of them under the names of Rhea and Nin, or 'Goddess-mother and Son,' were worshipped with an enthusiasm that was incredible and their images were everywhere set and adored. Whenever the aspect of Nimrod was ... an obstacle ... all that was needful was to teach that Ninus [Nimrod] had reappeared in the person of a posthumous son supernaturally borne by a widowed wife"—herself (*Hislop*, p. 69).

Nimrod was said to have been the first to invent magic arts. He used tricks of magic to impress his converts (*Justinus Historia*, lib. I, vol. ii, p. 615). After Nimrod's death, tricks of magic and deception were used by Semiramis to impress converts to her mystery system. The magic was attributed to the power of these imaginary gods she had concocted.

She first deified Nimrod, then herself and their son; due to opposition, gave them "secret forms" known only to the initiated, and these were worshipped. These, then, were the *mysteries*. Those on the outside could not see that these new practices of worshipping symbols such as a calf or a tree were actually the same as the worship of Nimrod or Semiramis who represented the sun and serpent (Satan)—the same sun-serpent worship Shem had suppressed!

Those who wished to be initiated into these mysteries in Semiramis' time had to have the meaning explained to them. The title of the priest who explained the mysteries to the initiated was called "Peter" in primitive Chaldee, the language of the mysteries. This means "interpreter" (*Parkhurst's Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 602). It was one of these interpreters or "Peters" who was in pagan Rome long before Christ. He was later confused with the apostle Peter.

Kings of the Earth Spread Mystery System

Using every means within her power, ambitious Semiramis left no stone unturned to advance this pagan religious system of mystery she had formulated. By doing so, she, as the head of this system, strengthened her hold over her subjects. Petty kings had arisen over small groups of people having different languages—the beginnings of the nations of the earth. These groups had resulted by God giving to them different languages in order to confuse them and thereby stop their building of the city and tower of Babylon (Gen. 11:7-9).

As one group with one language, they had established at Babel, or Babylon, a central place of authority—so they could rule in God's stead. Then God divided them "after their tongues, in their countries, and in their nations" (Gen. 10:20). They could never again establish authority over the peoples of the earth if they spoke different languages

For many of these kings, Nimrod, when he had been alive, built cities or towns, as we have seen (both he and Semiramis were given titles as builders after they were deified). These kings he controlled. The other kings of the earth were subservient to him because of his great conquests. How did Semiramis use these kings to further her own ambition when this great empire fell to her because of her husband's death?

The Bible tells us! Semiramis, or Isis, was the original fallen woman that the Bible describes in Revelation 17:1-2: “I will show you ... the great whore who sits upon many waters [nations]; with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication” (her character in regard to fornication was well known). In return, these kings furthered Semiramis’ system of religion—the religious mystery system spoken of in Revelation 17:5—the system formed by the *fusion* of the teachings of God with the teachings of Semiramis. She, the head of this *counterfeit* of the true Church of God, *gave herself sexually* to these kings of the earth in order to saddle her own counterfeit system of Satan-inspired religion onto the nations.

No wonder Revelation 17 uses the symbol of a *fallen woman* to represent today’s great unholy church! Revelation 17 is prophetic—it is *dual*—for these same words tell of the arising in strength of this same mystery system *in our day*, furthered by another “woman” (symbol of a church) that will unite with the kings of the earth in order to force her religion (including the “mark of the beast”) upon the world!

No wonder this counterfeit religion of Semiramis, impressed upon the nations of the earth in their beginnings, was carried to the farthest places of the globe as peoples migrated outward from this central point!

So here we have a religion set up over 2000 years before Christ that was calculatedly patterned on the future coming of Christ! No wonder there were so many similarities to the real Christ and His teachings when He came 2000 years later!

We read in Acts 4:11-12 that the only way to salvation is by the Messiah—Jesus. Yet here we find a counterfeit way—a false (Nimrod) messiah—with teachings that have deceived the whole world. Here was a man who was killed for the supposed good he had accomplished, just as Christ would be later. This man was also declared to be “resurrected”—he was born “supernaturally”—and he became a god. Did he also offer *eternal life* to his followers? We will see that he did!

Nimrod-Worship Widespread Under Other Names

We have already seen how Nimrod, after his death, was said by Semiramis to have been *reborn* in the form of her illegitimate child, Nin or Horus. That the child (Semiramis’ counterfeit of the coming Savior), who was worshipped in various countries, was really Nimrod there is much evidence. An examination of the legends and characteristics assigned to these gods by their worshippers shows that they coincide with the characteristics of Nimrod and the events of his life. As we proceed, recall that Nimrod was not only *deified* by Semiramis and worshipped after his death, but also, in her mysteries, he was “reborn” as her fair-skinned child.

Egyptian tradition shows that their god, Osiris (Nimrod), was black (Plutarch, *De Isid, et. Os.*, vol. II, p. 359.) This is a land where the color of the population is only slightly dusky. This clearly shows that the man they worshipped was not of their own nationality.

This negro-featured Osiris was clothed from head to foot in a spotted dress, the upper part being a leopard’s skin (spotted) and the lower part a spotted dress (*Bunsen*, vol. I, p. 425). The name Nimrod means “subduer of the leopard”—from *Nimr*, “leopard,” and *rod* “to subdue.” This name seems to imply that as Nimrod had gained fame by subduing the horse, he had also subdued the leopard and used it in hunting (*Hislop*, p. 44). In India, hunting with leopards has long been a custom (*Wilkinson*, p. 17). Persian legends show that Hosang (Cush), the father of Tahmurs (Nimrod), who built Babylon, was the “first who bred dogs and leopards for hunting.” (*Sir William Jones’ Works*, vol. IV, pp. 341, 353). The Egyptian high priest’s robe of office was

the leopard's skin. Here, then, the leopard skin was the common covering for the main deity in these two countries!

Nimrod, by the same spotted covering, is identified as being the god Bacchus of the Greeks. Leopards were employed to draw Bacchus' chariot, he was represented as being attired in leopard skins, and his priests were attired in the same manner or with the spotted skin of a fawn. This latter seems to have come from Assyria (Vaux, *Nineveh*, chap. 8, p. 233)—indications again of the principal gods being covered with leopard skins in two countries. The similarity to one man—Nimrod—is marked!

Recall that in Babylon, after Nimrod was slain by Shem's followers, Semiramis used secret or mysterious symbols to represent him so that he could be worshipped as a god. In Greece, to secretly show that Nimrod and their god Bacchus were the same, Bacchus was symbolized as a spotted fawn. The rites of the Egyptian Osiris and the Grecian Bacchus are the same, and those of the Egyptian Isis (Semiramis) and Ceres (the Grecian Semiramis) exactly resemble each other (*Bibliotheca*, lib. I, p. 9).

In Egypt, Osiris, as we recall, was mystically represented as a young bull or the calf *Apis*, being only another name for Saturn, the "hidden one." The name *Apis* in Egyptian is *Hopi*, evidently from the Chaldee (Babylonian) word *hop*—"to cover" (*Bunsen*, vol. I, vocab., p. 462). Other evidence is overwhelming that Semiramis had made her dead husband the great god of the world of that day.

"You shall be as gods"

A factor that aided Semiramis in her deification of Nimrod was the way in which *statues* were made of the mighty men of renown of that time. As the first of the "mighty ones" after the flood, Nimrod was symbolized as a *bull*. But there was yet another way by which his power was shown. Hislop, on pages 37-39, says that a synonym for *gheber*, which means "mighty one," was *aber*. But *abir* signified a "wing."

Hislop continues, "Nimrod, as Head and Captain of those men of war ... who were instruments of establishing his power, was *Baal-aberin*, 'Lord of the mighty ones.' But 'Baal-abirin' signified 'the winged ones.' Therefore, he was represented as a ... winged bull—showing not merely that he was mighty himself, but that he had ... ones under his command who were ever ready to carry out his commands.... [This] alone explains the remarkable statement of Aristophanes, that at the beginning of the world 'the birds' were first created, and then, after their creation, came the 'race of the blessed immortal gods.'... Let it be borne in mind that 'the birds'—that is, the 'winged ones'—symbolized 'the Lords of the mighty ones,' and the meaning is clear ... that men first began to be mighty on the earth, and then, that the 'Lords' or leaders of these 'mighty ones' were deified."

Nimrod was unquestionably the first of those deified after the flood. He became the "father of the gods"—the first of many "mighty ones" who might be deified after him. The same general method applied to Semiramis—she became the "mother of the gods."

Characteristics of the Babylonian System

Why has God objected all through the Bible to mankind following the Babylonian system? Let us examine closely Nimrod's way of rule and find why God would object. The characteristics of the Babylonian system of rule as represented by Nimrod's world empire are "rejection of God, denial of His right to rule, refusal to acknowledge man's dependence upon God for power or happiness, determination to deprive ... God of the gratitude and allegiance of

men, thirst for domination apart from God over this world, [and] the exaltation of man to the place of Deity.”

“These are characteristics which belonged in supreme degree to Satan, the archenemy and rebel against God. They are characteristic of the innate heart of ... humanity, since all unregenerate men are children of disobedience, and their minds are ‘not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be’ (Rom. 8:7)” (Miller, *Ancient History In Bible Light*, p. 55).

Now notice carefully, for this is very important!

“To the later Jews, Babylon was the complete embodiment of the enmity of the heathen world against the kingdom of God, and the idea they formed of Nimrod was influenced by this view. The arrogance of his character, which seemed to be implied in his very name, was conceived of as defiance to God, and he became a heaven-storming titan. As such, he built the tower of Babel.... Jewish legend made choice of Abraham to be his antithesis, the representative of God’s kingdom over against the heathen autocrat” (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 9th ed., vol. 17, p. 511). These are all serious indictments against Babylon’s system.

To summarize why God is against the Babylonian system: God is the supreme ruler; this rebellion of human beings would, if universal, defeat His very purpose—His purpose of giving to obedient mortals eternal life by bringing them into His spiritual kingdom where He is acknowledged as the creator and ruler of all!

Revelation 14:8 speaks of a Babylon that will be destroyed *in our day*, and Revelation 18:4 tells us to *come out of her* lest we receive her plagues. No one will receive eternal life while they are in this system! “Babylon” is not as far away from us as we have imagined!

Answer Found in Eden

Man had brazenly dared to make himself a god, a god to be worshipped and obeyed by others! He left the *true* God out of his life. The Ten Commandments say, “You shall have no other gods before Me” (Ex. 20:3). Many times in the Old Testament, when people sinned, God said words to the following effect: “I will punish them so that they will know that I am God.” Who first wanted to be like God? The devil—“I will be like the Most High” (Isa. 14:14).

What did the devil tell Eve would happen if she and Adam would follow his advice and eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which God had forbidden? “In dying, you shall not surely die!... [But] you shall be like God, deciding good and evil” (Gen. 3:4-5). Satan, in effect, said, “You will not die, you can be as gods, deciding for yourselves what is right and wrong—you can attain eternal life this way.” The churches of Satan have been teaching this philosophy ever since. The philosophy Adam and Eve followed in Eden is the philosophy the world has followed since that day—it is basically a type of disobedience. The devil’s suggestion sounds good to mankind.

But God had said they *would die* if they disobeyed His command and ate of this tree (Gen. 2:17). They did not know God yet—they did not fear Him: “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom” (Psa. 111:10). They did not know that they must obey Him above all beings or suffer dire consequences—so they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. *They usurped God’s prerogative—they decided for themselves what was good and what was evil!* They made their own “law” by deciding that to eat of the forbidden tree was right and not a sin. They followed their “law” and broke God’s. They became “as gods” in making their own law. But after they had sinned, they were afraid (Gen. 3:10). They realized their folly, for then God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to decide good and evil” (Gen. 3:22).

They had learned by experience. They realized they needed a different kind of clothing

than their carnal minds gave (Rom. 8:7). Thus, Paul says mankind has been made to desire vain things (Rom. 8:20).

“I put on righteousness, and it clothed me” (Job 29:14). They tried to clothe themselves with *their* righteousness: “they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves” (Gen. 3:7)—a symbol of *their* kind of righteousness. But Isaiah, inspired by God, says, “All our righteousnesses *are* as filthy rags” (Isa. 64:6). The Bible says of God’s commandments, “All Your commandments are righteousness” (Psa. 119:172). If we obey God’s commandments—as revealed then by God’s spoken word, but today by the Bible—we clothe ourselves with God’s kind of righteousness and are acceptable to Him. We cannot make our *own* laws! God said Adam and Eve must, for their sin, be separated from the tree of life. They must die. They needed a *Redeemer* who could pay the penalty of death in their stead if they were to have eternal life. This was, in fact, promised very soon afterward (Gen. 3:15).

Now we can see *how* the devil rules this world today! Are we doing today as Adam and Eve did in the garden of Eden?

Are Men “as Gods” Today?

It can now be easily seen that if we, today, are following the same deceptive suggestion that our human forbearers did in Eden—making their own laws—then *we*, too, are “as gods.” If Satan has thus deceived us, then our punishment will be the same as that given to Adam and Eve—denial of access to eternal life. “Don’t you realize that to whom you yield yourselves *as* servants to obey, you are servants of the one you obey, whether *it is* of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (Rom. 6:16). The devil, then, rules over us by suggestive deception!

Do the nations or individuals today consult what the Bible says about divorce, for example, before they make their decisions and their laws? They do not! They have become “as gods” to make their *own* laws! The *world*, then, is Babylon. We are told to come out of her (Rev. 18:4). This we can do by giving God’s laws precedent in our lives—being ruled by Him! The proper form of government is *theocracy*—being ruled over by God and His laws. This form will soon be set up on this earth.

Like Adam and Eve, when they became “as gods” and made their own laws, people today, in these end times, are having their eyes opened (Gen. 3:5) as a result of following their own laws.

World Deifies “Self”

The tendency of mankind to elevate himself is constant. After the devil tried to ascend to heaven and “be like God” (Isa. 14:14), Adam and Eve tried it (Gen. 3:5-6) and were denied eternal life at that time. In Genesis 6:4-5, we see that mankind had *deified itself* in the same way Semiramis deified herself and Nimrod. These people became “sons of gods.” Wickedness increased. Verse 11 says the earth was corrupt and filled with violence—the inevitable result when mankind makes its own laws! What happened? God drowned all on earth except Noah and seven others!

After the flood, Nimrod and Semiramis set the pace for self-deification, as we have seen. Israel was guilty of the same thing. In Ezekiel 20, there is a summary of why God said He was going to punish the Israelites. He repeats six times His reason—that they might “know that *I am* the LORD.” Judges 21:25, a summary of Israel’s actions, says, “Every man did *what was* right in his own eyes.” Like Adam and Eve, they decided what was right and wrong—so one could argue

that they were “as gods.”

Today, we see the whole world “deifying itself” by making its own laws and leaving God out of the picture. A great religious leader dares to sit today, claiming he rules in place of God! Very soon, one of this group will show himself, claiming that he is God: “Do not let anyone deceive you by any means because *that day will not* come unless the apostasy shall come first, and the man of sin shall be revealed—the son of perdition, the one who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is an object of worship; so that he comes into the temple of God and sits down as God, proclaiming that he himself is God” (II Thess. 2:3-4).

There is an outstanding example of a man deifying himself. While he was alive, “Joseph Stalin [had] long been eulogized by the Soviets ... as the world’s great ... master. No words [were] considered too extravagant.... East German children were asked to pray, not to God but to Stalin ... [for] his plans always come true” (*Los Angeles Times*, March 5, 1953, under heading “Stalin Cult Makes God of Dictator”). But only God is worthy of the attributes this cult ascribed to Stalin!

God knows the world will not voluntarily stop deifying itself. Soon, Christ is coming to chain that deceiver, the devil (Rev. 20:1-3), and Christ will rule with a rod of iron (Rev. 2:27). Then those on earth will have to decide whether they will stop deifying self or follow the real deity—God.

Why Do We Want to be “as Gods”?

Yes, why? You and I today wish that this war within ourselves would cease—this inner desire which makes us, against our will, do things that we know the Bible says not to do. It makes us not want to do the things the Bible commands us to do. This is the *internal battle* that Paul described as raging within himself. “I fully understand that there is not dwelling within me—that is, within my fleshly being—*any* good. For the desire to do good is present within me; but how to work out that which is good, I do not find.... But I see another law within my own members, warring against the law of my mind, and leading me captive to the law of sin that is within my own members” (Rom. 7:18, 23).

The answer to this enigma provides the explanation for how the devil can rule this earth by deceptive suggestion! Never once does the Bible show that the devil has used physical force to rule mankind.

God has made mankind with the inherent capacity to be upright (Ecc. 7:29), but has also given us a carnal mind: “The law is spiritual; but I am carnal” (Rom. 7:14). Carnal flesh does all sorts of evil things (Gal. 5:19-21). “The carnal mind *is* enmity against God” (Rom. 8:7). The carnal mind is today making carnal laws to take the place of the higher spiritual laws that God has set in motion to govern us. Mankind’s laws seem right in our own eyes. The flesh we are born with desires to lust—but we are not to fulfill the lusts of the flesh (Gal. 5:16; see also II Pet. 2:18; I Pet. 4:2). Indeed, “the creation was subjected to vanity” (Rom. 8:20).

We seem to be free agents, able to make our own laws and provide our own plans whereby we think (wrongly) that we will obtain happiness (the United Nations is a big example).

Mankind firmly believes that the capacity for self-rule lies within himself. We evidently believe that God gave this capacity to us—how else do we think we received it? This is the very condition which makes it easy for the devil to deceive us.

Proving Ourselves Wrong

Today, God is letting the world prove that He has not bestowed on human minds the

capacity of working out laws of happiness for themselves! He is letting us prove that happiness is beyond our reach *as we are now constituted*. It is no wonder, then, that God is willing to allow the devil to deceive the world by encouraging people to be “as gods.” He turned even Job, the most perfect man on earth (Job 1:8), over to Satan to be tested (Job 1:12; 2:6; 23:10).

God declared the end result from the beginning (Isa. 46:9-10). He planned it this way! After we have learned the folly of our ways, God says the creation will be “delivered from the bondage of corruption” (Rom. 8:21). God says He will then (and only then) go a step further in creating us—for He will change our fleshly bodies into spiritual bodies fashioned to do good works.

God has promised to do just this! We must desire this new eternal body; we must repent (Acts 2:38)—show by our actions that we realize that our usurping of our Creator’s authority was wrong. Then God will beget us as His children and ultimately give our bodies this new form. Lucifer, a spirit being who became the devil, never did learn his God-given capacity—he fought against his Creator (Isa.14:14).

How Satan Rules

How does Satan rule? Paul said, “But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds might be corrupted from *the* simplicity that *is* in Christ” (II Cor. 11:3). Satan may suggest evil courses of action to us through evil people over whom he has sway. The ministers of false churches are referred to here. Notice that Satan is behind such people. Paul says these are “false apostles—deceitful workers who are transforming themselves into apostles of Christ” (verse 13). They corrupt our minds! Sometimes demons enter people and rule them by taking complete possession of their bodies. Luke tells of devils coming out of many people in Christ’s time (Luke 4:41).

Satan lays traps for us. He brings about circumstances that tempt us to do evil things. Paul warns us about falling into the “snare of the devil” (I Tim. 3:7). Does our acting on Satan’s evil suggestions bring us under his rule? Yes, for “you are servants of the one you obey, whether *it is* of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness” (Rom. 6:16). We are urged to recover ourselves out of the “devil’s snare” if we are taken captive by him (II Tim. 2:26). Satan is called the *prince* of this world (John 14:30). He rules it.

The evil spirit-helpers of Satan can directly influence the human mind. A spirit in Old Testament times told how he would persuade an ancient king’s prophets to lie to this king. He said, “I will entice him [the king].... I will go forth and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets” (I Kings 22:21-22).

Satan has deceived the whole world (Rev. 12:9). Notice that Satan deceives people everywhere. As a deceiver he makes things *seem* what they are not. Because of his own lusts, a man can deceive his own heart—and this makes Satan’s work easier (James 1:26).

Paul says we are “not wrestling against flesh and blood, but against principalities *and* against powers, against the world rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spiritual *power* of wickedness in high *places*” (Eph. 6:12). We wrestle against spiritual powers—Satan and his demons. But how does Satan rule over large groups of people on this earth? Revelation 12:3 tells of a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns; Rev. 13:1 describes this same beast. This is a *civil government system* of four succeeding empires that are to rule this earth until Christ comes. One beast had four heads and each of the other three had one head which makes a total of seven heads. Daniel 7:6, 17-18 describes this in greater detail. Notice that the dragon, identified as Satan (Rev. 12:9), is *head* of this system. Through it he rules mankind!

But there is a *second system* through which Satan sways the millions: “And I saw another beast rising out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, but spoke like a dragon; and he exercises all the authority of the first beast before him; and he causes the earth and those who dwell therein to worship the first beast” (Rev. 13:11-12). This is a great religious government or *church* through which Satan deceives the world as to the true way of becoming sons of God! Revelation 17:3 gives a further description of this system. Yes, through these two agencies Satan truly rules over all—for a time! But Satan knows his time is short (Rev. 12:12).

We have seen how the devil, through Semiramis, perpetuated sun-serpent worship after Nimrod’s death, and why God allows this deception to go on. But how did Satan disguise these same deceptions so they could be used to replace the teachings of Christ when He came?

Semiramis of Babylon Originated Counterfeits

As we have seen, Semiramis possessed the knowledge of true salvation. It was known because of Noah, the preacher of righteousness (II Peter 2:5).

Queen Semiramis of ancient Babylon deified herself, and her son and dead husband, Nimrod, by introducing various types of images, titles, and rituals (Rom. 1:21-23). She circulated stories of actual or imagined events that had (or were supposed to have) occurred in their lives. The stories made them appear as liberators, heroes, emancipators, and saviors—delivering men from the rule of God.

These innovations made her and her son *appear as the woman and her promised “seed”* through which salvation was to come. This promise was foretold by God in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:15).

Holidays were set apart on which the new divinities were to be worshipped. Almost all of the principal Bible teachings on salvation have been *counterfeited* by this system—an evil twist being given to them. These “mysteries” or ceremonies appealed to the physical senses—to the carnal nature with which man is born (Rom. 7:14). They became very popular.

What better way could the devil play upon human lusts and desires! Thus, men accepted a false purpose and counterfeit way of salvation. Fables smothered God’s true way to salvation by confusing the people.

Eternal life was promised through a *false messiah*. The people gladly gave the rule of their lives over to him. The *mother* and *son* promised security and guaranteed eternal life through rituals and penance. The ambitious and unprincipled Semiramis saw her opportunity. Using all the might of her great empire to back her lie, she enforced her claim to be the mother of this great false savior.

Thus, she became the *original religious ruler* over the kings of the earth (Rev. 17:1-2). Both her and Satan’s desires were fulfilled. She ruled the earth and Satan obscured the true rule of God, which alone can bring life everlasting!

Idolatry Spreads Everywhere

Babylon was the *primeval source from which all systems of idolatry flowed* (Herodotus, *History*, book II, p. 109). Layard, in his *Nineveh and its Remains*, vol. II, p. 440, speaks of this Babylonian system of worship. He writes that we have the united testimony of sacred and profane history that *idolatry originated in the Assyrian (Babylonian) area* and is believed to be the most ancient of religious systems!

This was the first Babylon. Today, the world is still in *Babylon the Great* (Rev. 17:5). Isaiah 47:1 describes the religious system that rules the earth today as the *daughter* of the

original Babylon, and Revelation 18:3 says *all nations* have drunk of the wine of her spiritual fornication or false doctrine!

As the language in each country was different, the names of Nimrod, Semiramis, and Semiramis' illegitimate son, Horus—the returned false messiah whom she palmed off as the resurrected Nimrod—varied from nation to nation.

The devil continued to twist God's word and the truth, which the early inhabitants of the earth had known. Semiramis, inspired by Satan, *duplicated* all things which were revealed by God. She credited her family with divine attributes to enhance her earthly power and prestige. Among these were her *counterfeit* of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Truth About God Changed

One of the pagan concepts originating with Semiramis is the false idea of a “trinity.” How does this compare with what the Bible reveals to us? Let us examine Genesis 1:1-2: “In *the* beginning God created the heavens and the earth.... [And] the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” The Hebrew word for God here is *Elohiym*, which is plural. The Father and He who was to become the Son are referred to here (see John 1:1). The word “spirit” means the Holy Spirit of God—that divine force by which so much good is accomplished and which resides in both the Father and Son.

Genesis 1:1 says that during the creation period “the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” It is this same spirit that God says He will pour out on all flesh in the future: “And afterward it shall be *that* I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh. And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; your old men shall dream dreams; your young men shall see visions” (Joel 2:28). The Hebrew word *ruwach* is used in both cases for “spirit.”

Actually, *God is a family*, not a trinity of persons. God is a family composed of two beings with a common spirit. It is into this divine family that we may be born (John 3). Note that the pagans termed the Holy Spirit a “being”—such as the Father and Son. They wrongly made a trinity. Satan was confusing mankind!

An examination of the triune emblem of the supreme Assyrian divinity clearly shows a knowledge of the original truth. The emblem had the head of an old man (the Father). Next, there is the zero or circle, which stood in the Babylonian language for a “seed” (the Savior). Lastly, there was the wings and tail of the dove (the Holy Spirit, which Semiramis soon supplanted).

This concept of God preceded the counterfeit of Semiramis, which was soon introduced. At that very early period, an important change took place in regard to the divinity: the Spirit of God, according to the harlot-queen Semiramis, became incarnate in a human mother, and the divine son became the fruit of that incarnation (*Hislop*, p. 18).

Semiramis, through her mysteries, hundreds of years before Christ's birth, duplicated the truly miraculous event! Her own illegitimate son was the returned “savior”! How baffling it must have been for pagans who had once known God!

Semiramis *identified herself as this spirit* and ascribed to herself the power of aiding in the creation of the world. Through her method of deification, she taught her followers that she, in one of her forms, had been the dove—a symbol of the Spirit that “moved upon the face of the waters” at creation. She moved or “fluttered ... ‘upon the face of the waters’ (Gen. 1:2)” (*Hislop*, p. 303). She claimed to be one of the “trinity.” She had become “as the gods.”

Please recall that it was a *dove* that lighted on Christ's shoulder at His baptism. Later, this identical symbol—the dove—pictured the descent of the Holy Spirit on Christ (John 1:32). It is becoming clear that there was a plan behind these pagan similarities!

Same Pagan Ideas in Today's World

To symbolize the Trinity doctrine, an equilateral triangle was used, just as the church uses it today (Layard, *Babylon and Nineveh*, p. 605). Some churches in Madrid, Spain, have an image of a triune god with three heads on one body (Parkhurst, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 605). Thus, we see the origin of the false doctrine of the Trinity. Here again is seen the influence of the Babylonian mysteries on religion today!

“The recognition of a Trinity was universal in all the ancient nations of the world, proving how deep-rooted in the human race was the primeval doctrine on this subject, which comes out so distinctly in Genesis” (*Hislop*, p. 18). In Japan, the great divinity Buddha has one body and three heads. Gillespie's *Sinim*, p. 60, and *Japet*, p. 184, show that the pagans of Siberia worshipped a god with a similar body.

Later, the “Father” was overlooked. As the “great invisible”—taking no immediate concern in human affairs—he was to be worshipped through silence alone (Jamblichus, *Mysteries*, sect. VIII, chap. iii). Today, in some churches, we hear much about the *mother* and *child* (Christ being depicted as dependent on His mother)—but little about God the Father. A *human woman* is thus made supreme!

Family of God Counterfeited

The true teaching of the Bible is that the Father and Son comprise the one Kingdom or Family of God. The Holy Spirit is the common nature, mind, and force of God (Gen. 1:2; John 1:1). Jesus said, “God is Spirit” (John 4:24). “God” is a divine family composed of spirit, not material flesh. As we have seen, at present only two persons—Father and Son—comprise this family. But we can become members of that family!

Is there a mention of a pagan counterfeit of God in the Bible? Yes, in Isaiah 66:17. In the *King James Version* you will find the ambiguous words, “behind one tree in the midst.” The proper translation should be “after the rites of Achad.” The ancient pagan deity *Achad* was the triune counterfeit of God.

The proper reading is: “They that sanctify and purify themselves ... after the rites of the Only One [Achad], eating swine's flesh ... shall be consumed” (*Hislop*, p. 16). Those who take part in the rites of this counterfeit god shall be destroyed!

The Devil's Part in the Counterfeits

We have seen how Semiramis used the God-kingdom spoken of in Genesis 1:1-2 to fit into her mysteries. But how did she fit the serpent or devil (Rev. 20:2) into these?

Plutarch, in *De Iside*, says of the serpent (Gen. 3:1): “First Tammuz (Nimrod as the ‘Savior’) was worshipped as the bruiser of the serpent's head, meaning thereby that he was the anointed destroyer of Satan's kingdom. Then the dragon himself, or Satan, came to receive a certain measure of worship, to ‘console him,’ as the pagans said, ‘for the loss of his power,’ and to prevent him from hurting them; and last of all the dragon, or Teitan or Satan, became the supreme object of worship, the Teitania, or rites of Teitan, occupying a prominent place in the Egyptian Mysteries” (vol. II, pp. 362, 364). The same is true of the mysteries of Greece (Porter, *Antiquities*, vol. I, p. 400).

What is the significance of this? Remember that it was for supporting the rites of serpent worship and sun worship that Nimrod was killed by Shem. So, at first, Semiramis cautiously introduced her illegitimate son as the bruiser of the serpent's head. But as soon as the way was

paved, she cautiously reintroduced a certain measure of the serpent worship that Nimrod had first introduced. The serpent (dragon), Teitan, or Satan, became the supreme object of ancient worship.

Semiramis now changed her position in her mysteries. She claimed to be the *wife* of Pluto, the god of hell—the serpent—in order to fit her new position as sponsor of serpent or devil worship. “Under the name of the ‘Dove’ she was worshipped as the Incarnation of the Spirit of God ... and was known herself as the ‘virgin’ mother.... Under the name of Proserpine she was celebrated as the mother of the first Bacchus, and known as ‘Pluto’s honored wife’!” (*Hislop*, p. 126).

Pagan “Hades” a Myth

Where did the idea of Hades or purgatory originate?

Bacchus, as we have seen, was the Grecian god who represented Tammuz. Pluto represented Satan. Now consider the following: “How vitally important was the place that Teitan or Satan occupied, may be judged from the fact that Pluto, the god of Hell, was looked up to as the great god on whom the destinies of mankind in the eternal world did mainly depend; for it is said that to Pluto it belonged to ‘purify the soul after death’ ” (Taylor, *Pausanias*, vol. III, p. 321). Pluto was the Greek name for the Babylonian god Kronos.

Here we see that Pluto—the Greek name for their god who represented Nimrod, merely different names for the devil or serpent—was, instead of burning people up, purifying them by fire after death!

Semiramis, as was her custom in forming her “mysteries,” linked her deified family with notable characters, whether they were good or bad. She used whichever one best fitted the times. She soon found it helpful to identify her deified husband as Kronos or Saturn—the devil himself! Scattered notices of antiquity say that the name of the first deified king of Babylon was Kronos or Saturn (*Hislop*, p. 31). Semiramis had been guided by the devil in order that the devil might be worshipped!

The Bible says that the wages of sin is death—eternal death (Rom. 6:23). And II Peter 3:10-11 and Revelation 20:15 indicate that this eternal death will be caused by this entire earth burning up and causing the destruction of all who have not become spirit beings in the Kingdom of God. *Nowhere does the Bible teach that there is a place underground where people are tormented by fire.* This is another of the false conceptions handed down by Semiramis.

Satan has people so confused today that they do not know whether they are coming into true knowledge, which will lead to eternal life, or actually going the way that will lead to eternal death. Only the inspired Word of God—the Bible, closely studied—shows us the right way and reveals the true destinations of the sinner and the saved!

Devil Worship Reaches Rome

Purgatory in paganism was the grand hinge of priest craft and superstition. “The serpents were the supreme of all the gods and princes of the universe.” No wonder it came to be believed that the messiah, on whom the hopes of the world depended, was himself the “seed of the serpent”! (Eusebius, *Proeparatio Evang.*, vol. I, p. 50).

“This was manifestly the case in Greece; [it was held that] the first Bacchus (the Grecian name for Tammuz) was brought forth in consequence of a connection on the part of his mother with the father of the gods, in the form of a ‘speckled snake.’ Thus, the [devil] ... got himself almost everywhere recognized as in every deed ‘the god of this world’ ” (*Ibid.*). Satan the devil,

through one form or another, has obtained the worship of this world!

Let us note the message of God to His churches over 60 years after Christ's time. What did He reveal through Christ in Revelation regarding the worship of Satan? God addressed His message to the church at Pergamos—seat of Babylonian devil worship after Belshazzar's time (*Hislop*, p. 240). In Revelation 2:13-14, Christ, speaking to the church at Pergamos, says, "I know your works and where you dwell, where the throne of Satan *is*.... [You] have there *those* who hold the teaching of Balaam."

In Pergamos, which was "Satan's seat," the sun-divinity *Baal*—Balaam's "doctrine" was idolatrous sun worship (Num. 25:1-3; 31:16)—was *worshipped under the form of a serpent* and under the name of Aesculapius, the "man-instructing serpent" (Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, book I, p. 650). At Satan's seat, over 60 years after Christ's time, the main objects of pagan worship were the sun and the serpent!

This sun-devil worship was transferred to *Rome* when Pergamos became part of the Roman Empire. According to the fundamental doctrine of the mysteries, as brought from Pergamos to Rome, *the sun was the only god*. In Pergamos, the sun had been worshipped as a serpent!

Counterfeit of Adam and Eve's Disobedience

In Genesis, chapters 2 and 3, God has given us an account of the deception by Satan of Adam and Eve. We have already seen the importance of understanding this event, as it gives us insight into *how* mankind has been misled by the devil and as to the ultimate result.

Also, we have seen that mankind, at first, *did understand* the significance of this event in Eden. But would the devil let this warning to the people stand, or would he, through human means, *counterfeit* it and use it to keep mankind under his control? Would he let people remember *how* he deceived Eve?

Let us remember the following: Eve sinned because she saw that the tree appeared to be good. She *gazed* at it. Pagans, knowing of this event, typified her in a "gazing position" in their idols. They remembered this event and Satan's deception!

Throughout the pagan world, many goddesses are known as "gazing mothers" or "gazing women." The Chinese goddess-mother (or "Queen of Heaven") in the province of Fuhkien is worshipped by seafaring people under the name of Ma Tsoopo, which is believed to mean "gazing mother" (Gillespie, *Land of Sinim*, p. 64). The name of the great Egyptian mother, Mut, in one of its vocabulary forms, signifies "to look" or "gaze" (*Bunsen's Vocabulary*, vol. I, p. 471).

The Egyptian goddess-mother Mu or Mut was symbolized by either a vulture or an eye surrounded by vulture's wings (*Wilkinson*, vol. V, p. 203). The vulture is noted for its sharp sight, and the great mother of the gods (recall that Semiramis was the "mother of the gods") in Egypt had been known as "the gazer." The Athenian Minerva wore a helmet with two eyes or eye holes in its front (*Vuax, Antiquities*, p. 186).

What have these similar pagan deities to do with the lesson God wanted mankind to learn in Eden? It was believed by the Babylonians that Rhea (Eve) conceived by Kronos (Satan), and brought forth a child named Muth, or death. This is in accord with Genesis, for Eve's lust, inspired by Satan, "when it had conceived, did bring forth death." Indeed, "after lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is completely finished, brings forth death" (James 1:15).

How did the devil remove this lesson of his deception and even turn it to his advantage?

Again, we find the answer in the goddess queen of Babylon. The queen of Babylon held a pomegranate in her hand. Astarte or Cybele (Syrian and Roman names, respectively, for their goddess corresponding to Semiramis) was also called “Inaia Mater,” which signifies “the mother of knowledge”—in other words, our mother Eve, who first coveted the “knowledge of good and evil.” The pomegranate was represented as the fruit of the forbidden tree (*Hislop*, pp. 110-113).

Notice the clever deception! Men were taught to look upon Semiramis as their grand benefactress, as gaining knowledge that they might otherwise have sought in vain! Satan thus taught that *good came to mankind by Eve’s disobedience* to the Eternal—and by her obedience to him! According to the classic pagan story, *it was God who was the snake* who would not let man eat of the desirable tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The false messiah, Tammuz (as Hercules), slew it (*Hislop*, p. 112).

This, then, is a classical example of how Satan twists the teachings that God holds so dear! He perverted the truth then, and continues to do so today!

We have now seen how the Gospel that Christ proclaimed was *counterfeited* hundreds of years before Christ! Moreover, it has been proven that these counterfeits do influence religion today!

Pagans had Counterfeit Baptism

Through the Babylonian mysteries, Satan distorted the truth about the Godhead and the Holy Spirit as spoken of in the first chapter of Genesis. He distorted the facts concerning himself and Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Was Satan going to turn Noah and his experiences also to his benefit? We will see that he did just that—in making the forgiveness of past sins a “mechanical process” through a counterfeit baptism.

Some churches consider water baptism so important that unless an infant is baptized it cannot “go to heaven” (Bishop Hay, *Sincere Christian*, vol. I p. 363). Says Hislop: “The doctrine of Rome is that *all who are canonically baptized*, however ignorant, however immoral, if they only give implicit faith to the church and surrender their consciences to the priests, *are as much regenerated as ever they can be....* This doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration also is essentially Babylonian.... [Thus, even] Hindus, who have never opened their ears to Christian instruction, are as familiar with the term and idea as ourselves” (p. 132).

The Brahmins of India make it their distinguishing boast that they are “twice born” men, and that, as such, they are sure of eternal happiness. Among the ancestors of the people of Mexico, Scandinavia, and other countries, the same baptismal practice was followed (*Asiatic Researchers*, vol. VII, p. 271). “In certain sacred rites of the heathen”—referring to the worship of Isis (the Egyptian goddess corresponding to Semiramis) and Mithra (the Greek god corresponding to Nimrod as mediator)—“the mode of initiation is by baptism” (Tertullian, *De Baptismo*, vol. I, p. 1204). The term “initiation” clearly shows that it was the mysteries of these divinities to which he referred.

How did it come about that the Babylonians adopted a doctrine of regeneration by baptism? The Babylonian *mysteries* of Semiramis, as usual, give the answer. In these mysteries, the commemoration of the flood, the ark, and the grand events in the life of Noah were mingled with the worship of the “Queen of Heaven” (Semiramis), her son-husband (Nimrod), and her illegitimate son, Horus (the “resurrected” Nimrod). Noah, having lived in two worlds—both before and after the flood—was called *Diphues* or “twice born.” He was represented as a god with two heads looking in opposite directions, the one old and the other young (*Bryant’s Mythology*, vol. I, pp. 84, 319).

Semiramis saw that it was necessary to identify her dead husband, Nimrod, with the great patriarch Noah, who was the father of all. In this way, Nimrod would become the supreme one, the father of all the deified “mighty ones.” He would obtain the authority and respect essential to constitute him the head of the great system of idolatry that the apostates inaugurated.

The period in which Osiris (the Egyptian term for Nimrod) was in his coffin was precisely the same as Noah was in the ark—a whole year (*Apollodorus*, vol. I, pp. 356, 257). Osiris, at the great and solemn festival called “the disappearance of Osiris,” was looked upon as dead and buried when put into his ark or coffin. When he came out again, that new state was regarded as a state of “new life” or “regeneration” (Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, vol. II, pp. 356-367).

“Whatever primitive truth the Chaldean (Babylonian) priests held, they utterly perverted and corrupted it. They willingly overlooked the fact that it was the ‘righteousness of faith’ which Noah ‘had before’ the flood ... that carried him safely through.... They led their votaries to believe that if they *only passed through the baptismal waters* and the penances therewith connected,... it would entitle them ... to a new birth.... The whole spirit of paganism was opposed to the spirituality of the patriarchal religion and indeed intended to make it void, and draw men utterly away from it, while pretending to do homage to it” (*Hislop*, pp. 137, 141).

The ancients, knowing the truth concerning baptism, that it symbolized a righteous state of mind, *made it a mechanical process!* Here again we see the devil deceiving mankind. He says to man in effect: “Follow your own ideas and ways, not God’s, and you can have your past sins forgiven.” But God says, “Repent and be baptized” (Acts 2:38). Turn to the ways God commands! “For they worship Me [God] in vain, teaching *for doctrine the* commandments of men” (Matt. 15:9). What does this mean?

Most churches today have been deceived into employing a counterfeit water baptism. True, some large denominations use the scriptural form—immersion. But a counterfeit *looks like* the genuine. The deception lies in that which is associated with it—and the spirit in which it is done. Baptism is done today in the same spirit in which it was done in ancient Babylon—many are baptized, *but* their actions afterward do not show that they have figuratively “buried the old self” in baptism. They continue in their old practices.

Pagan Doctrine of Penance

We have seen that the devil’s deceptive doctrine (practiced by many churches to this day) is that man does *not have to change* from his old evil ways—and yet can be “baptized” to obtain forgiveness of past sins. The question now arises: What sort of perverted doctrine does Satan have regarding the forgiveness of sins committed *after* baptism?

The Bible teaches that we, through faith in Christ’s shed blood, can not only have past sins forgiven—but *His blood will cover subsequent sins as well* (Rom. 3:25, 28, 31). Now let us note the *bondage* associated with the pagan counterfeit of forgiveness. “In regard to justification, the Chaldean doctrine was that it was by *works* and *merits* of men themselves that they must be justified.... [Indeed,] perfection depended on the *exertions* of the individual” (*Hislop*, pp. 144-145). The doctrine of many churches is the same. From the days of Cain, the doctrine of human merit and self-justification has everywhere been indigenous to the heart of depraved humanity.

In the Middle Ages, according to legend, Michael the archangel had committed to him the “balance scales” of God’s justice—with the *merits* and *demerits* of the deceased placed in the opposing “pans” (Review of Epistle of Dr. Gentianus Harvet, book II, chap. xiv). This same system of human merits for justification is found in paganism around the world. Wilkinson’s

Egyptians, vol. V, p. 447, shows that in Egypt, the land of Ham, it was to Anubis that the “scales of justice” were committed. If a person is found wanting, he is rejected and Osiris (Nimrod) pronounces judgment. The same system is found in Grecian and Chinese mythology. In China, lists and comparative tables of good and bad actions are recorded (Davis, *China*, vol. II, chap. “Religion—Buddhism”).

“In spiritual despotism in every age, both pagan and papal ... its grand object has always been to *keep the souls of its votaries away from direct and immediate intercourse with a ... merciful savior* (Hislop, pp. 148-150). Continuing, Hislop quotes from a decree of the Council of Trent: “No man can know with infallible assurance ... that he *has obtained* the grace of God.” Thus, such religion seeks to keep its devotees in continual doubt.

Notice how the pagans acquired merits for justification. Hislop continues: “Nimrod was the first after the flood that violated the patriarchal system and set up [himself] as ‘king’ over his fellows.... In almost every land bloody worship prevailed ... [and] human victims ... were his most acceptable offerings. In pagan Rome, the worshippers of Isis (Semiramis) observed the same practice in honor of Osiris (Nimrod). When it is remembered that Saturn (Nimrod) was cut in pieces, it is easy to see how the idea would arise of offering a welcome sacrifice by setting men to cut one another to pieces (in war) ... *to lay up a stock of merit* ... in their behalf.”

In these “latter days,” a turning away from true doctrines was foretold (I Tim. 4:1; Heb. 13:8-9). God has given man a simple way to have past sins forgiven; but the counterfeit system enslaves its followers! Today, mankind still follows the old Babylonian system in seeking to have sins forgiven. If one does not or cannot *pay* for forgiveness, he must *abstain* from something that the church has decided is evil—going to shows, dancing, card playing, to mention a few. The idea is that one can *balance* any evil they might do by such abstinence.

But these same people go on divorcing and remarrying and observing other practices the Bible clearly condemns. They will not turn from their ways (*repent*) so they can have Christ’s blood cover their sins—the *only way* by which sins may be forgiven (Acts 2:38)! Romans 5:9 says we are *justified* by His blood! Mankind continues to live in ways that only yield unhappiness, bondage, and death! Indeed, “There is a way which seems right to a man, but the end thereof *is* the way of death” (Prov. 14:12).

Forgiveness by Blood Unnecessary?

No! God says that without the shedding of *blood* there is no remission of sin (Heb. 9:22). Where, then, did today’s idea of an “unbloody” sacrifice originate? *Babylon!*

No blood was allowed to be offered on the altars of the Paphian Venus (a Grecian form of Semiramis). These rites came from Cicilia in Asia Minor (Tacitus, *Historia*, vol. II, p. 106). Cicilia, in turn, had acquired the rites from Babylon when Sennacherib, the Assyrian, built Cicilia in *express imitation* of Babylon. For this reason, the bloodless altars of the Paphian Venus are the same as the bloodless altars of the Babylonian goddess Semiramis from which she was derived (*Bunsen*, vol. I, p. 718).

This false worship of Semiramis differed from the worship of her husband and son, Tammuz, whom she carried in her arms. He, as we have seen, was represented as delighting in blood. She was the mother of grace and mercy, the celestial “dove”—the hope of the world (*Bryant*, vol. III, p. 226). Whereas *he* desired bloody sacrifices, *she* desired only an “unbloody sacrifice”—*cakes*. When her followers were initiated into the higher mysteries, they could eat of these cakes or wafers.

“All this was done,” says Hislop (p. 159), “to exalt the mother as more *gracious* and

more *compassionate* than her glorious son.” Thus, we find the women of Judah offering cakes and drink offerings to the Queen of Heaven (Jer. 44:19). Today, many professing Christians, thinking they are worshipping Christ, actually worship Semiramis through the eating of the cakes or wafers at communion.

Semiramis also bore the name of “Mylitta”—that is *Mediatrix*. But Scripture says there is only one Mediator between God and men—Jesus (I Tim. 2:5). The idea of a Mediatrix has its origin in paganism, not the Bible! It is *Christ* who is Mediator for us—He paid the penalty for sin by the offering of His blood.

Communion With the Sun-God

Christ said, “I am the bread of life.” This statement by Jesus has been twisted to confuse the world for centuries.

Some religions today are very intent on the “roundness” of their unbloody sacrifice—a round cake like that formerly used in the rites of Semiramis, Queen of Heaven. Why is this roundness so important? Hislop says the *round disk*, so frequently used in the sacred emblems of Egypt, symbolized the *sun*. Osiris (Nimrod), the sun-divinity, became incarnate and was reborn (p. 160). Recall that Semiramis in her mysteries represented Nimrod after his death as being reborn—corresponding to the birth of Christ, as a human being, and the resurrection. The round wafer used in communion does not really represent Christ at all. It came from pagan sun-worship.

“When Osiris, the sun-divinity, was born,” declared Hislop (pp. 160-163), “it was not merely that he should give his life as a sacrifice for men ... but also *be* the life and nourishment of the souls of men.” It is universally admitted that Isis (the Egyptian goddess representing Semiramis) was the original of the Greek and Roman Ceres—and she was worshipped as the “mother of corn.” The child she brought forth was symbolized by the corn. Those who were uninitiated into the mysteries worshipped “Ceres for the gift of material corn to nourish their bodies, but the initiated adored her for a higher gift—for *food to nourish their souls.*”

Here then, long before the apostles’ time, was the *counterfeit* of Christ as *bread*. He said, “My Father gives you the true bread from heaven” (John 6:32). Jesus said, “I am the bread of life” (verse 48).

“That the initiated pagans actually believed that the ‘corn’ ... was not the ‘corn’ of this earth, but the ‘Divine Son’ through whom alone ... eternal life could be enjoyed, we have decisive proof.... The Druids were devoted worshippers of Ceres ... [and] the grain of corn is expressly identified with ‘the lovely babe.’

“This son who was symbolized as ‘corn’ was the sun-divinity incarnate according to the sacred oracle of the great goddess of Egypt.... ‘The fruit which I have brought forth is the Sun.’ What is more natural, then, if this incarnate divinity is symbolized as the ‘bread of God,’ that he should be represented as a ‘round wafer’ to identify him with the Sun?

“In Egypt, the disk of the Sun was represented in the temples.... In Babylon, the golden image of the Sun was exhibited,... in Peru, the disk of the sun was ... upon the wall.... The Paeonians of Thrace were sun-worshippers. In the worship of Baal, as practiced by the idolatrous Israelites, the worship of the sun’s image was equally observed ... [as] the image of the sun was erected above the altar.... Even in comparatively modern times ... among the Cushites of the East,... we find the image of the sun.... If the sun-divinity were worshipped in Egypt as ‘the Seed,’ or in Babylon as the ‘Corn,’ precisely so is the wafer adored in Rome. ‘Bread-corn of the elect, have mercy upon us,’ is one of the appointed prayers of the Roman litany, addressed to the

wafer” (*Ibid.*).

Thus, the *son* became the *sun*! Here we see churches of today paying homage to the sun!

Why do churches today have Easter sunrise services? It is the *same* service the pagan Assyrians used to honor their goddess *Ishtar*! The celebration commemorated the birthday of Semiramis, who was the mother of the sun-god Tammuz. They faced the rising sun, just as many sincere people do today. Why do today’s churches speak of having pagan *Lenten* services? Why do they observe the *birth of the sun-god Nimrod* on December 25th (Christmas)—just when the *sun* is starting to wax strong again in the sky? And why do they have communion on *Sun-day* (day of the sun)?

If they are not still worshipping the sun-god, then why do they still observe the *same customs* the pagans used to honor him? They *are* worshipping the sun-god! People today, in keeping these customs, are in Babylon as much as our ancestors! In ignorance, people *honor the sun* as the one who will spiritually nourish them!

But remember, the *sun* and the *serpent* (Satan) were identified together. Sun-worship, then, *is devil-worship!*

God shows who the real “sun” is that we should worship: “But unto you who fear My name, the Sun of Righteousness shall arise...” (Mal. 4:2). Who is this? God said, “I will raise to David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall do justice and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely. And this *is* His name by which He shall be called, THE LORD [is] OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS” (Jer. 23:5-6). But He is not to be worshipped by symbols of the sun—that is *idolatry*! Satan has a “false sun”—the sun in the sky! When the pagans accepted Christianity, they mingled their sun-worshipping practices with the teachings of Christ. They believed they accordingly honored the true God. But what does God say? “Take heed to yourself that you do not become ensnared by following them ... [and] do not ask about their gods, saying, ‘How did these nations serve their gods, that I may also do likewise?’ You shall not do so to the LORD your God...” (Deut. 12:30-31). *You cannot worship the true God by celebrating pagan customs and holidays!*

Remember, once the ancient mysteries were well established, the meaning behind its symbols was no longer explained; the people worshipped by outward appearance, unaware of what—or who—they were really worshipping. Likewise, the churches of today have been deceived into worshipping by outward appearance, with no knowledge of the real meaning behind the customs.

Satan has substituted a false “Christ” and linked him to diabolical pagan customs. Those who observe these customs unknowingly *reject* the real Jesus and show by their actions that they do not understand salvation. Satan has substituted a false baptism—a mechanical act that does not signify the burying of the “old self.” He has perverted the teaching of God that man must *repent*. He has thus blocked the vast majority from becoming true sons of God—unless they change their ways!

World Deception Planned From Time of the Flood

The vast majority today believe they are on the right road to salvation. They are honest, sincere people. They do what they think is right. Never has it entered their minds that they could be wrong.

Just after the flood, Nimrod founded in Babylon a civilization that ignored the rule of God (Gen. 11:1-9). The Gospel of the coming of Christ—along with numerous other vital Bible teachings—was “counterfeited” (ahead of time) in such a way as to appeal to Nimrod’s

followers. However, it would lead them to destruction rather than salvation!

From Babylon, these deceptive teachings spread throughout the whole world—including the Christian-professing nations. Because of their *marked similarity to Christ's teachings*, the pagan counterfeits became *mingled* with the true teachings of the early church; these “mixed teachings” have deceived people to this very day—just as the devil had planned! Unknowingly, millions celebrate the supposed birth of Nimrod on December 25th—and call it the birthday of Christ, who was not even born in the winter season! At the beginning of spring, men face and bow in the presence of the rising sun on Easter morning—in the same act of worship as that of the pagans who bowed in honor of Ishtar, the Queen of Heaven, the supposed mother of the sun-god. And Christians have been led to believe that this abominable kind of heathen worship was ordained by Christ and the apostles!

But Jesus Christ never commanded us to celebrate His *resurrection*. He commanded us to annually commemorate His *death*—on the eve of the very day on which He gave Himself for the world. Yet almost no one obeys the very One whom Christianity acknowledges as its Savior!

Pagan Worship Continues Today

You will recall that in the time of Nimrod the *sun* (which was associated with the serpent, or Satan) was symbolized on earth by *fire*. Nimrod, as the sun-god or fire-god in the mysteries, was worshipped by the sacrifice of human beings *by fire*. Has this pagan custom persisted to our “Christian” times?

The Feast of the Nativity of St. John is set down in the papal calendar for the 24th of June. The very same period was equally memorable on the Babylonian calendar for one of its grand original festivals—to commemorate the death and reviving of Tammuz, or Nimrod (Stanley, *Sabean Philosophy*, p. 1065).

Is this a coincidence? The apostate church followed the now-famous advice of Pope Gregory I, that by all means they should “meet the pagans halfway” and so bring them into the church (Bower, *Lives of Popes*, vol. II, p. 523).

Here is how it happened. About the 6th century AD, emissaries were sent throughout Europe with an eye toward gathering pagans into the church. Remember, the apostate church was formed by a union of pagans and professing Christians (see Gibbon's *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. I, chap. 15). These emissaries found that the keeping of the 24th of June in honor of Tammuz (Nimrod) was very popular.

For the church, gaining members was paramount. This meant both professing Christians and pagans must be satisfied. The pagans wanted this festival, but Christians would not tolerate a name suggestive of its *real* meaning. So a “Christian” name was put on this pagan festival. It was thus “Christianized.” This is exactly how pagan Christmas came into Christianity—and why there are so many pagan festivals observed in churches today.

Now what Christian name was attached to June 24th—a pagan festival? The pagans had already established December 25th as Christ's supposed birthday (it was actually in the autumn). But June 24th—six months earlier—could pass for John the Baptist's birthday! John was born six months before Christ. The feast could be called the Nativity of St. John. But where could a connection be found between John and the name Tammuz? In the Latin language, adopted by the church, John was called Joannes.

One of the many sacred names by which Tammuz or Nimrod was called, when he reappeared in the mysteries after being slain, was *Oannes* (Bunsen, *Egypt*, vol. I, p. 707). How similar is Oannes to Joannes (or John)! But Oannes was the ancient fish-god. How did Nimrod

acquire this characteristic and name?

When Nimrod was overcome by Shem, Semiramis concocted a fable. She said that Nimrod took refuge in the sea. When he therefore “reappeared,” he did so in the very character of Oannes, the fish-god (*Hislop*, p. 114).

So the pagan festival that commemorates the death and reviving of Oannes or Tammuz bears a Christian name—“Nativity of St. John.” How was this festival *originally* observed? How has it been observed even in our time?

“St. John’s Day” in Britain

Before Christianity entered the British Isles, the 24th of June was celebrated by the Druids with blazing midsummer fires in honor of their great divinity *Baal* (another name for Nimrod or Tammuz). It was thus observed even to our times! “I have seen the people running and leaping through the St. John fires in Ireland ... proud of passing through unsinged ... thinking of themselves in a special manner blest by the ceremony” (Toland, *Druids*, p. 107). This has been a widespread custom. Herodotus, Wilkinson, Layard, and many others record its observance in various countries.

The grand distinguishing solemnities of St. John’s Eve are the mid-summer fires. These were lighted in France, Switzerland, Ireland, and Scotland (*Hislop*, p. 114). “When the fire had burned for several hours and got very low, *everyone passed through it...* [This was the] worship of Baal, if not Molech (II Kings 23:10) too, by millions professing the Christian name” (Bell, *Wayside Pictures*, p. 225).

Thus, we again see the work of the sun-god or serpent in our time, under the cloak of a Christian name! Our world is not as far removed from paganism as we think!

What does God say about this heathen practice? The people of Old Testament times were practicing this identical rite to honor this same pagan god. “They built the high places of Baal ... to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire to Molech [Nimrod]; which I commanded them not...” (Jer. 32:35; *KJV*). Again, God says, “When you make your sons to pass through the fire, you defile yourselves with all your idols, even to *this day*” (Ezek. 20:31). *God commands that this festival not be kept!* He says it is *idolatry*—in honor of an false god! People today have *other gods* before the true God. The very first of the Ten Commandments says, “You shall have no other gods before Me” (Ex. 20:3).

What About Christmas Observance?

The day set apart by Semiramis in memory of the “new birth” of Nimrod, her husband who had been slain by Shem, is familiar to everyone. What day is this? *Christmas!*

Through her mysteries, her dead husband was said to have been miraculously conceived of Semiramis and to have returned in the form of *Horus* (Semiramis’ illegitimate son). *It was the birthday of the unconquered sun!* (Gieseler, *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. II, p. 42). Semiramis claimed that Shem had *not* vanquished Nimrod, even though he had been slain.

In Egypt, the *son* of Isis (Semiramis) was supposedly born at the approximate time of the winter solstice (Wilkinson, *Egyptians*, vol. IV, p. 405). The winter solstice then was December 25th, the date marking the beginning of the days becoming longer and longer. For pagan worshippers, it meant that their *god*—the *sun*—*was not going to die after all, but was becoming stronger and stronger*. The name “Yule-day,” which is still used among us today, indicates the pagan and Babylonian origin of Christmas (Mallet, *Northern Antiquities*, vol. I, p. 130). “Yule” was the Chaldee name for “infant” or “little child.” This concept did not appear in Christian

worship until around 350 A.D.!

The Sabaeans of Arabia regarded the 24th day of December as the birthday of their pagan “Lord” (Stanley, *History of Philosophy*, p. 1066, col. 1). The Saxons observed December 25th. Hislop, p. 96, states: “It was an essential principle of the Babylonian system that the Sun or Baal was the only God. When, therefore, Tammuz was worshipped as god incarnate,”—after he had supposedly taken the human form, as Christ did centuries later—“that implied he was an incarnation of the Sun.”

Again, we see why observing the *birthday* of Tammuz is sun-worship! In observing Christmas, people actually pay homage to a mortal man (now dead) as being God incarnate, while they think they are honoring Jesus’ birth!

And the Christmas Tree?

What about today’s Christmas tree? The Christmas tree in Egypt was the palm; in Rome it was the fir. The mother (Semiramis) of Adonis the sun-god (Grecian name of Nimrod) was mystically said to have been changed into a tree—the Christmas tree. While in this state she was said to have brought forth her so-called “divine” son (Ovid, *Metain*, lib. XV 500-513). Hislop, on p. 97, indicates that if the mother was the tree, the son must have been the counterfeit “man of the branch.” But Christ is the true “Branch” (Jer. 23:5). This is another pagan counterfeit.

This, Hislop states, accounts for putting the Yule log into the fire on Christmas eve and the appearance of the Christmas tree next morning—the tree that supposedly brings all divine gifts to men. When people use the Christmas tree in their celebrations, they pay homage to Semiramis, the mother (and giver) of the false “savior.” Who, then, do they acknowledge as their savior? *Nimrod*—the one who “saved” mankind from following God at the tower of Babel (Gen. 11:6).

What does God say about the Christmas tree? “Do not learn the way of the heathen.... For the customs of the people *are* vain; for one cuts a tree out of the forest with the axe.... They adorn it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and hammers, so that it will not move.... But they are altogether foolish” (Jer. 10:1-8). God commands us to commemorate Christ’s *death* (Mark 14:22-24)—not His birth, which occurred before winter (Luke 2:8).

Christ’s Conception Counterfeited

Is there a counterfeit for the miraculous conception of Christ? Yes! *Lady Day*, celebrated each March 25th—nine months before the supposed “savior” was born. This day was observed long before Christ’s time in honor of the Babylonian “messiah” (*Ammianus Marcellinus*, bk. 23, ch. 3, p. 355). How clear it is that the devil has supervised the fashioning of these counterfeits—which have deceived mankind as to the true way to salvation even *after* Jesus’ coming.

Indeed, those who keep Christmas today mark themselves as worshippers of the sun, Satan, Nimrod, Horus, and Semiramis—apostate “heroes” who founded civilization after the flood in defiance of the way of God. What a group for a modern “Christian” to be worshipping!

And Semiramis? Does she have a day—a festival? Yes, she has a day reserved all for herself—Lady Day. And people here and in other countries are dutifully keeping it! After all, had it not been for her, the *mysteries* (II Thess. 2:7) that deceive the world today would never have been formulated.

The name of Semiramis found on Assyrian monuments is “Ishtar.” This corresponds to one of the titles of the Babylonian Beltes (Semiramis)—called Astarte in the Bible. Thus, the very word “Easter” shows that this festival originated in Babylon (Layard, *Nineveh and Babylon*,

p. 629). What does this day commemorate?

Origin of Easter Observance

To discover the origin of Easter, we have to go back to Semiramis and her mysteries. Notice what Hislop writes on page 110: “As everything that was good ... to mankind was represented in the Chaldean (Babylonian) mysteries, as in some way connected with the Babylonian goddess (Semiramis), so the greatest blessing to the human race which the ark contained ... was held to be *Astarte* ... the great civilizer and benefactor of the world.... It was easy for her worshippers to be made to believe that in a previous incarnation she had lived in the antediluvian world.”

The words for “egg” and “house” in the Hebrew and Chaldean are very similar. So the house or ark of Noah floating on the waters became the “egg.” “An egg of wondrous size is said to have fallen from heaven into the river Euphrates ... [and] out came Venus, who afterward became the Assyrian goddess” (Hyginus, *Fabulae*, pp. 148-149)—that is, *Astarte*. The pagan classic poems are full of fables of the mystic egg of the Babylonians.

The event that the “Ishtar egg” (or Easter egg) first commemorated was the “arrival” (birth) of the future mother of the sun-god after the flood! So we see *Easter* commemorates Semiramis’ birthday—not Christ’s resurrection! Easter worship is actually sun-goddess worship!

What does God say about observing Easter? The women of Israel were *making cakes* to the Queen of Heaven—just what the world does today! See Jeremiah 7:1-33. And what happens to those who continue to disobey? Verse 33: “And the bodies of this people shall be food for the birds of the heavens.” This is the result of keeping Easter—of following the devil’s deceptive mysteries!

Jesus knew men would attach His name to pagan practices, claiming to worship Him. He warned: “Why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ but *you* do not practice what I say?” (Luke 6:46).

Let us now notice another deception that masquerades as Christian—*the cross!*

The Counterfeit Cross

Is the cross that took Christ’s life a thing to be proud of and adored? Or has the devil deceived us here also? Our sins and the devil’s deception killed Christ. Satan was to *bruise* the heel of the seed of woman (Gen 3:15)—Satan was to kill Christ. How did he do this?

Satan deceived us into sinning and *our* sins killed Christ. Should we parade our *instrument of death*, which took Christ’s life, before the world and be proud of it? But notice even more about the practice of displaying the cross.

The original form of the Chaldean (Babylonian) alphabet letter “T” is made like the crosses churches use today—and was the *initial* for Tammuz, the sun-god. “This was marked on the foreheads of those initiated into the mysteries; the vestal virgins of pagan (not modern) Rome wore it suspended off their necklaces as nuns do now. There is hardly a pagan tribe where a cross has not been found.... [The] X, which in itself was not an unnatural symbol of Christ and which was once regarded as such, was allowed to go entirely into disuse, and the Tau cross, the sign of Tammuz, the false messiah, was everywhere substituted in its stead” (*Hislop*, p. 119).

People and churches nowadays are going to great lengths to identify themselves with the symbol of the sun-god! The great display of this symbol today is an outward sign of how blinded the world is to the truth of God!

Origin of God’s Week

When did God’s week originate? What was this week like, which He has given to the world to use forever?

When God remade our earth, He said of the first evening and morning, “And the evening and the morning were day one” (Gen. 1:5). Then came the second day (verse 8), the third day (verse 13), the fourth day (verse 19), and so on until the *seventh* day. He not only gave that day a number, He gave it a name—the Sabbath!

This, then, is when God’s week originated. Note that it was composed of seven days, six of them bearing numbers, and one of them—the last, the seventh—bearing a name (see Ex. 16:23).

God’s Week Corrupted Early

In the library of Asshur-bani-pal of Assyria (a country that lay just north of ancient Babylonia), many clay tablets have been found relating the epic of creation. One of these tablets reads: “On the seventh day He appointed a holy day, and to cease from all business He commanded” (Henry Halley, *Pocket Bible Handbook*, p. 64 [p. 62 in the 1996 24th edition]).

Here is absolute proof, from the ancient records collected by this Assyrian king, that long before the time of Moses the Babylonians knew of God’s seven-day week. But recall that Babylon was the place where Nimrod and his Assyrian wife, Semiramis, called the “Queen of Heaven” in the Bible, ruled. It was the country in which Satan started his perversions.

Would Satan leave God’s simple calendar intact? Or would he pervert it and thus try to “change the set times and the laws”? See Daniel 7:25.

Here is what happened. In ancient Babylon, “evil days”—which were observed on the 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th days of the month—were gradually *set apart* (Webster, *Rest Days*, p. 230). The seventh day of each Babylonian week was called a *shabattum*—the pagan corruption of the Sabbath. Thus, the Sabbaths of God—times when man might enjoy spiritual pursuits—were soon changed into periods of “ill omens” or “evil days” (Webster, p. 232).

On these “evil days” the pagans had to afflict themselves—they had to do penance. They could not eat flesh cooked upon coals, or change garments—nor could the physician lay a hand on a patient. At night, the king was to bring his gift before the images of Marduk (Nimrod) and Ishtar (the “Queen of Heaven,” Semiramis) and offer sacrifice (Webster, p. 232).

The point is that Satan was having other gods—Nimrod and his wife—worshipped on this crude imitation of God’s Sabbath day. Satan had corrupted the Sabbath and thereby the true week of God. Did he then establish a *counterfeit week* of his own? Yes!

Satan Produces His Own Week—Today’s Week

How did the pagans, under Satan’s influence, formulate the week—the planetary or astrological week the world retains today? Here is the answer: “The planetary week presents itself as a curious amalgam [or mixture] of ideas derived from different sources. Babylonia, the motherland of divination, provided the doctrine of the influence of the stars upon human destinies. Greece furnished the mathematical astronomy, which grouped the planets according to their distance from the earth.... [U]pon these foundations, astrologers of the Hellenistic (Greek) era, familiar with the cult of seven and with the division of days into twenty-four hours, built up what was, at the outset, an entirely pagan institution.”

Notice the origin of our week—a pagan institution!

Continuing: “This seven day week, in its astrological form ... probably first appeared ...

[in] Syria, [but] certainly not before the 2nd century B.C. [ended].... [Later, it passed] to Alexandria (Egypt) ... and about the age of Augustus (31 B.C.-14 A.D.) ... into the Occidental (Roman) lands” (*Webster*, pp. 218-219). Today’s week was born from mother Babylon!

Names of the Days

How did the pagans, under the guidance of Satan, *name* the days of this week—today’s week? As we have seen, old Babylonia provided the doctrine of the influence of the stars on human destinies. Remember, Semiramis (the “Queen of Heaven”) had identified herself with the planet Venus. She identified her dead husband, Nimrod, with Saturn, and then with the *sun*, ultimately making him the sun-god.

Guided by these Babylonian influences, pagans of a later time named the days of this new planetary week after various ancient heroes who were honored as gods. Sunday was at first set apart for the “god of this world”—Satan, the *sun*-god—but was later associated with Nimrod after his supposed “Sunday resurrection.” Monday was set apart for the *moon* (Cush, the first husband of Semiramis). Friday was named for Venus or Frigga (Semiramis), and Saturday for Saturn (Nimrod, when he was associated with the planet Saturn as the hidden god—the pagan “savior” who was hid in the grave on Saturday after being killed on Friday). Nimrod’s fabled “Sunday resurrection” led pagans into honoring him on Sunday as the sun-god.

The other days of the week received their names in a similar fashion. Each received its name from a heavenly body that had been associated with some old Babylonian god or goddess, which the “Queen of Heaven,” Semiramis, had named in honor of herself and her husband, and for Ham, Cush, [Horus], and Asshur—the first apostates.

Is *this* the week God gave us—a week bearing only numbers, with the seventh day being named the Sabbath? Here is a *strange week*—a week whose days bear the *names* of pagan gods. *The Sabbath day nowhere appears in this week!* But Sunday, the day of the sun—the sun around which the pagans symbolically entwined the serpent, the devil—does appear! And it is the one day that is most observed by all the world today!

This new planetary week is a part of our present Roman calendar. Of course, *God’s weekly cycle, with the Sabbath on the seventh day, has never been altered.* But *Sunday* was positioned as the first day of the week—placed right next to the Sabbath. This proximity causes confusion!

Why was Sunday Created?

The world after the flood knew and understood that a *savior* was to come (Gen. 3:15). So did Satan! What did he do about it?

Satan, as we have seen, inspired Nimrod to become the priest of the *sun*, whose worship he initiated and furthered after the flood. At Nimrod’s death, his wife, Semiramis, for purposes of prestige, contrived to convince the people that one of her illegitimate sons was miraculously conceived of her by the *sun*—her god-husband up in the sky. She claimed this son was the son of the *sun*-god. All of this was *patterned* after the yet future birth of Christ.

But how are these events, which occurred 4000 years ago, connected with the day of the *sun*—Sunday of our time?

In Egypt, shortly before 2000 B.C.—when the “Queen of Heaven” (Semiramis) was most active in having her dead husband, Nimrod, worshipped as the sun-god)—worship of the sun became dominant. Sun worship became associated with almost every god that had not received a clear cosmic function at an earlier time (*Gray, Mythology of All Races*, vol. XII, p. 28).

Now it can be understood why the pagans, about 300 years before Christ's coming, came forward with the *week* that is now used by the world today—a week that includes the day of the sun, *Sunday*, the day on which they worshipped their god, the sun. Satan was again inspiring his agents. Satan was influencing them to set apart a day—*Sunday*—on which he, through the dead Nimrod, the sun-god, could be worshipped instead of the true God. The serpent, Satan, was (symbolically) entwined around the *sun!*

Sunday—the “Lord’s Day”—Enters the Early Church

When did Christianity adopt the practice of keeping Sunday, which the pagans who joined their congregations brought with them? When was the planetary week—the week the world uses today—adopted by the early church in place of the week God commanded at creation?

Here is the answer: “The early Christians had at first adopted [God’s] seven-day week with its numbered weekdays, but by the close of the 3rd century A.D., this began to give way to [Satan’s] planetary week. The use of planetary names [Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, etc.] attests to the *growing* influence of astrological speculations introduced by the converts from paganism” (Webster, *Rest Days*, p. 252). Thus, the use of the planetary week by early Christians was a yardstick indicating how much they were being influenced by paganism!

But what about the “Lord’s Day” we hear so much of today? Many claim it is Sunday. And they are right!

St. Augustine, one of the early “church fathers” (a group of men who formulated the teachings of the churches after the days of the apostles), said that the “Lord’s Day” was *declared not to the Jews*—which it would have been if it had been declared to Christ or the apostles, as they were Jews—but *to the “Christians”* (newly “converted” pagans) by the *resurrection* of “the Lord” (*Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, vol. 2; “Lord’s Day”).

Here, St. Augustine declares that the “Lord’s Day” is the day of the week on which the “Lord” was resurrected. Could this “Lord” be Jesus Christ? No!

Christ was cut off “in the midst of the week” (Dan. 9:27)—*Wednesday*—and, after being three days and three nights in the tomb (Matt. 12:38-40), was resurrected on Saturday! The “Lord” referred to by Augustine was not the Christ! Sunday cannot be observed as the day of His resurrection! Then whose day was it?

“Lord’s Day” Among Pagans

Astonishingly, the “Lord’s Day” existed before Christ came!

What “Lord” do people worship today when they observe Sunday—the “Lord’s Day”? The whole world has been deceived by this surprising counterfeit!

The pagans who flocked into Roman Christianity were carrying in mind *their* “Lord” Nimrod, the first great “Lord” or *Baal* of this world (*Baal* means *lord* or *master*). You probably never understood this before!

It was Nimrod’s wife, Semiramis (counterfeit of Mary), who, after her husband’s death, led the ancient pagans to believe that the “Lord” Nimrod had been resurrected! It was Nimrod who was supposedly “resurrected” on Sunday!

Accordingly, Nimrod was the first of Satan’s (the *sun*) created beings, just as Christ is the firstfruits of God’s spirit-created beings. What does this mean? It means that if we observe Sunday, *we serve Satan*, instead of God, as the creator and giver of eternal life, and show our obedience to Satan and not to God!

Why Sunday Worship is Widespread Today

But what has been responsible for the widespread rise of Sunday worship, which prevails today?

Constantine, a civil—not ecclesiastical—ruler of the Roman Empire, had the most to do with the ascendancy of Sunday as the day of worship. “Constantine’s famous edict (321 A.D.) definitely enrolled Sunday among the holidays of the Roman state religion. The change from Saturn’s day to Sunday must have further commended the planetary week in Christian circles, where the Lord’s Day ... [the] beginning the week, had long been observed as the day on which Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, rose from the dead. Thus, a pagan institution was engrafted in Christianity” (*Webster*, p. 222).

Do you grasp this? A human civil ruler, not God, established the custom of observing Sunday as a time of “Christian” worship!

What was Constantine’s own religion? Gibbon, the authoritative historian, in his *Decline and Fall of The Roman Empire*, vol. 1, pp. 636-638, tells us: “Constantine ... persevered till he was near forty years of age in the practice of the established religion (paganism)... But the devotion of Constantine was more peculiarly directed to the genius of the sun.... The sun was universally celebrated as the invincible guide and protector of Constantine.”

Notice that Constantine became a “Christian” after he was about forty years of age. It was also after he was about forty that he, by his legislation, brought his *sun*-god—the “lord”—and *Sunday* into the “Christian” church to stay. Today, the vast majority of “Christians” are still following in his footsteps.

What were the words of Constantine’s famous edict of 321 A.D.? “On the venerable *day of the sun* let all magistrates and people ... rest.” (Schaff-Herzog, *Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, “Sunday Legislation”).

Satan wants, as always, to be God! He has substituted his week and his day—Sunday. Satan wants to be known as the *creator* of all things—including time—and the *giver* of eternal life. Yes, Satan has been quite successful in this grand deception. The world today has adopted his pagan week and Sunday worship!

Vain Repetition of Prayers

Jesus commands, “And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions, as the heathen *do*; for they think that by multiplying their words they shall be heard” (Matt. 6:7). Where does *mechanical repetition* in prayer come from? What about *praying using beads*? Are these commanded by God?

The *rosary* (the instrument containing beads on which prayers are counted) was used as a sacred instrument among the ancient Mexicans (Humboldt, *Mexican Researches*, vol. II, p. 29), as well as among the Brahmins. Hindu sacred books refer to it often. Such beads were used by the heathen of ancient Tibet, China, and Greece, and ancient Rome (Rome before the time of Christ!). The name “rosary” seems to be from the Chaldee (Babylonian) *Ro* (thought) and *Shareh* (director) (*Hislop*, p. 188)—“thought director.” The indication is that this method of praying came from Babylon.

The rosary allows people to *think* they are worshipping God—but they overlook the fact that God wants prayer from the heart!

As regards the rosary of the Sacred Heart, the *heart* was one of the sacred symbols of Osiris (the Egyptian Tammuz or Nimrod) when he was supposedly “born again” as the infant

divinity and carried in the arms of his mother Isis (the Egyptian Semiramis). Dryden's *Aeneid*, book I, pp. 937-940, shows why the heart was Osiris' symbol when he was "born again": Venus (a Grecian name for Semiramis), speaking to the boy-god, her son, said, "My Son, my might ... to thee thy much afflicted mother flies." The son was called the "strength" of his mother. Thus, the boy-god came to be regarded as the "god of the heart," or *cupid*, god of love.

In this rosary of the Sacred Heart, it is Tammuz, the sun-god, who is venerated—even in our day!

St. Valentine's Heart

Christ said: "I am the light of the world; the one who follows Me shall never walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). Through Christ's words, *light* was shed to the people on how to attain eternal life. Did Satan have counterfeits corresponding to this part of Christ's character? Let us see.

As Nimrod was said to be reborn as the incarnation of the *sun* (the light-bringer), the "sacred heart" was frequently represented as being *aflame*. It became an emblem of the incarnate son. "To be represented as a heart on fire required also that burning lamps and lighted candles should form part of the worship of that Son" (*Hislop*, p. 191).

Jesus is spoken of as the "Messiah" (John 1:41). The word *Messiah*, according to *Peloubet's Bible Dictionary*, means one who is anointed with holy oil. The Kings of Israel were called "anointed" from this mode of consecration. The Savior was the Messiah, the *anointed one*, consecrated by God.

"Extreme Unction" a Counterfeit of Salvation

We shall now see how Satan—knowing of the Messiah's coming, the one who would make peace between mankind and God—produced *messianic counterfeits* hundreds of years before Jesus came. It did not take Semiramis, inspired by Satan, long to incorporate this idea into her mysteries and identify her dead husband, Nimrod, as messianic.

"Among the many names of the Babylonian god (Nimrod) was the name 'Beel-samen,' 'Lord of Heaven,' which is the name of the sun. But Beel-samen also properly signified 'Lord of Oil' and was evidently intended as a synonym of the divine name 'the Messiah.' "

Note here the subtle effort to counterfeit the real Messiah! Continuing:

"This also accounts for the fact that the body of the Babylonian Belus (Nimrod) was represented as having been preserved in his sepulcher ...floating in oil. [And] at Rome, the 'statue of Saturn' (Nimrod) was made hollow and filled with oil.... As the olive branch was one of the symbols of their Messiah (Nimrod) whose great mission it was to make peace between God and man, so, in bearing this branch of the anointed one, they thereby testified that in the name of that anointed one they came seeking peace" (*Hislop*, p. 165). They believed that if one was anointed with oil before death, he or she was assured of a gracious reception by their god.

"The worshippers of this ... 'Lord of Heaven' ... were also anointed with 'magical ointments' ... to fit and prepare them for being admitted in vision into his awful presence.... Thus, the pagan system naturally developed into an 'extreme unction' ... [which] was entirely unknown among the Christians till corruption was far advanced in the [Roman] church" (p. 166).

Thus, *extreme unction* was practiced by pagans hundreds of years *before* the great falling away from the truth occurred in the church. It was being used to prepare those who were being initiated into the mysteries to meet their god in vision. It was also to prepare others to make their last journey into the "unknown beyond."

After Christ's coming, the apostate church—desiring to retain this pagan practice for the thousands of incoming pagans and also to pacify professing Christians—concocted a spiritual basis for the practice: “Is anyone sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him after anointing him with oil ... and the Lord will raise him up” (James 5:14-15). But this command is obviously given for physical healing, not to prepare one to meet God! This scripture was deliberately misinterpreted to allow a pagan counterfeit to masquerade as Christian.

Only repentance and Christ's blood make forgiveness possible. But by this one pagan rite, men claim to prepare one another to meet their Creator. This rite or ceremony is only a continuation of pagan sun-worship, worship of a false messiah.

So those who might have life by God's instruction on healing are led astray, by Satan's counterfeit, into ways that bring death. They are deceived into honoring a false messiah—into using a false method to prepare for their final judgment!

Today, this same deception is perpetuated in the name of “Christianity”!

Relic Worship of Pagan Origin

Today, the worship of *relics* plays an important role in many churches. This is the belief: “Whenever a chapel is opened or a temple consecrated, it cannot be thoroughly complete without some relic ... of a he-saint or she-saint to *give sanctity* to it.... The grossest impostures have been practiced in regard to such relics ... and their *wonder-working powers*....” In the realms of heathendom, relic worship flourished for ages before Christian saints or martyrs appeared in the world (*Hislop*, p. 176).

Relic worship has been found in China, Greece, India, and other places. Nimrod, it will be remembered, was cut into pieces. *Plutarch* (vol. II, p. 358) describes the search Semiramis made for those pieces: “Isis (Semiramis) set out ... in search of the scattered pieces of her husband's body ... and one reason assigned for the different sepulchers of Osiris (Nimrod) in Egypt is that whenever any one of his scattered limbs was discovered, she buried it on the spot. Not only were these Egyptian relics sacred themselves, but they *consecrated the very ground* in which they were entombed” (*Ibid.*, p. 359).

“If the places where the relics of Osiris were buried were accounted peculiarly holy, it is easy to see how naturally this would give rise to [the] pilgrimages so frequent among the heathen.” In the Middle Ages, pilgrimages to the tombs of saints was thought to wash away sin (*Hislop*, p. 180).

But nowhere in the Bible are such pilgrimages commanded!

Mankind spread from the original Babylon to all parts of the earth to form *spiritual* “Babylon the Great.” Thus, it is easy to see where today's Romish church has acquired this practice. But such practices are entirely contrary to God's teachings. When a human being dies, he remains dead. He cannot “sanctify,” “work wonders,” or “consecrate” anything. Even David, one of God's most beloved, is *still* dead (Acts 2:29). Only when Christ comes will the righteous live again (I Cor. 15:51; I Thess. 4:16).

Other Deceptive Counterfeits

Church government in the Middle Ages was patterned after the pagan College of Pontiffs, with its “Pontifex Maximus” (pope), which had existed in Rome from the earliest times. Its origin lies with a similar grand council in ancient Babylon. The *keys* that their leader emblazons today on his arms, as ensigns of his spiritual authority, were the symbols of two well-known

pagan divinities who existed at Rome before the apostate church was ever founded—*Janus* (the Roman name for a god who represented Nimrod in one of his many forms), and *Cybele* (Nimrod’s wife, Semiramis). Each of these two divinities had a *key* that opened the doors to the kingdom of heaven.

Clerical celibacy, the shaving of the heads of priests, the pontifical crosier, and the miter were all known in ancient Babylon.

These are other pieces of evidence as to what the people of today are actually worshipping. Does God hold people responsible today for worshipping this system—even though they are deceived? He held our forefathers responsible for worshipping this same system of mysteries—even though they were deceived! Why would God not hold us responsible? He says He will (Rev. 18:4). We are to *come out* of spiritual Babylon or we will receive of her plagues! And the plagues will soon fall!

“Mystery of Iniquity” a Secret System

As we have seen, the *open worship* of the sun (or fire) and the snake (the devil) was *stopped* when the righteous forces of Shem destroyed Nimrod, who had been the great power promoting this form of worship. Shem forbade the worship of these symbols. Thus, when Semiramis started the forbidden idolatry again, it had to be through a *system of mysterious symbols*. We have seen that she *deified* her dead husband, Nimrod—and herself, and her son, Tammuz. She associated them with great personages of the past, and set up a system whereby they might be worshipped through *secret* symbols. Thus, those who were initiated into the *secret meaning of these symbols* could continue their worship of that which had been forbidden.

As we will see, this *mystery system* has led to the most powerful *religious deception* the world has ever known!

Nimrod had many titles, as did his wife (*Wilkinson*, vol. IV, p. 179). As we have seen, one of Nimrod’s names was *Saturn*, which signifies the *hidden god*. To those who were initiated, he was *revealed*; to all others, he was *hidden*. In fact, the name *Saturn* is the key that connects the idolatrous Babylon of the past with the Babylonish idolatry of our time! Hislop explains: “The name Saturn in Chaldee (Babylonian) is ... *Stur*. This name contains exactly the apocalyptic number 666: S=60, T=400, U=6, R=200.... But still further, it turns out ... that the original name of Rome itself was *Saturnia*, ‘the city of Saturn.’ This is vouched alike by Ovid, by Pliny, and by Aurelius Victor.” Thus, ancient Rome was branded with the number 666 (Rev. 13:18). Also, “Virgil ... showed that Lateinos, to whom the Romans or Latin race traced back their lineage, was represented with a glory around his head to show he was a ‘child of the Sun’—a symbol of devil worship” (*Hislop*, pp. 269-270).

Note in particular that Nimrod, the head of pagan sun-serpent worship who was falsely represented as the very son of God, bore the number 666. This same number continues to be branded on the present-day Babylonish system, wherein *secret symbols conceal* the actual worship of the devil. In the end time, a great religious leader who represents this system will brand himself with this very number—666—by acting exactly as Nimrod did, by setting himself up in the place of Christ, the son of God!

It is prophesied that Christ will come and smite the nations and rule them (Isa. 2:14). But what else is prophesied to happen just before Christ establishes His rule in Jerusalem? God says, “For, behold, in those [latter] days and in that time—*when* I will bring back the exiles of Judah and Jerusalem...” (Joel 3:1). Jerusalem is soon to go into captivity to a coming union of fascist dictators in Europe. The religious head of this union will “plant his royal tents between *the* seas

in the glorious holy mountain”—in Palestine (Dan. 11:45). He will place his headquarters of pagan worship in the very land Christ intends to use as His own headquarters and place of worship. Indeed, this human religious head will exalt himself “above all that is called God, or that is an object of worship; so that he comes into the temple of God and sits down as God, proclaiming that he himself is God” (II Thess. 2:4).

Christ, the Son of God, is to come to Jerusalem to establish the true worship of God on earth, but there will first come a false religious leader who will spread Babylonish worship from Jerusalem. This man will thus attempt to usurp the authority of Christ; he will actually try to be the “Representative of the Son of God”—which, translated into Latin, is *Filii vicarivs Dei*. The phrase adds up to 666: i=1, l=50, v=5, c=100, d=500 (the letters f, a, r, s, and e have no numerical value). This man will place upon himself the same number that Nimrod carried. Nimrod, said to be the “son of god,” was represented as being the Messiah.

Here is proof that the *system of mysterious iniquity*, whose head will brand himself with the number 666, is the same hidden system that has existed from the flood—and only for the purpose of perverting God’s teachings. It is no wonder that Christ’s gospel became twisted!

In summarizing, recall that mysterious or hidden symbols were used anciently. These symbols exist today—such as the Christmas tree, the Easter egg, the hot cross bun—there are many others. Just as symbolic are the periods of time set apart by Satan for false worship—Christmas, Easter, Lent, Sunday-keeping. These symbols *disguise* the “gods” people today are worshipping! Satan has always taught “another Gospel”—a wrong and impossible way of obtaining salvation! The fact is, you cannot worship the symbols of Satan’s gods and obtain eternal life!

Even to the initiated, this worship system was *mysterious* or *hidden* until explained. The individual (Satan) who is at the head of this religious system is *mysterious* or *hidden*. God has given Satan’s system the name “Babylon,” which means “confusion” (Rev. 17:5). No wonder the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with its doctrines (Rev. 17:2).

Satan *hid* in the form of a serpent; Adam *hid* in the garden after he had sinned; Nimrod was *hidden* in the Chaldean mysteries. The devil is now the hidden *god* of this world (II Cor. 4:4) and is actively deceiving all mankind (Rev. 12:9)! The world today thinks it is worshipping God, but the Bible says the world is greatly deceived!

We have seen that there were pagan religious practices in the time of Christ that *closely resembled* the doctrines the apostles practiced and preached. We have studied these pagan customs and found that they originated from a common source—the old Babylonian mysteries of Semiramis—and that they have found their way into the religious practices of our day. As such, they *mask* the way to salvation that Christ taught. This Babylonish system, masquerading as *Christian*, controls much of the world’s worship today.

Fortunate will be the few who find their way out of this morass of confusion and *stand ready* to be transformed at Christ’s soon coming!

Today’s Greatest Religious Hoax!

It comes as a shock to realize that the professing Christian world is being deluded by a *false Messiah*—one who has been masqueraded as Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul knew of this clever deception that would be foisted upon the church. Here is what he wrote under the inspiration of God: “But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds might be corrupted from *the* simplicity that *is* in Christ. For indeed, if someone comes preaching another Jesus, whom we did not preach ... or a

different gospel, which you did not accept”—that is, if any minister comes who preaches about *another Jesus*, a false Jesus whom the apostles did not preach about, or *another gospel*, a different way to eternal life than the way you received from Christ and His apostles—“you put up with it as *something good*”—you readily accept his false message (II Cor. 11:3-4)!

Paul was shocked that Christians in his own day were giving heed to false doctrines about “another Jesus”—a false messiah to whom the name of Jesus was appropriated. But this false savior—upon which people today are depending for their salvation—appeared long before Christ’s time! Biblical evidence proves that this is just what has happened!

World’s False Savior Reappears

The inhabitants of the earth just after the flood knew and understood that a *savior* was to come (Gen. 3:15)—but they did not know *when* He would come. They were looking and waiting for Him!

It was under these circumstances that Nimrod—the founder of human civilization after the flood—died (Gen. 10:9-11). Semiramis, his wife—known also as the “Queen of Heaven” (Jer. 44:17, 25)—desired to retain the vast holdings of her dead husband at all costs. She conceived a daring plan. Her family, even at the death of Nimrod, was considered very unusual because of their great exploits. Thus, it was not difficult for people to accept her claim that her illegitimate child, Horus, was the very savior they were anticipating.

The world knew that Nimrod had “liberated” them from God’s “distasteful” ways. Therefore, after Nimrod had been slain, Semiramis claimed that she had *miraculously conceived* and that Nimrod was thus miraculously *reborn* to her as the “messiah” in the form of her present illegitimate son, Horus—or Ninyas, as he was called in different nations.

Horus, then, was the “savior” the world was looking for, and Semiramis was the “virgin mother.” Nimrod, in his new form as Horus, was to continue to liberate the world from God’s ways and was to usher in a new way—another way of life—the way of sin!

Thus, Semiramis, the Queen of Heaven, received the adoration of the world through her lies. She became the “virgin mother” of the “savior”! Her position over the holdings of Nimrod was thus secure.

Even today, Semiramis—whose Assyrian name was *Ishtar*, pronounced as *Easter*—is worshipped. The world continues to pay homage to her as mother of its “savior” in the pagan festival of Easter.

Because of fierce opposition from Noah’s son, Shem, Semiramis was compelled to use *symbols* to represent the members of her family who were being worshipped. This allowed them to be worshipped *secretly*. Thus arose the *mystery system*, referred to in the New Testament (II Thess. 2:7), by which innumerable pagan customs (such as *Easter*) have been introduced into the church. Those who knew the *meaning* of the symbols knew whom they worshipped—outsiders did not.

These three, the husband, the wife, and her illegitimate son, came to be worshipped in many symbolic forms and under many pagan names. This system has been perpetuated by monks, nuns, and celibate priests down to this day!

Today’s Religious Confusion From One Masked Source

The pollution of God’s teachings, whether ancient or modern, has come from *one* great masked source. It is hard to believe—yet it is absolutely true! It has come from *one family*—the family of Nimrod and Semiramis! Knowledge of this fact has almost been lost!

Here is how it happened, step by step:

1) At first, Semiramis—also called Ishtar or Easter—desired to have the members of her family worshipped *openly*. But, as we have seen, she was forced by the opposition of Shem to have them worshipped through *symbols*.

The *hero worship* bestowed upon Nimrod while he was alive became transferred to *symbolic rites* in his honor after his untimely death. The remembrance of Nimrod was so strong and his popularity had been so great that the worship of Nimrod, Semiramis, and her son, Horus, *saturated* the whole earth in the time of Semiramis' rule.

The use of *symbols* to represent those being worshipped did, however, remove the people one step from the knowledge of whom they worshipped. Thus, the people were not as aware of whom they were actually worshipping as they would have been if such worship was done openly. The point is that even at that time, after symbols were introduced, the people were not fully aware that they were worshipping Nimrod's family, although for a time it was explained to them. Thus, the use of symbols gradually clouded the realization of whom the people were actually worshipping.

The Next Fateful Factor

2) The second key factor that caused people to lose sight of who they were actually worshipping was that the various family groupings at the tower of Babel were miraculously given *different languages*. This resulted in great confusion between the groups!

Each group continued worshipping the same three false deities as before. However, as they began to spread out over the face of the earth from this central area, they began to believe they were worshipping *different gods*—for the three were by then bearing *different names*.

3) Now we come to the third key factor—a great *masking* endeavor. This masking effort has resulted in *completely blinding* the “Christian” world to the fact that it is actually worshipping three humans—Nimrod, Semiramis, and Horus. Here is what happened: When Christ came, Satan the devil inspired Christian *names* to be placed on the very rites and doctrines that Semiramis had devised to cause people to worship herself, Nimrod, and Horus.

Labeling Pagan Practices with “Christian” Names

The Gentiles around Jesus in His day were still worshipping the first “savior”—Nimrod—but by different names. In fact, the world in His day was saturated with the worship of the “unholy” three. Such worship was attractive among Gentiles, as there was still a desire to be “liberated” from the authority of God by their own “savior.” But seeing the *power* of Christ manifested through miracles, people wanted to associate themselves with *Him*. Yet they would not accept Jesus' Gospel—which required repentance, a turning from their former ways, *Nimrod's ways*. Thus, they rejected the only way to obtain eternal life. But the people still admired Jesus; they were in a quandary as what to do about these *two* saviors!

What did they do? They paid “lip service” to Christ by placing “Christian” names on the old pagan practices by which their false savior-god was worshipped! They continued to worship Nimrod—using “Christian” terms and trappings!

Our world has refused Christ, the true Savior, and His ways—it still clings to the false “savior” and his ways. This is nothing less than “another Jesus”—against which Paul warned (II Cor. 11:3-4).

Pagan Rites Masquerading as “Christian”

The practices for worshipping the counterfeit “savior” still remain and are observed, although they bear “lip service” to the name of Christ. Nimrod’s birthday on December 25th is still celebrated around the world, although it bears the “Christian” name of *Christmas*. Sunday—Nimrod’s day, the day of the *sun*-god—is still observed worldwide, although it is now falsely called the “Lord’s day” and is often confused with the true 7th-day Sabbath.

Moreover, Semiramis’ “sprinkling rite” continues to be used, although it now falsely bears the “Christian” name of *baptism*.

These pagan practices, falsely labeled as “Christian,” are masquerading as teachings of Jesus—but it is a *different* Jesus from the Bible. The surface has barely been scratched here in naming the ways Semiramis has devised for the worship of her “savior”—ways used by the whole world to worship Nimrod instead of Christ!

You Are Born Into Your Religion

4) There is a *fourth factor* that has aided in hiding from the world the truth about who they are actually worshipping.

Semiramis was forced to introduce *symbols* for her family so that others could continue to worship them. At first, worshippers were told that in adoring these symbols (idols, trees, animals, periods of time, etc.) they were actually worshipping the members of her family. The priest who told worshippers what these symbols actually represented bore the title of “Peter,” which in the Babylonian language means *interpreter* (Hislop, p. 208). In fact, this Roman “Peter” later became confused with the apostle Peter.

But in time the symbols were no longer explained. Thus, subsequent generations were “born into” the religion of their fathers—they “worshipped they knew not what”! They never questioned what they were taught—their father’s “old time religion” was good enough for them. In reality, they *unknowingly* worshipped Nimrod, etc., because it came naturally—they knew of nothing else. This is exactly how people today acquire their religion—they are simply born into the family religion.

People do not by nature “prove” things by the Bible as the Bereans were commended for doing (Acts 17:11). Rather, people today unquestionably accept the confused denominational teachings of their parents handed down by tradition from generation to generation.

Bible Proof That World Worships a False “Savior”

If the world is so saturated with the worship of Nimrod, the counterfeit “savior,” and his family, why doesn’t the Bible concern itself with the matter? This is naturally a question that enters anyone’s mind. But the fact is, the worship of Nimrod’s family is the *only* false religious system the Bible *does* speak of! It is that important! The Bible mentions Nimrod (Gen. 10:8-10), his “Queen of Heaven”—Semiramis (Jer. 44:17-19, 25), and [Horus]—Semiramis’ illegitimate son who was supposed to be Nimrod miraculously reborn as the “savior.” The Bible discusses *no other* false religious system.

The world has marveled at the variety of gods the Bible shows were worshipped by Old Testament people. There seems to be no connection between them—but this is not true. It is a fact that they all came from *one source*—from that first ruling family of old Babylon!

Let us now see in the Bible how the worship of Nimrod, the first “savior,” and his family caused Israel to turn away from God. Mark well that these three—Nimrod, Semiramis, and Horus—were the ones the whole world worshipped. But they were worshipped in different lands

by the different names applied to them. This is what God referred to when He said the people of Israel went “lusting after other gods” (Judges 2:17).

Abraham and Israel

In Abraham, God found a man after the flood who would obey Him. He commanded him to leave his home country and told Abraham that He would make of him a great nation and give him and his offspring forever all the land he saw (Gen. 12:1-4; 13:14-15). Ultimately, Abraham’s twelve grandsons found themselves in Egypt due to a famine in Palestine, and there they became slaves of the Egyptians (Ex. 1:11).

They were in Egypt—a land that, according to other evidence, was full of worshippers of the mysteries (*symbols*) of Semiramis. They were among pagans, and remained captives among them for over 200 years. They learned, while there, how to worship the first “savior” and his “virgin” (so-called) mother, the “Queen of Heaven” (Semiramis). They forgot the true God; but because of His promises to Abraham, God had not forgotten them.

He led them out of Egypt and promised to establish them as the greatest of nations—if they would forsake their idol (*symbol*) worship and follow Him. If they would not, He would punish them severely (Lev. 26).

Israel Worshipped a Counterfeit “Savior”

The Israelites had scarcely started their journey to the Promised Land when the people called for the old *symbolic* pagan gods they had known in Egypt. Moses had gone up on Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments. In his absence the people said to Aaron, “Make us gods [*symbols*] which shall go before us, for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him” (Ex. 32:1).

Aaron made them a golden calf to worship, which, as we have shown, was the way the Egyptians mystically worshipped Osiris (Nimrod), their “savior.” This was almost 1500 B.C.

Pagans who originally worshipped the golden calf did so with the full knowledge that they were worshipping the “reborn” Nimrod in one of his symbolic forms. The *calf* symbolized the false savior, as the *lamb* symbolized the true Savior. Every one of the 19 kings that ruled over the House of Israel—after the separation of Israel and Judah—worshipped the golden calf, the symbol of the first “savior.”

Do you recall the account (above) of the Europeans who passed through the bonfire in our “Christian” times? Now notice that the Bible shows that the custom originated from the worship of Nimrod. We have previously shown that *Molech* was a title applied to Nimrod in one of his idol forms. In order to “purify” themselves, pagans, usually children, were made to “pass through the fire to Molech.” In Leviticus 18:21, just after they had left Egypt, God warned Israel: “And you shall not let any of your children pass through *the fire* to Molech.” And, “Anyone of the children of Israel ... that gives any of his children to Molech, he shall surely be put to death” (Lev. 20:2).

That this practice was picked up from neighboring pagan nations is evident: “[You] shall not learn to do according to the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter to pass through the fire...” (Deut.18:9-10).

Today, the “Christianized” version is the *doctrine of purgatorial fires* for the next life.

Why Mentioned in Scripture

Now we can begin to see why God named in Scripture an endless array of pagan gods—all of whom represent the three deified members of Nimrod’s family. It is a veiled warning that a world saturated with the worship of a false messiah figure would continue with such practices—even to the point of rejecting the true Savior and His Gospel of the kingdom. Still, they would appropriate His *name* for their pagan customs.

Chemosh was the god of the Moabites. God says Israel had forgotten Him and was worshipping Chemosh (I Kings 11:33). Chemosh was identified with Baal-peor—the pagan “Christ child”—and with Baal-zebub, Mars, and Saturn (*Peloubet’s Bible Dictionary*, p. 115). We have shown that Saturn was a name of Nimrod, and Mars was another name, as the god of war of the Greeks. Chemosh, then, was the Moabite name for Nimrod. Solomon, despite his wisdom, built an altar to Chemosh (II Kings 23:13). Even he was misled by this Babylonian system of worship.

Israel also joined itself to the worship of the idol Baal-peor, which is but another form of the old Babylonian worship of Nimrod (Num. 25:3). Again, in Numbers 31:16, God rebukes Israel for worshipping Peor, which is the abbreviated name of Baal-peor.

A Dead “Savior”

Recall that the true Messiah is often pictured as still hanging dead on a cross—whereas He is actually a *living* Savior today.

In Psalm 106:28, God says that Israel “joined themselves to Baal of Peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead”—the *dead* Nimrod, (*Hislop*, p. 69). These people were eating sacrifices offered to Nimrod. God was telling them a *dead god* could do them no good. The true God is a *living* God (John 6:57).

Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron (II Kings 1:3-4), the pagan god of medicine, was none other than Nimrod (*Hislop*, p. 279). Here again we see Israel partaking of the mysteries of Semiramis and worshipping Nimrod in this form—by depending on healing from Baal-zebub through doctors and drugs. Luke 11:15 shows the real power behind Baal-zebub—it was the “chief” of the demons, Satan.

These pagan customs have been passed on to the church as “Christian.” They are labeled with the name of Jesus—but they originated among pagans as a means to help them worship the false messiah Nimrod!

But Peter warns that there is *no other way to be saved* than through the name and person of the true Messiah (Acts 4:12)!

History’s Secrets Unfold

God had promised Israel—the people He chose for a special mission—that, if they obey Him, the greatest earthly blessings any nation ever had would be theirs. But He did not promise the nation, as a whole, eternal life. In Egypt, they had lost much of the knowledge of the true God that their ancestors had possessed. In bringing them out of Egypt, God performed many miracles, showing them His power (Jer. 32:21).

Were they going to obey the true God and allow Him to bless them with material wealth and power? Or were they going to be misled by the devil-inspired idols of Semiramis?

Were they going to believe the devil’s lie—that they could obtain eternal life by following the doctrines taught by the mysteries of Semiramis, who falsely promised eternal life? Or would Israel see through this deception and follow God’s commands—and be greatly blessed

physically and materially *and* ultimately obtain eternal life? (Recall that Adam and Eve lost the material Garden of Eden *and* eternal life by following Satan’s deception.)

Baal and Ashtoroth

Some sixty years after God led Israel out of Egypt, He said: “And they forsook the LORD and served Baal and Ashtaroath” (Judges 2:13). We find these two names used in many places in connection with the Israelites. Who were they? Why are they so important in Scripture?

The word “baal” means master or lord (*New Standard Bible Dictionary*, p. 820). As the first and mightiest of the lords of the earth, Nimrod became *Baal* or *Bel* (*Peloubet*, p. 80). He was recognized as the chief Babylonian deity (*Halley’s Pocket Bible Handbook*, p. 95). Ashtaroath, as we have previously shown, was Semiramis. Israel was soon worshipping both under these later names.

Israel also worshipped Baal-berith (Judges 8:33). Nimrod, as mediator and head of the covenant of grace, took this name or the name *Mithras* (*Hislop*, p. 70). “Solomon went after Ashtoreth” (I Kings 11:5, 33). For a short time, Israel did “put away the Baalim and the Ashtaroath, and served the LORD only” (I Sam. 7:4). But they soon returned to this pagan practice (I Sam. 12:10). Please recall that Ashtaroath (or Ashtoreth) is just another form of the word “Ishtar” or *Easter*—which the Christ-professing world observes today!

We, today, just as Israel was, are in *spiritual* “Babylon” or in “Egypt” (which continued Babylon’s pagan practices). “Jeroboam ... served Baal, and worshipped him” (I Kings 16:31). You have heard of him. Is modern-day Israel—the United States of America and the British Commonwealth—not worshipping Baal (Nimrod) by observing his birthday, Christmas?

The priests of Baal (remember, Nimrod was the first and mightiest baal, or god) became the official representatives of (northern) Israel’s religion (I Kings 18:26), while Ahab and Jezebel were the rulers. These priests, in their rituals, “leaped”—or, properly translated, “limped” or “went sideways”—just as their Baal (Nimrod) is said to have done when he, through Semiramis’ mysteries, was identified as the one who “went sideways” or “turned aside” from God.

The official representatives of Israel’s religion during the reign of Ahab and Jezebel were the priests of Nimrod! Indeed, Nimrod had become Israel’s god!

Do the representatives of modern Israel’s religions not encourage us to keep Nimrod’s Sundays and birthday? Who is our national god today? Among the millions in those days who followed Baal under Ahab and Jezebel, *only seven thousand* did not follow their idolatrous ways (I Kings 19:18). How many are refusing to keep these pagan customs today in our nation?

Other Names of Nimrod

Israel worshipped *Milcom*, “the god of the children of Ammon.” Who was this? None other than Molech, whom we have identified as Nimrod (*New Standard Bible Dictionary*, p. 824). Judah was worshipping this god just before her captivity (II Kings 23:13). In Jeremiah 7:17-20, God warned Judah against worshipping the Queen of Heaven, who was Semiramis.

Now notice II Kings 17:17, Jeremiah 8:18-22, and Deut. 4:16-19. Hislop, on page 309, says: “As Baal (Nimrod), the Lord of Heaven had his visible emblem, the *sun*, so she (Semiramis), as Beltes, Queen of Heaven, must have hers also—the *moon*.” Righteous King Josiah “burned the chariots of the sun with fire” (II Kings 23:11).

With regard to Israel’s and Judah’s gods being represented by stars, the *New Standard Bible Dictionary*, p. 827, says: “The stars formed a class ... corresponding to the Igigi or ‘heaven gods’ of the Babylonians.”

“High places”—elevations used for idolatry—were all over Israel and Judah (II Kings 23:13; Micah 1:3). *Bel* (Isa. 46:1) was Baal or Nimrod, as we have seen, and Nebo (same verse) was Nimrod as the prophetic god (*Hislop*, p. 34). Dagon (I Sam. 5:2-5) was the fish god of Babylon, whom Semiramis created in order to associate Nimrod with Noah (*Hislop*, p. 264). Recall that Semiramis associated her dead, deified husband with great personalities for prestige.

As we saw earlier, Israel continued to worship the golden calf. God said He would cut off the horns of the altars at Bethel (Amos 3:14). Israel had a golden calf in Bethel (*Peloubet's Bible Dictionary*, p. 87). God warned Israel just before her captivity (which He brought upon her for such practices): “ ‘Let the men who sacrifice kiss the calves.’ Therefore they shall be as the morning cloud and as the early dew that passes away, as the chaff storm driven from a threshing floor...” (Hosea 13:2-3). God warns Israel today—America and Britain—“Your calf, O Samaria, has cast *you* off.... [They] shall return *to* Egypt” (Hosea 8:5, 13). Samaria was the capital of the ten northern tribes of Israel. They never returned to the land of Egypt after Moses’ time, but we, their descendants, will do so, as this prophecy shows.

We have seen that *Molech* was a title applied to Nimrod in one of his god forms, and that in order to “purify” themselves, people (usually children) were made to “pass through the fire to Molech.” In Leviticus 18:21, God warned Israel: “And you shall not let any of your children pass through *the fire* to Molech.” (Also see Leviticus 20:2.)

But they disobeyed God—for Ahaz, the king of Judah, “walked in the ways of the [evil] kings of Israel” and “made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the nations” (II Kings 16:1-3). That this practice was picked up from pagan nations is evident. “You shall not do so to the LORD your God, for every abomination to the LORD, which He hates, they have done to their gods; even their sons and their daughters they have burned in the fire to their gods” (Deut. 12:30-31; 18:9-10). Note carefully that the heathen—the gentiles—were behind these pagan practices.

Solomon built a “high place” for Molech (I Kings 11:7). Israel and Judah were both being deceived by the Babylonian mysteries. They, like the other nations, were infected with it! More evidence: Josiah, one of Judah’s good kings, “defiled Tolpheth”—a place where Molech was worshipped—“so that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech” (II Kings 23:10). But this destruction of a worshipping place of Molech had no lasting influence, for Judah continued in idolatry. This was happening 800 years after God led Judah and Israel out of their Egyptian captivity.

What does God say of this practice? “Is this, your whoredoms, so small a matter? You have slaughtered My children and delivered them up and caused them to pass through the fire” (Ezek. 16:20-21). God says this worship of Nimrod was a great sin. “They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons” (Psa. 106:37). Essentially, such practices are devil worship.

We have now seen Bible proof that Israel worshipped the pagan gods of this “mystery” religion. What about the *customs* used in the worship of these pagan gods?

Israel’s Pagan Customs

God says of the days set aside *by Israel* on which to worship—days that had not been commanded by Him: “Your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; they are a trouble to Me; I am weary to bear *them*” (Isa. 1:14). God had not appointed these days and customs that Israel had been observing. But God did give Israel *His* days and *His* feasts—times that keep God’s people in remembrance of His great plan of salvation. Moreover, the keeping of these times instills the habit of obedience to the true God!

What about today? Has God, in the Bible, appointed the days churches now observe? As we have seen, God specifically condemns the observance of Christmas (Jer. 10), which actually commemorates Nimrod's rebirth as Horus. Today, "Christianity" says it is Christ's birthday—but it was observed by Israel, our forefathers, as the birthday of Nimrod long before Christ was born!

Israel had their representation of the "image of jealousy"—Tammuz, the counterfeit of Christ—hung upon their walls (Ezek. 8:5, 10, 14). Who knows what the actual Jesus looked like? We hang His *supposed* picture on our walls today.

Israel worshipped the *sun*; America and the UK, modern Israel, do so as well when they observe Easter sunrise service—with "their faces toward the east; and they worshiped the sun toward the east" (Ezek. 8:16). God says, "I gave them My statutes and showed them My ordinances.... And also I gave them My Sabbaths.... But the house of Israel rebelled against Me" (Ezek. 20:11-13). God said, "I will turn your [not God's] feasts into mourning" (Amos 8:10).

"I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies.... [You] have carried the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun, your images, the star of your gods which you made for yourselves. So I will cause you to go into exile..." (Amos 5:21-27). What a duality! Moloch we have identified as Nimrod, the fire god of Babylon, and Chiun was Nimrod in his hidden form as Saturn (*New Standard Bible Dictionary*, p. 823). Israel was setting aside days for the worship of Nimrod, and God said He would scatter them into captivity for it!

Today, modern Israel, the United States and Britain, are doing the same thing in our Sunday, Christmas, and Easter observances—and our captivity is foretold!

Read Ezekiel chapter five. Note that verse four says the prophesy is to the house of Israel and remember that this prophesy was given about 600 B.C.—long *after* ancient Israel was scattered. This prophesy is for us! It is the same old story—Israel today has been deceived by the same old means the devil used to deceive ancient Israel!

It is evident by now that the pagan gods Israel and Judah worshipped were none other than those Satan had inspired Semiramis to fabricate for the deception of the world. They were believing the lie of the devil—that they could obtain eternal life and material benefits through the worship of these gods. All through the history of Israel—while she was worshipping the gods we have identified as those composing the *mysteries*—God was warning her not to follow the way of the heathen. The heathen were following these same gods (see II Chron. 28:3; 33:2; 36:14; II Kings 17:15; 21:2). Here is Bible proof that the Gentiles were being deceived by this same system. The whole world, at the time Israel existed under the rule of God, was deceived by these mysteries. Israel herself finally refused to be under God's direct rule and became deceived!

Why is it that God calls attention to *only this system* of deception—the mysteries of Semiramis—and never mentions the many demon gods of Asia? Because Semiramis' counterfeit way is *patterned after* the true way of salvation so closely that God knew that, if it were possible, it could deceive even the "very elect" (Matt. 24:24). God has warned the *few* that follow Him about these "mysteries." Other pagan practices can be recognized without divine revelation. But God knows this one will deceive the whole world!

New Testament Mentions "Mystery System"

Paul warned the churches of his time against these same practices when he said, "You are of your own selves observing days, and months, and times and years. I am afraid for you" (Gal. 4:10-11). When he visited Athens he saw the city "wholly given to idolatry" (Acts 17:16). The Greeks did not know the true God (verses 23-28). Paul stood on Mar's Hill to talk to them (verse

22). *Mars* was Nimrod as the Roman god of war (*Hislop*, p. 153). He was a well-known god. Diana, who was Semiramis as the “Bruiser of the Serpent’s Head” (*Hislop*, p. 76), was worshipped by “all Asia and the world” in Paul’s time (Acts 19:27). The devil, the hidden *head* of this mystery system, is not an evil-looking person with a pitchfork and a tail, as we have been led to believe. The New Testament shows that he is “transformed into an angel of light” (II Cor. 11:14).

Why Israel was Deceived

Why did God allow Israel, which He Himself had called out of “Babylon” (Egypt), to be deceived? In Leviticus chapter 26, God said He would bless Israel above all nations *if* they would obey Him—five would chase a hundred of their enemies and a hundred would put ten thousand to flight (verse 8); they would dwell safely (verse 5) and have much material wealth (verse 10). He reminded them that He had brought them out of Egypt, the land where they had learned the devil-inspired worship of old Babylon, and had been in captivity both to this pagan religion and to the Egyptians.

In bringing Israel out of Egypt, God warned that if they would *not* obey Him, He would punish them more than the other nations; they would be slain before their enemies (verse 17), suffer famine (verse 25), and be scattered among the heathen (verse 33). He would punish them “seven times” (verse 18)—indicating an increasing intensity of punishment.

We have seen that they were deceived by the devil into worshipping his idols. God says, “But they rebelled against Me and would not hearken to Me. They did not each man throw away the abominations of their eyes, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt.... [They] did not walk in My statutes, and they despised My ordinances.... And they greatly polluted My Sabbaths.... [Therefore,] I also lifted up My hand to them in the wilderness, *swearing* that I would scatter them among the heathen and scatter them throughout the lands” (Ezek. 20:8, 13, 23).

God did “scatter them among the heathen.” The ten tribes, Israel, “worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal.... So the LORD was very angry with Israel and removed them out of His sight” (II Kings 17:16-18). Israel was taken captive by the Assyrians, the ancestors of modern Austria and Germany. And as the Assyrian king was ruler over Babylon and other areas, he repopulated Israel’s land with people from various pagan countries (II Kings 17:24). Israel later migrated away from Assyria. She was scattered into the “Babylonish” world—the pagan world that was saturated with the customs of old Babylon and the mysteries of Semiramis; they were scattered into the world of Babylon the Great (Rev. 18:2). Judah was taken captive by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon about 135 years later because of the same sins.

Why did God allow all of this? We need not guess—the Bible, as usual, tells us. It is explained hundreds of years later in New Testament times. Stephen, speaking to the Jews, the present-day descendants of Judah, said: “[Moses,] to whom our fathers would not be subject, but thrust *him* away, and turned their hearts back to Egypt.... Then God turned and delivered them over to serve the host of heaven” (Acts 7:39, 42). Continuing with verse 43 in the *Moffatt* translation, “So now I will transport you beyond Babylon.” God was doing this. God says He has determined the boundaries of the nations (Acts 17:26).

Why, then, did He remove Israel? Paul says of Israel, “But with many of them God was not pleased, for their dead bodies were strewn in the wilderness. Now these things became examples for us, so that we might not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be idolaters, as *were* some of them.... Now all these things happened to them *as* examples, and were written for our admonition” (I Cor. 10:5-7, 11). *Idolatry* is defined as the worship of anything

that is not God (*Webster's Columbia Reference Dictionary*). God is building historical examples of the great penalty for worshipping anything other than Him, and of the great reward for worshipping Him alone!

Remember, Abraham worshipped God only *after* God called him. Through these many historical examples, God was preparing for the time when He would begin in earnest to save the world. He was using Israel as an example to the world, just as He had used the people existing at the time of the flood!

Satan Knows He Has But a Short Time

God has allotted 6,000 years for Satan to rule and deceive this world. The demons knew this time was not up when Christ came the first time—for they asked Him, “Have You come here to torment us before *the* time?” (Matt. 8:29).

Satan was aware of the importance of Christ's first coming. And he knew well in advance what it would do to his own rule! Note this prophecy: “A great red dragon ... stood before the woman ... so that he might devour her child when she gave birth” (Rev. 12:3-4). It was Satan's idea to destroy Christ and save his own kingdom. Herod, who sought to slay the infant Jesus, was only a tool of Satan. Satan later tried to cause Christ to worship him when he tempted Jesus in the wilderness (Matt. 4:8-9). Had Christ yielded to that temptation, the devil would have retained his rule! Christ would have become disqualified from ruling this world in the near future as God's representative—for He would have been serving Satan (verse 10). In fact, had Christ yielded to Satan's temptation, He would have had to pay with His own life for His own sin (Rom. 6:23).

But Christ resisted! And He thereby made salvation possible for all humanity.

When Satan saw Christ “caught up to God” (Rev. 12:5), he knew he was defeated. As a result, Satan became wrathful with Christ's church. And he is especially angry today! God warns of Satan's wrath: “Woe to those who inhabit the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath *because* he knows that he has *only* a short time” (Rev. 12:12).

The devil knows his period of rule is almost up—he has but a short time. He is even now casting out a *torrent* of false doctrines. He would have succeeded in destroying the early church had it not been for divine intervention (verse 6). Even so, only a “remnant”—a very small number—are to be left keeping the commandments of God. “Then the dragon [Satan, verse 9] was furious with the woman and went to make war with the rest [remnant] of her seed, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev. 12:17).

God watches over this earth in as far as His overall plan and immutable laws are concerned. But Satan is allowed to rule this world through deception—until Christ's second coming. Satan is now intensely active and has all but a remnant deceived!

The Perversion of True Church Teachings

Have you ever noticed Ephesians 2:19-20? This passage tells us that the “household of God” is “being built up on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being *the* chief Cornerstone.”

Do you really grasp the meaning of this? Whatever Jesus, or the apostles of the original church, taught or did, *we must do today* if we are going to belong to the “household of God.” If Satan could *counterfeit*, or otherwise divert people from following, the original church teachings and practices, he would destroy the Christian hope of salvation. He would thus strike at the very purpose of God's creation—the development of sons of God who are to rule with Him. No

wonder Satan started attacking the teachings of God from the very time of Adam and Eve.

We have already seen how the mysteries of Semiramis were everywhere when the true church was founded. Did these seep into the church? Paul wrote that “the mystery of lawlessness is already working” (II Thess. 2:7).

Indeed, Semiramis’ mysteries had started to corrupt the teachings of Christ and the apostles. But the mysteries did not infiltrate the headquarters church at Jerusalem during the time the apostles were there. The Jerusalem church, whose practices are recorded in the New Testament for our benefit, became the example for all to follow. Christians everywhere “became imitators of the churches of God in Judea which are in Christ Jesus” (I Thess. 2:14).

Yet notice what happened!

Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* says, “It was natural that the primitive tradition of a church which was founded [little more than] forty days after the death of Christ, and was governed almost as many years under the immediate inspection of His apostles, should be received as the standard of orthodoxy” (vol. I, ch. 15, p. 389). In other words, the Jerusalem church was to be the standard or foundation for all future churches of God.

Where, then, were the mysteries creeping in? In the outlying churches. In the church at Ephesus, idolatrous practices (Rev. 2:6); in the church at Pergamos, the doctrine of Balaam (Rev. 2:14); in the church at Thyatira, idols (Rev. 2:20). These are but a few of the examples pointed out in the Bible.

How did this perversion of the Gospel come about? Here is the answer from history: “The Jewish converts who laid the foundations of the church soon found themselves overwhelmed by the increasing multitudes ... from all the various religions of polytheism [that] enlisted under the banner of Christ” (Gibbon, p. 389). Gibbon further states that these pagans, when they first began to associate with church members, asked the upright Christians to *tolerate* their pagan practices. Later, after they became greater in number, the pagans became intolerant of the true teachings. Thus, paganism crept into the churches!

Are the Majority Deceived Today?

Are all to enter the Kingdom of God now? Doesn’t the Bible say, “The Law and the Prophets *were* until John; from that time the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone zealously strives to enter it” (Luke 16:16)? Some would ask, “Doesn’t this mean that all must be saved now or be lost forever?” Here is the answer: Scripture shows that God, as part of His great purpose, has allowed the *spiritual blindness* of the vast majority at this time. God has given the Gentiles over to a reprobate, or blinded, mind (Rom. 1:28). The god of this age—Satan—has been allowed to blind the minds of those who do not believe (II Cor. 4:4). All of Israel (except for a very small number) are now blinded (Rom. 11:7) and have been given over to their own laws that are not good (Ezek. 20:25).

Did you know that Christ spoke in *parables*—lest this very blindness should be removed from the people of His day? (Mark 4:11-12). But in the messianic age to come, God says He will remove all blindness. “And He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering which covers all people, and the veil that is woven over all nations” (Isa. 25:7). But you can, if you are repentant, pray to God that He will remove this blindness from you *now* (Matt. 7:7).

Since the beginning of this world, God has *called only a few* at various times. In every case, God removed the blindness from those He called; thus, they saw the truth and accepted salvation. Enoch, Abraham, and David are examples. The *few* are called now (I Cor. 1:2). For what purpose? Christ will use them—as well as those of New Testament times—to rule and

instruct the “unsaved” when He returns (Rev. 2:26; 5:10).

How False Churches Arose From Apostatizing Congregations of True Church

“Just how, step by step, did the pagan customs get into the churches of today?” you ask. We shall now see the unbelievable answer. The professing Christians of apostolic and post-apostolic times “found a new occupation in the government of the church.... The ambition of raising themselves or their friends to offices of the church was disguised by ... laudable intention” (*Gibbon*, vol. I, ch. 15, p. 417). Selfishness was beginning to assert itself in a strong way within the early church.

Gibbon shows that the churches—and their daughter congregations that had been founded through the work of the apostles—began to form themselves into larger and larger groupings. Faithful members were ex-communicated. The size of the town within the boundaries of a group of churches had much to do with the power exercised by the churches.

Naturally, Rome, being the largest city, became the headquarters of this system of *pseudo-Christianity*. In the struggle for influence, there arose among the elders a Roman “pontiff” who gradually became the *supreme head* of these congregations. In order to increase church membership and power, a patronizing attitude was taken toward both pagans and “Christians.” “Worship, at first very simple, was developed into elaborate, stately, imposing ceremonies having all the outward splendor that belonged to the heathen temples.... The imperial church of the 4th and 5th centuries had become an entirely different institution from the persecuted church of the first three centuries. In its ambition to rule, it lost and forgot the spirit of Christ” (*Halley’s Pocket Bible Handbook*, p. 671). The true teachings of Christ were cast aside!

“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—to shake hands*” (*Hislop*, p. 105).

The parent of present-day “Christendom” was taking form!

The famous advice of Pope Gregory I was that “by all means they should meet the pagans half-way, and so bring them into the Roman church” (*Hislop*, p. 113). This was to be done by a fusion of fragments of truth with overwhelming error!

“If, in the beginning of the fifth century, Tertullian or Lactantius [early Catholic fathers] had been suddenly raised from the dead, to assist at the festival of some popular saint or martyr, they would have gazed with astonishment and indignation on the profane spectacle which had succeeded to the pure and spiritual worship of a Christian congregation” (*Gibbon*, vol. V, ch. 27, p. 121).

Indeed, the forerunner of present-day Christianity had departed far from the practices of the primitive church in Judea. But let us further consider the paganism of this “transitional church” which stands midway in the path of development to today’s Protestantism. The contradicting and competing Protestant churches claim to trace themselves back to the original New Testament church, but they hide the fact that they observe festivals and practices derived from paganism and adopted from Roman Catholicism.

Paganism supposedly “disappeared” in the Roman area about 450 A.D. “So rapid, yet so gentle, was the fall of paganism that only twenty-eight years after the death of Theodosius, the faint and minute vestiges were no longer visible to the eye of the legislator” (*Gibbon*, vol. V, ch. 28, pp. 90-93). Where did paganism go? Gieseler’s *Ecclesiastical History* has the answer: “In exact proportion as paganism has disappeared from without the church, in the very same

proportion it appears within it” (vol. II, p. 40).

Hear what Hislop (p. 224) has to say: “The system, first concocted in Babylon and thence conveyed to the ends of the earth, has been modified and diluted in different ages and countries. In papal Rome only is it now found nearly pure and entire.” The system is a “mystery,” as we have seen. How does it masquerade? “It [Rome] ... admits [utilizes] Christian terms and names; but all that is apparently Christian in its system is more than neutralized by the malignant paganism that it embodies” (*Hislop*, p. 282).

Mankind today is deceived by Christian-sounding names that Satan has put on practices of his own devilish system. Indeed, Satan is active—more active than ever!

Small Church of God and Great False Church

We have now seen how the old Babylonian system of Semiramis and Nimrod engulfed the true teachings of Christ and the apostles within a relatively short time after Jesus’ death. We have read that only a remnant—a very small number—are to keep the commandments of God (Rev. 12:17).

Down through the centuries have come two different churches, side by side, described by the Bible. One is the true church, small in number, and always persecuted—“If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you also,” Christ said in John 15:20. It has been so scattered that it has seemed almost invisible—its members often not knowing each other (Acts 6:1; 8:1; Rev. 12:6, 15; Dan. 12:7; Ezek. 34). These are those who keep the commandments of God.

The other is that *false church* described as a “great whore” (Rev. 17:1) who has wielded great power in this, Satan’s, world (verses 2, 15). She will continue to do so—with suddenly increasing power for a short time at the end of the age (verses 12, 18). She is described as the mother who has given rise to many protesting denominations (verse 5).

Daughter Churches Blinded

The woman sitting on the beast in Revelation 17:3 is a world-ruling church. On her forehead is the name “Mystery Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots” (verse 5).

Who are the harlots? What offspring has the “mother church” given rise to? It is well-known that they are Protestants—“a name given to the party who adhered to Martin Luther during the Reformation in 1529 and *protested*, or made a solemn declaration of dissent, from the decree of Emperor Charles V and the Diet of Spire.... The name [is] now applied generally to those Christian denominations that differ from the Church of Rome and sprang from the Reformation” (*Roach and Robertson’s New Practical Reference Library*, vol. IV, “Reformation”). This same source says of the Reformation that it is a “term applied to a revolt in Europe in the sixteenth century against papal supremacy and certain doctrinal tenets of the Church of Rome.”

This started similar movements in Hungary, France, England, and Scotland at that time. From these movements the various modern Protestant groups have arisen. This, then, is where the Protestant churches of today have originated. They did not begin with Christ!

The Protestant churches came *out of* papal Rome, where the system first concocted in old Babylon is “now found nearly pure and entire” (*Hislop*, p. 224). By protesting against “certain doctrinal tenets,” they *claimed* to get back to the teachings of the New Testament.

But they did not do so! The matter is easily proven. All one has to do is take the New Testament and check point-for-point what teachings the apostolic church kept and what the Protestant churches now keep.

Many churches today claim to be founded on the “ancient, original, apostolic Christian church” (Karl Kreuzschmar, *What Lutherans Teach*, p. 3). But doctrines *foreign* to the original church are followed, and doctrines followed by the original church are not observed.

We have seen how Satan, knowing that his time for ruling this earth is short, substituted the deceptive doctrines of Semiramis’ mysteries for the true doctrines that Christ and His apostles taught. But we have also seen in Scripture how one can recognize deception.

Satan, using the churches that arose after the apostles’ time, has been able to deceive the world. But the original church at Jerusalem has given us the Bible despite Satan’s attempts to have it stamped out.

What God Requires of You

Are you fulfilling God’s requirements for salvation? The very fact that you are reading this shows that God is *revealing Himself* to you. What should you now do?

The household of God is “being built up on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being *the* chief Cornerstone” (Eph. 2:19-20). Thus, what Christ and the apostles said or did is the foundation for the household or Kingdom of God. If one desires to enter the Kingdom of God, he must build his actions on this foundation. Paul, inspired by God, taught this to the Ephesians. Today, it applies to each one of us.

Make this comparative “spot check.” Beginning with the Book of Acts, there is much concerning how the apostles established and led the New Testament church. Obtain a Bible concordance and try to look up the words “Christmas” or “Sunday” or “Halloween.” (You need not look up these words, for they do not appear once in your Bible!) By contrast, look up the word “Sabbath.” Then look up the word “Pentecost.” Were they being kept? As Jesus forms the chief part of this “foundation,” the things He observed are to be kept by His followers. So include the four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, in this word research. The practices observed by Christ and the apostles were their *final instructions* to this world.

It is time you stopped being deceived by false teachers! It is time to wake up to the shocking *fact* that the churches of today have greatly departed from the doctrines of the original, apostolic Christian church! Are you willing to do something about it? Quit these foolish, heathen customs masquerading under Christ’s name and begin to *follow your Bible!*