

PARABLES

Bringing Hidden Things to Light



Psalms 78:2-4

I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter dark sayings of old... We will not conceal them.

Parables Bookshelf - Series 2.3.1

Series 2 of the Parables Bookshelf contains a variety of writings covering a wide range of topics related to the Kingdom of God. These writings originally appeared as posts on the Heart4God website, or the Parables Blog, both of which are the websites of Bible teacher Joseph Herrin.

Removing the High Places



The history of God's chosen people Israel as recorded in the Old Testament of the Bible is filled with tragedy. Nowhere are the disastrous consequences of offending a holy God and incurring His wrath seen more clearly than when His people embraced the worship of idols with all of their attending symbols and rituals.

Yahweh warned His people in the clearest language of the consequences of embracing the worship of the gods of the people whose lands they were going in to conquer.

Deuteronomy 31:16-18
Yahweh said to Moses, "... this people will arise and play the harlot with the strange gods of the land, into the midst of which they are going,

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and will forsake Me and break My covenant which I have made with them. Then My anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and hide My face from them, and they will be consumed, and many evils and troubles will come upon them; so that they will say in that day, 'Is it not because our God is not among us that these evils have come upon us?' But I will surely hide My face in that day because of all the evil which they will do, for they will turn to other gods."

With many such warnings, on many different occasions, the people were warned of the consequences of embracing the worship of other gods. There is clearly the practice of much idolatry in the church today, and the results have been the same. Even as Yahweh testified that He would hide His face from His people who entered into idolatry, so too has Yahweh hidden His face from many in this hour. Few are the saints who hear the voice of the Spirit of Christ, for the Holy Spirit will not inhabit a temple that is filled with idols.

As prophesied here, days of the greatest evil are soon to fall upon the nations, and many will find that in a time when they need to hear from God the most that He will hide His face from them as a judgment against their idolatrous lives.

Joshua 24:19-20

Then Joshua said to the people, "You will not be able to serve Yahweh, for He is a holy God. He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgression or your sins. If you forsake Yahweh and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and consume you after He has done good to you."

Tragically, the history of Israel revealed in Scripture shows that the people did the very thing that Yahweh warned them against. Time after time the people embraced the images and rituals of the pagan deities worshiped by the people around them and God always brought judgment upon them. Then the people would repent and put away their idolatrous images and return for a time to a single devotion to Yahweh. Yet the history of Israel reveals that the times of idolatrous mixture were much more frequent than the brief period of pure devotion to Yahweh.

After the nation of Israel split into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah, we

never read of a single king of Israel whose heart was purely devoted to God. Jeroboam was the first king of the ten northern tribes and he immediately led the people into idolatry as he set up altars at Dan and Bethel. Because of their gross idolatry having provoked Yahweh to jealousy, Israel suffered many things. Her land was invaded. Her people were enslaved and made to pay severe taxes to foreigners. Her crops were stolen by marauding bands. Famines plagued the land. And ultimately the entire nation was given into the hands of the Assyrians and carried off into exile.

The Southern Kingdom knew some godly kings, and many of them served Yahweh and sought to honor him. Even among these godly kings, however, there was rarely any time when all idolatry was removed from the land. In fact, there were only three kings who ever ruled over God's people whose hearts were zealous for Yahweh and who acted with jealousy on His behalf so that His jealousy would not burn toward the people. These three kings were David, Hezekiah and Josiah.

David was a man after God's heart. He loved Yahweh with a purity that was never exceeded by any other king, and God has given him a name of renown unto this day. As the writers of the Old Testament wrote of the histories of the kings of Israel and Judah they used phrases repeatedly that made comparison of the kings with King David. What was compared was the reigning king's devotion to Yahweh. In the following verses we see this comparison made.

I Kings 15:1-3

Abijam became king over Judah... He walked in all the sins of his father which he had committed before him; and his heart was not wholly devoted to Yahweh his God, like the heart of his father David.

II Kings 14:1-3

Amaziah the son of Joash [became] king of Judah... And he did that which was right in the sight of Yahweh, yet not like David his father.

II Kings 16:2

Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem; and he did not do what was right in the sight of Yahweh his God, as his father David had done.

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Because David served God with a whole heart God made many wonderful promises to him. In the same way God has given many promises to the saints today who follow Him with a whole heart. These same promises are not for the mass of professing Christians. They are reserved for the overcomers in Christ. These magnificent promises are for those who are devoted to Christ in purity and who are not chasing after the idols of the world.

Most Christians today have made some compromise with the world. Oftentimes they are not even aware of the compromise for they have not invited the Holy Spirit of Christ to examine them and reveal if there be any wicked way in them. David made such an invitation to God, as revealed in the following verse.

Psalms 139:23-24

Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Oftentimes our relationship to God is revealed more in the things we have omitted than in the things we do. Much of what Christians do today is the result of tradition and the influence of other professing believers around us. Yet if we only go as far as those whom we observe in our devotion to Christ, and we do not press on any further, then it is certain that we will fall short of Yahweh's desire for us. We must all press in ourselves. We must demonstrate our love for God by manifesting initiative in our pursuit of Him. We must ask Him to reveal everything that is not pleasing to Him and to lead us in the path of righteousness. This is how Yahshua taught His disciples to pray.

Matthew 6:9-13

"Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Holy is Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.'"

As familiar as this Scripture passage is, it is my experience that there are few Christians who have ever considered what it is Yahshua was teaching His disciples here. Some key parts of this prayer are:

- An acknowledgment that God is holy
- An invitation that God's will be done here in the earth of this flesh even as it is done by the holy angels in heaven.
- A petition that He deliver us from all that is evil.

Yahshua is teaching His disciples that we can only properly relate to God as we understand that He is holy. He is pure righteousness. He is all light with no darkness. In Him is no variation or shadow of evil, sin or wickedness.

If we understand this then we will readily acknowledge that in heaven there is nothing profane or unholy. There are no idolatrous images in the presence of the holy God. In the same way there should be no idolatrous images in our lives, for the Scriptures declare to the saints that it is the will of God that we be holy even as He is holy.

It is an awesome invitation for any saint to ask God that His will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Certainly our Lord had it in mind when teaching His disciples how to pray that man was created of the dust of the earth, and this invitation for God's will to be done on earth is directly focused upon establishing the kingdom of God in the earth. Yahshua also told His disciples the following:

Luke 17:20-22

"The kingdom [literally - reign] of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you."

When Yahshua taught His disciples to pray He was in effect instructing them to invite God to establish His perfect reign in their lives even as He reigns perfectly in heaven. We are given a pattern and a parable of the attempts of God's chosen people to establish the reign of God in the earth as we look to the history of Israel and Judah under her kings. Most of those who were chosen to serve as spiritual parables to the saints today were outright idolaters. Although they would oftentimes mention Yahweh and pay Him lip-service, their hearts were far from Him. They loved the world and the things in it.

There were only a few, three to be exact, who received the commendation of having followed Yahweh with a whole heart. A much larger number fell into a middle ground where they had some devotion to God, but they

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did not fully commit themselves to following Him with passion and jealousy. As we read of some of these kings who are revered to this day, we find that God did not find them perfect and He assigned a statement to follow the record of their devotion, and this statement holds much meaning for the saints today.

II Kings 12:2-3

Jehoash did right in the sight of Yahweh... Only the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.

II Kings 14:3-4

[Amaziah] did right in the sight of Yahweh, yet not like David his father... the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.

II Kings 15:3-4

[Azariah] did right in the sight of Yahweh, according to all that his father Amaziah had done. Only the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.

II Kings 15:34-35

[Jotham] did what was right in the sight of Yahweh; he did according to all that his father Uzziah had done. Only the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.

Over and over we read that there were kings who sought to serve God, and who followed Him to a great degree, but who fell short of that standard of holiness that Yahweh desired. After all was said and done, and the Holy Spirit inspired men to write about their works, a caveat was added at the end of their testimony that revealed a deficiency in their obedience. They did not remove the high places.

No Christian should think that these things were recorded without purpose. These things were written for the instruction of the church. These things were written as examples of us (I Corinthians 10). As we read about the lives of these kings of Israel and Judah we are to discern things about the condition of the lives of the saints of God who are called to be a nation of kings and priests

unto their God.

In the same way that there were many who were called from among God's chosen people to be kings unto Him, yet whose lives were marked with idolatry, so too are there many among the saints who live lies of great idolatry. Though they be known as the called of God, and though they associate themselves with the name of Christ, they follow after all the gods of the people in whose midst they find themselves.

There is a lesser number who seek to separate themselves from the idolatry of the world. These ones remove from their midst all the idols of the world that appear detestable in their sight. They are devoted to Yahweh to a greater degree than some, but they still fall short of the desire of God. Perhaps no king of the Old Testament came closer to Yahweh's perfect will, while still falling short, than King Asa. We read of him the following:

II Chronicles 15:8, 16-17

Now when Asa heard these words and the prophecy which Azariah the son of Oded the prophet spoke, he took courage and removed the abominable idols from all the land of Judah and Benjamin and from the cities which he had captured in the hill country of Ephraim. He then restored the altar of Yahweh which was in front of the porch of Yahweh... He also removed Maacah, the mother of King Asa, from the position of queen mother, because she had made a horrid image as an Asherah, and Asa cut down her horrid image, crushed it and burned it at the brook Kidron. But the high places were not removed from Israel...

Asa came so close to doing the perfect will of God, yet he too fell short in removing the high places of idolatrous worship. What does this signify for the Christian today? We can gain understanding as we examine the words of this Scripture. We are told that Asa removed "the abominable idols" from the land. We also read that he cut down the "horrid image" that his mother had set up, and consequently removed her from all position of honor due to her sin. These were tremendous steps of obedience that surely cost him personally, and were a trial to accomplish. To his credit he obeyed Yahweh to this extent and his deeds were forever recorded.

Why then did the high places remain untouched? These too were places of idolatry, and an offense to a holy God.

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Yahweh desired that they be removed as much as all the other symbols of idolatrous worship. The reason was that to Asa and the people these high places did not have the appearance of being “abominable” and “horrid.” The people were not offended by the blatant nature of the high places. The high places had stood for a long time, and they were constructed by one of the most revered kings of Israel, King Solomon. Even when other kings had instituted reforms and a return to devotion to Yahweh, the high places had been left untouched, and it therefore seemed acceptable to purge all that was idolatrous from the land while leaving these high places intact.

Does the church in any way commit a similar error today? Are there symbols of idolatry that are an offense to a holy God that the people of God are not offended by? Are there high places among Christianity that have withstood numerous revivals and reformations while being left intact? Surely there are, and uncloaking their identity will reveal the reason that Christians have so much trouble separating themselves from them.

Before I go further I want to remind the saints of a key practice of Satan in his activity among mankind. The Scriptures declare the following of Satan:

I John 5:19

We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

Revelation 12:9

And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world...

Satan’s power is deception. What he cannot accomplish through outright means, he seeks to accomplish through subtlety and deceit. In the presentation “Freemasonry, the Spirit of Babylon” it was revealed how Satan deceives many men into becoming involved in a Satanic organization by deceiving them as to the meaning behind the symbols and rituals that are practiced. A number of instances were cited to demonstrate that it is a practice of Satan to take things which are horrid and abominable and make them acceptable by ascribing to them a false interpretation. In this way many men, even the called of God, have been led to view certain symbols

as if they were praiseworthy when they are actually vile and profane.

Following are a couple of examples taken from the presentation on Freemasonry.

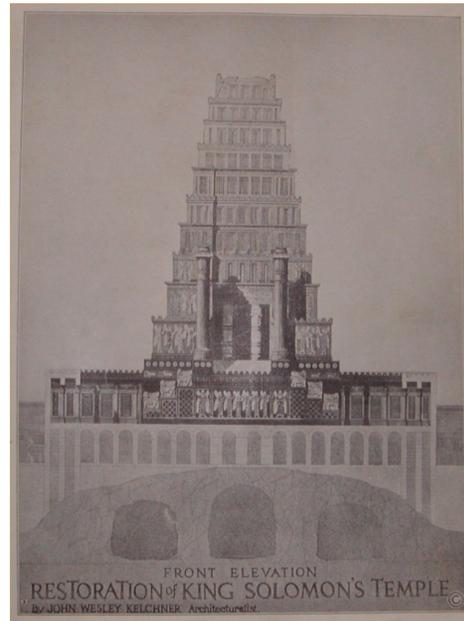


Image of Solomon’s Temple

from Masonic Bible

As I was conducting a study on Freemasonry, a Masonic Bible was donated to the Macon Rescue Mission where I was on staff, and I purchased it. This Bible was published by the A. J. Holman company and is a very large family Bible that is filled with Masonic content at the front. One of the first articles is titled “The First Authentic Restoration of King Solomon’s Temple and Citadel.” The restoration is credited to John Wesley Kelchner and a statement precedes the article and following images.

“Exactly the spectacle beheld by the eyes of Solomon when his artisans had finished.” Harvey Wiley Corbett, Architect

Following is an excerpt from this article.

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How the Designs, Drawings and Pictures Were Obtained.

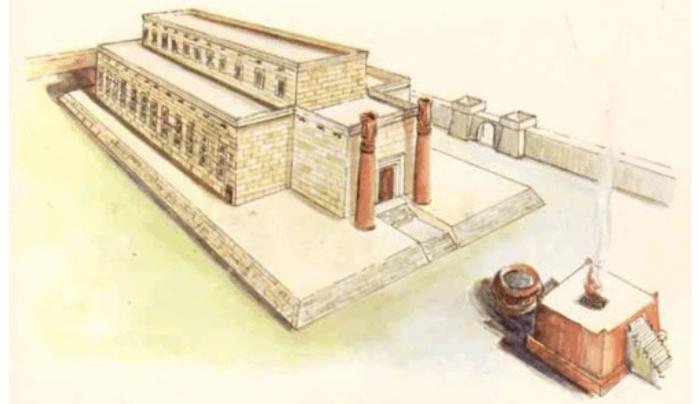
It is known to every reader of the Bible and student of Solomon's days, that an amazingly exact description of the Temple and its associated structures has been carried down from the mists of antiquity by the Scriptures. Lineal measurements, materials employed, and ornamental detail are so graphically presented that restoration of the Temple at any time within a score of centuries past, awaited only the coming of a man with the vision to recognize its historic value, and the imagination to undertake the task.

Notwithstanding the universal interest in King Solomon's Temple, a fascination which has created innumerable legends and romances during the intervening centuries, the incredible fact remains that no adequate effort to restore the Temple was made until John Wesley Kelchner, Archaeologist, Bible Student and Lecturer, began thirty years ago to make real his vision of the scriptural description.

It is espoused that the images created of Solomon's Temple are accurate, having followed the Biblical details of its construction. However, the reality is far from the truth. What is depicted in this Bible are images of a Babylonian Ziggurat, the offspring of the original Tower of Babel, as well as numerous other Babylonian buildings and artistic images.

This slide shows the Masonic Bible's depiction of the front view of Solomon's Temple. Note that what is visioned here is a tower. Nowhere in Scripture is there any indication of a tower being incorporated in the construction of the Temple. The next slide shows a more accurate rendering of the shape of Solomon's Temple.

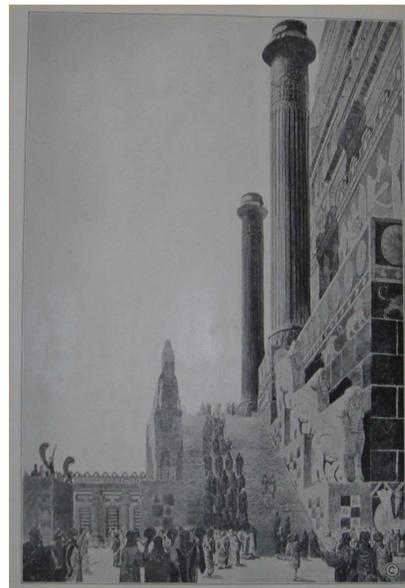
Masonic Bible 2



One immediately notices the tremendous difference between this Biblically accurate rendering, and the fantastic depiction of the Temple in the Masonic Bible. Absent is any tower, as well as the numerous Babylonian images that decorated the facade of the Masonic painting.

Very clearly we can observe the principle that Masonry utilizes, namely to present before her adherents images of pagan and occult origin and to deceive the viewer as to what they are actually seeing. In this way Freemasonry is even trying to pass off an image of the Tower of Babel as if it was a depiction of Solomon's Temple. Yet there is much more of this subterfuge in following pages.

Masonic Bible 3



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Entrance to the Great Porch of Solomon's Temple

This painting which is purported to be another angle of the front of Solomon's Temple is filled with Babylonian imagery. The artwork seen in the murals and statuary is clearly of Babylonian origin. In the next slide I have zoomed in on one prominent image, that of the winged bulls with the head of a man which decorate the right side of the stairs leading up to the Temple.



Nimrod, Winged Bull

As the introduction to these pictures in the Masonic Bible has stated, the Bible presents precise details of the artwork, materials and dimensions of Solomon's Temple. Nowhere in this Biblical account do we find any description of winged bulls with the head of a man. Where then does this image come from?

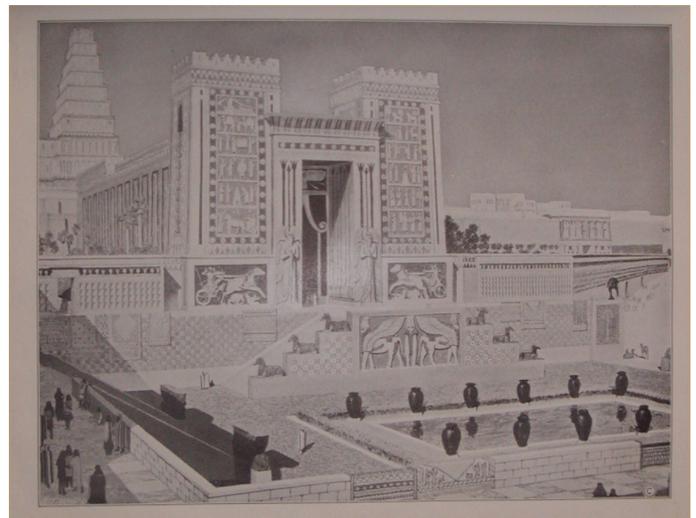
In Alexander Hislop's classic book "The Two Babylons," he shows an image of this same winged bull, and he gives the following account of its origin and meaning.

There was another way in which Nimrod's power was symbolised besides by the horn. A synonym for Gheber, "The Mighty One," was "Abir," while "Aber" also signified "a wing." Nimrod as head and captain of those men of war, by whom he surrounded himself, and who were the instruments of establishing his power, was "Baal-Aberin," "Lord of the Mighty Ones." But "Baal-Abirin"

(pronounced in nearly the same way) signified "The Winged One," and therefore in symbol he was represented not only as a horned bull, but as at once a horned and winged bull - as showing not merely that he was mighty himself, but that he had mighty ones under his command who were ever ready to carry his will into effect.

This symbol of Nimrod was copied by other kings of Mesopotamia, and images of it are still existing to this day. Yet we never read of such an image in association with Solomon's Temple. Once more the Great Deceiver is seeking to convince the viewer of these images that they are looking at Solomon's Temple when in actuality they are viewing images of Babylon.

House of the Forest of Lebanon



The Masonic Bible then proceeds to show other depictions of Solomon's works. The Bible describes Solomon building The House of the Forest of Lebanon, and once more an artistic rendering is presented that is supposedly accurate in its representation of the actual building. Nothing could be further from the truth however.

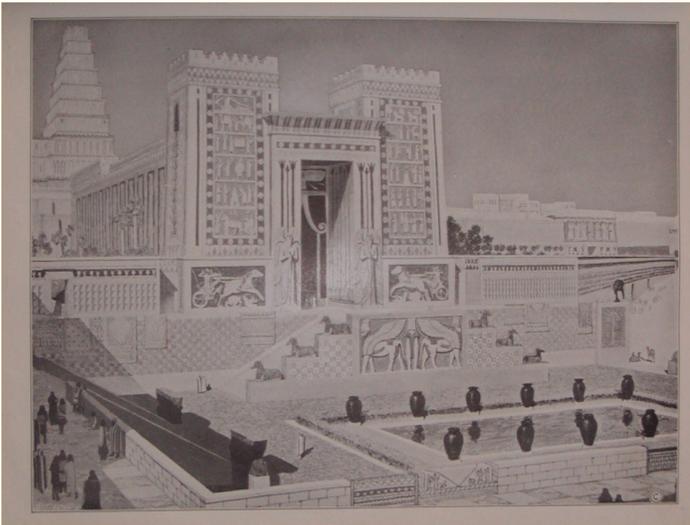
As one looks at this image they can see numerous Babylonian images decorating the grounds and the face of the building, including once more the winged bulls of Nimrod. In the background is observed the Tower of Babel which we have been told is Solomon's Temple. We should understand then that what we are seeing is none other than a further image from Babylon. Indeed, what

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the artist has done is to copy wholesale an image of the Ishtar Gate of ancient Babylon and to overlay it upon this building. The following slide shows what the Ishtar Gate looked like.

As we observe these two images side by side it is clearly observed that the Masonic Bible is practicing great deception by presenting images of Babylon as if they were images of Jerusalem.

(Slide - Two Images)



When seen side-by-side, it is easy to see what deceit is being used by these Freemasons who were involved in this project.

Shriner's Fez



This slide shows an image of the hat worn by Shriners. In order to be a Shriner a man must attain to the 32nd degree of Scottish Rite Freemasonry, or a similar rank among York Rite Freemasonry. Shriners have carefully cultivated an image of their organization as being both charitable and fun loving. It seems that the greater the evil Satan is seeking to make palatable to the masses, the more extreme lengths he goes to in order to disguise the truth.

It is well known that Shriners have established children's hospitals, and even burn centers for children. This casts their organization in the most positive light, for how could anyone who is helping sick and injured children be involved in an evil work? Shriners also participate in parades where they ride little motorbikes and go-carts and dress up as clowns. They even have their own circus, and all of this is designed to foster in the minds of those who see this organization from the outside as something that is harmless, and all about having fun and helping people. The truth is far from this, however.

As it is shown in the presentation on Freemasonry, all Shriners must take an oath where they invoke Allah's help and they speak terrible curses upon themselves should they prove to be unfaithful to the organization. The red fez worn by Shriners is itself a symbol of great evil as it bears upon it the crescent moon and star of Islam. Many Shriners profess belief in Christianity, while

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embracing idolatrous symbols, oaths and practices. The red fez is itself a testimony of Islamic victory of Christianity and other religions.

According to historical accounts, Sultan Idris I conquered the Moroccan city that he renamed Fez in 789 A.D., having slain thousands of its non-Muslim inhabitants. Tradition states that the hats of the conquering Muslims were dipped in the blood of the slain, including Christians and Jews, and this is the origin of the red fez that is worn to this day. That the Shriners wear the symbols of Islam and the sword on their hats gives further support to the understanding of the message being conveyed through this organization whose leaders have written openly of the Luciferian doctrines to which it holds.

How does Satan lead men, some who are professing Christians, to participate in organizations that are anti-Christian, whose symbols are Satanic, and whose rites find their origin in occult practices and the ancient mystery religions of Babylon, Egypt and Greece? He does so through much deception, and by providing them with alternative explanations of the rites and symbols in which they are made partakers.

It is not merely Freemasonry in which such subterfuge is practiced. As the Scriptures declare, "the whole world lies in the power of the evil one" and his chief weapon is deception. Satan's original attack upon mankind began with deception.

Genesis 3:13-14

Then Yahweh God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." Yahweh God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field..."

A Christian holds to a very naive position if he believes that Christianity today does not suffer from great deceptions which have been foisted upon it by the enemy of Christ during the past 2,000 years. Indeed, Christianity holds to great deceptions, and has embraced as many vile symbols and rites as are seen in Freemasonry. Christianity practices and observes many things that have no mention or origin in Scripture. These symbols and practices have been added to her midst in the same way that the nation of Israel began to adopt the profane practices of her idolatrous neighbors as revealed in the Old Testament.

I will focus on two of these high places that stand as an affront to a holy God, and then the saint can determine for themselves whether they will continue to go up to the high places of idolatry, or whether they will be as David, Hezekiah and Josiah who were zealous to remove all idolatrous symbols from the land.



As you look at these symbols you are certain to have various reactions that automatically arise in your mind. These reactions are due to the associations that have been created in your mind throughout your lifetime. All of these are symbols associated with Christmas and Easter celebrations. If you hold these celebrations dear you may not want to continue any further in this study. You may think, "Don't tell me that the symbols and rituals associated with Christmas and Easter are evil. I don't want to even hear that."

I know that it seems farfetched and a real stretch of the imagination to those who have grown up with positive images of these celebrations to consider that they may not only be unscriptural, but they could be satanic in origin. Yet that is the truth. Remember, it is a practice of Satan to attach the most positive associations with images that are vile and profane in order to lead the masses of mankind into accepting things that are an offense to a holy God. Most people who view these images have very positive thoughts associated with them which have been continually reinforced over a considerable length of time.

The actual origins of both Christmas and Easter are not Christian, but rather pagan. Their symbols and rites, as well as the dates upon which they are observed can be traced back to Babylonian mystery religions. Before we look at the origin of these symbols and rituals I want to answer the question of what is wrong with being associ-

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ated with images of idolatrous religions if they have come to represent something else to the Christian today? Some might say, "I don't think of ancient mystery religions when I celebrate these holidays. I am thinking of Christ."

Consider for a moment that not only does Yahweh know the origin of all of these symbols, but so does Satan. We must ask, "Why has Satan sought to lead Christians to adopt pagan symbols, some of which are lewd, and all of which are profane, if the Christians do not know what the symbols stand for?"

Satan is the adversary of God, and as Yahweh's adversary he continually seeks to lead mankind into rebellion against God, and to defile everything that God calls holy. Satan is angry at the fact that God cast him out of heaven when he attempted to make himself like the Most High. He is filled with violence toward God, and is enraged with a bitter hatred of God. Satan disagrees with the judgment of God in casting him out of heaven and therefore he seeks to inflict every offense toward God that he can imagine. One such way that he seeks to offend God is by defiling those things that Yahweh has declared to be holy.

The following example was given in the presentation on Freemasonry:



Masonic Symbols Stand for the Generative Principle

Albert Pike states within *Morals and Dogma* [page 631-32] that the Monad [#1] is male, and the Duad [#2] is female. Their sexual union produces the Triad [#3], which is "represented by the letter 'G', the generative principle." This term, "generative principle," is code for the sex act.

The Square and the Compass also stand as symbols in that a circle is drawn with a compass, and an obelisk is drawn with the square. These two symbols, as we have seen, are analogous to the sexual organs, and when placed together they represent the act of sexual intercourse between a man and a woman.



Inscription:

**Three Great Lights of Freemasonry
The Holy Bible
Square
and Compass**

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As I have mentioned, Macon, Georgia is a Masonic city, and it is marked by a profusion of Masonic symbols. This obelisk in downtown Macon bears the inscription cited above. Satan seeks to corrupt all that is holy, and what better way to do so than to depict a square and compass lying atop the Bible. Even as God gave the Israelites instructions to defile the images and locations associated with pagan worship, so Satan has sought to defile those symbols and locations associated with the worship of God and His Christ. We have seen already how he has inspired men to create a Masonic Bible that is filled with abominable deceptions. Here too is one more attempt of Satan to defile all that is holy by placing the symbols of the sexual act on top of the Bible. And all of this is inscribed upon an obelisk that is a phallic symbol.

You may note that on the base of this pillar is the word "Justice." What a mockery this is from Satan, for he understands what is being depicted here, and in his violent opposition to God's judgment upon his rebellion he has sought to defile the word of God and He calls this "Justice."

II Kings 23:13-16

The high places which were before Jerusalem, which were on the right of the mount of destruction which Solomon the king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Sidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Milcom the abomination of the sons of Ammon, the king defiled. He broke in pieces the sacred pillars and cut down the Asherim and filled their places with human bones. Furthermore, the altar that was at Bethel and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin, had made,

even that altar and the high place he broke down. Then he demolished its stones, ground them to dust, and burned the Asherah. Now when Josiah turned, he saw the graves that were there on the mountain, and he sent and took the bones from the graves and burned them on the altar and defiled it...

Yahweh directed His servants to defile the altars and idols and places used in profane worship. In the same way Satan seeks to defile all that is used in the worship of Yahweh. He does this by taking those things that Yahweh finds detestable and mixing them with that which is holy. Even if the people who are subject to Satan's deception do not know what it is they are doing, Satan does, and so too does God. For this reason Yahweh has instructed His children to separate themselves from all that is unholy, and He has instructed His ministers to teach the people the difference between those things that are holy and those things that are profane.

Ezekiel 44:23

"Moreover, they shall teach My people the difference between the holy and the profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean."

This presentation is designed to instruct the people of God to distinguish between that which is holy and that which is profane. Let us not be the unwitting instruments of Satan in bringing offense unto a holy God.

To understand how very much opposed Yahweh is to any admixture of the holy and the profane we can look at a series of laws that He delivered to His chosen people through His servant Moses. Remember that all of the laws of the Old Testament serve as types and shadows of spiritual principles and serve as instructional tools for the saints in Christ.

Deuteronomy 22:9-11

"You shall not sow your vineyard with two kinds of seed, or all the produce of the seed which you have sown and the increase of the vineyard will become defiled. You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together. You shall not wear a material mixed of wool and linen together."

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What is the message here for the Christian in this present age? God detests mixture. The specific type of mixture that He detests is righteousness and sin, the holy and the profane, light and darkness, the fruit of the Holy Spirit and the works of the flesh. These things are shown forth in the specific laws given. For example, the priests were directed to wear linen, and to wear no wool when ministering unto God. The reason given is that wool makes men sweat while linen does not. Sweat speaks of the works of man being offered to God. Such an offering is despised by God even as God had no regard for the offering of Cain which arose from the ground from which man's flesh was formed. God will only regard that which is initiated and performed in the power of the Holy Spirit.

If God has made such a point of differentiating between the holy and the profane, then it is vain for a Christian to reason that God does not care if they are mixing symbols of pagan rites and idolatrous worship with the worship of Christ Jesus, Yahshua the Messiah. God does care. And furthermore, Satan is using what is done in ignorance by the children of God as an act of rebellious offense which he casts back into the face of God.

It is a simple matter to demonstrate Satan's deceit in leading the saints to mix the holy and profane together. One need look no further than the name of the celebration which is called Easter. The name Easter never appears in Scripture, other than one occasion in the King James Version of the Bible. This is as follows:

Acts 12:4

And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.

KJV

The KJV translators did a disservice to the church by rendering this passage in this manner, for the word being translated is "pascha," the Greek form of the word "Passover." This grievous error was corrected in later Bible translations, including the New KJV.

Acts 12:4

So when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four squads of soldiers to keep him, intending to bring him before the people after Passover.

NKJV

We see in this how far the influence of Satan extends. When he is able to get Bible translators to replace the name of one of God's appointed feasts with the name of a pagan festival. These two observances are far from being equal. Passover was initiated at the leading of Yahweh and its observance communicated to Moses. Easter is a veneration of a fertility goddess that was initiated by Satan and delivered to sinful men.

The very word Easter, that the church has written on the calendar of her annual observances is the name of a goddess of fertility. According to the wikipedia website, the English name of the goddess was arrived at as follows:

The English name, "Easter", and the German, "Ostern", derive from the name of a putative Anglo-Saxon Goddess of the Dawn (thus, of spring, as the dawn of the year) — called *Eāster*, *Ēastre*, and *Ēostre* in various dialects of Old English and *Ostara* in German.

The worship of the fertility goddess who is remembered at Easter goes much further back, however. The mystery religions had their foundations in Babylon. The Bible records the following:

Genesis 10:1-12

Now these are the records of the generations of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah; and sons were born to them after the flood... The sons of Ham were Cush and Mizraim and Put and Canaan. The sons of Cush were Seba and Havilah and Sabtah and Raamah and Sabteca; and the sons of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan. Now Cush became the father of Nimrod; he became a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before Yahweh; therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before Yahweh." The beginning of his kingdom was Babel and Erech and Accad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. From that land he went forth into

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Assyria, and built Nineveh and Rehoboth-Ir and Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city.

The mystery religions can be traced back to Nimrod. Nimrod's father Cush married a woman named Semiramis. Semiramis gave birth to Nimrod and, when Cush died, Nimrod married his mother. Thus Semiramis was both the mother and the wife of Nimrod. It is apparent from Scripture that the genealogy of this family was under a curse. Nimrod's grandfather was Ham, the son of Noah. It was Ham who acted wickedly in exposing the nakedness of his father Noah when Noah had gotten drunk with wine and passed out in his tent. Ham acted rebelliously toward his father, in contrast to his two brothers Shem and Japheth who covered their father's nakedness and would not look upon him. When Noah learned what Ham had done he cursed both Ham and his offspring.

It seems apparent that the sins of the father (Ham) were passed on to the sons, for wickedness continued in this bloodline. This wickedness was manifested in Cush who is attributed with the establishment of a system of rebellious idolatry that was continued in his wife Semiramis and his son Nimrod. This idolatry became heinous, being associated with all that is profane and with many immoral sexual rites including orgies and prostitution.

Alexander Hislop, in his book "The Two Babylons," does a remarkable job of documenting and bringing together many ancient sources that reveal the history of this wicked family and the founding of the ancient mystery religions. According to Hislop, the profane practices of Nimrod and his tyranny over many people increased until Shem, the son of Noah rose up against this "mighty one" and made war with him. Shem having defeated Nimrod then cut his body into pieces and sent it throughout the land as a warning to all who should openly partake of the profane idolatry of Nimrod.

Out of fear of punishment, those who continued in idolatry were forced to practice their rites in secret, and the most vile parts of their practices were known only to those who had passed through the rites of initiation and been admitted into the deeper teachings and practices reserved for those whose loyalty had been proven. This is the origin of the "Mystery Religions" that have their

source in ancient Babylon. One had to be initiated and pass through degrees to be admitted into the mysteries, and those who were outside, or whose loyalty had not yet been proven, were restricted from the true knowledge of the mystery religion. That which had once been practiced openly under the reign of Nimrod, was forced into secrecy when Shem slew Nimrod.

This same pattern of initiation, terrifying oaths against disclosure, and the cloaking of truth to those whose loyalty is not yet proven is observed in Freemasonry, which itself is merely one of the latest incarnations of the idolatrous practices of ancient Babylon.

We also see another pattern here. Shem, the son of Noah, became father of the Shemites, or the Semitic people. It was from this family that Abraham and his descendants arose. Why did God choose a people from among the descendants of Shem to be His chosen people in the earth? Certainly Shem's actions in standing against idolatry and removing the wicked practices from the land had great bearing in Yahweh's choice. In the same way we find that when Yahweh chose one tribe from among Israel's descendants to serve Him as a priestly tribe, that He made His selection based upon the fact that Levi did not join with the rest of Israel when they sacrificed before the golden calf that Aaron made. Levi alone separated themselves from idolatry, and they became priests unto Yahweh.

I hope that the Christian today can understand that Yahweh will certainly use the same standard of measure when He chooses those who will be numbered among the overcomers, and who will be granted access to His presence and to His most holy things. That He will make a division among the saints based upon their involvement in idolatrous practices is prophesied in Ezekiel 44:6-19.

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BABYLONIAN GODDESS SEMIRAMIS AND GOD-INCARNATE SON



INDIAN GODDESS DEVKA AND INFANT KRISHNA



INDIAN GODDESS ISI AND INFANT ISWARA



EGYPTIAN GODDESS ISIS AND SON HORUS



ROMAN CATHOLIC MARY AND GOD-INCARNATE JESUS



GODDESS DIANA OF EPHEBUS

things about the mother of Yahshua that are nowhere found in Scripture, but which do find agreement with the Babylonian mystery religions. When God confused the languages of the people at Babylon and scattered mankind throughout the earth, its idolatrous religion centered around the trinity of Nimrod, Semiramis and Tammuz was already pervasive and it was carried throughout the world where the main characters took on many different names while maintaining much of the central element of the original mystery religion.

Alexander Hislop writes:

The Babylonians in their popular religion supremely worshiped a goddess mother and a son who was represented in pictures and images as an infant or a child in his mother's arms. From Babylon this worship of mother and child spread to the ends of the earth. In Egypt, the mother and child were worshiped under the names Isis and Osiris. In India, even to this day, as Isi and Iswara; in Asia as Cybele and Deoius; in pagan Rome as Fortuna and Jupiter-puer "Jupiter the boy"; in Greece as Ceres, the Great Mother, with the babe at her breast, or as Irene, the goddess of Peace, with the boy Plutus in her arms, and even in Thibet, in China and Japan...

Idolatrous worship of Semiramis and Tammuz spread from Babylon

After Nimrod was killed by Shem the mystery religions teach that he ascended into the heavens and became the Sun god. Semiramis is herself associated as the Moon goddess. Semiramis continued to be sexually active, and when she became pregnant she claimed to have conceived without intercourse. Satan, as the great deceiver, sought to bring forth a false belief in a counterfeit virgin birth that was sufficiently corrupted to suit his ends. Semiramis gave birth to a son named Tammuz, and it was declared that Tammuz was the reincarnation of Nimrod.

In this we see attributes of Yahweh's plan of salvation. There is a child born of a virgin, supposedly the offspring of deity, yet a clear departure from Scripture is that the mother assumes a more prominent role than the son. This emphasis on the mother is continued to this day through the Catholic Church which teaches

Other manifestations of these same characters are seen as Aphrodite/Cupid and Ashtoreth/Orion. Some of these characters are mentioned in the Bible.

Ezekiel 8:14-16

Then He brought me to the entrance of the gate of Yahweh's house which was toward the north; and behold, women were sitting there weeping for Tammuz. He said to me, "Do you see this, son of man? Yet you will see still greater abominations than these." Then He brought me into the inner court of Yahweh's house. And behold, at the entrance to the temple of Yahweh, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men with their backs to the temple of Yahweh and their faces toward the east; and they were prostrating themselves eastward toward the sun.

Worshiping the Sun (Nimrod) and worshiping Tammuz were abominable acts in the sight of God. Yahweh

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judged the people for this idolatry. The church is in great peril of not recognizing the consequences of embracing similar rites and symbols today. It was an offense to God that these pagan rites were being conducted in the temple of God. Today the saints are the temple of God, and God is equally offended when abominable practices are observed by those who constitute this living temple of the Holy Spirit.

I Kings 11:4-6

When Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to Yahweh his God, as the heart of David his father had been. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians... Solomon did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh, and did not follow Yahweh fully, as David his father had done.

How did the high places become established in Israel? We read that Solomon's heart was turned aside by his wives whom he loved. These wives were idolaters, many of them foreigners, and they wanted to continue to worship the gods and goddesses they had known from childhood. Their rites and symbols to them were just as dear as the rites and symbols of Christmas and Easter are to many Christians today. Solomon acquiesced to the pressure of his wives' desires and built high places of worship for them.

Lest we condemn Solomon out of hand, the Christian should consider that the same pressure is exerted upon the saint today to maintain the celebration of pagan festivals. Our children and spouses may love the traditions that they have grown up with, and they may express their desires very passionately to maintain an observance of the things they love. How many saints are willing to stand fast and choose a course other than the one Solomon chose? When Yahweh reveals the truth of these practices and makes His will known, then the Christian is brought to the test. Do they love Yahweh more than all others? Will they choose obedience to God over satisfying the desires, and even demands of their family?

Luke 14:26-27

"If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disci-

ple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."

Christianity as is practiced widely today costs individuals very little. The reason is that there is so much compromise. The church has embraced the world, and has even adopted the practices of pagan religions. True Christianity, however, is very costly. As the Scriptures declare:

II Timothy 3:12

Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

The reason there is so little persecution and so little cost to being a professing Christian today is that men and women are not living godly lives. They have not come out of the world and out of Babylon. Solomon found it easy to get along with the members of his family if he accepted their idolatry. Even so, the world has no problem accepting Christians who will accept their values and practices. But should a Christian begin to differentiate between the holy and profane, then he or she will know the disapproval of those who have embraced that which is not holy.



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Sacred Egg of Heliopolis (Ishtar Egg)

This same goddess Ashtoreth, for whom Solomon built a high place, is also called Ishtar, from which we get our word Easter. The church also has a high place erected to her. Every year the church celebrates a holy day that bears the name of the pagan goddess of fertility which whose original was Semiramis, and who is known by a profusion of names throughout the various cultures of the world. Heliopolis is a city of Egypt where Semiramis was known by the name Isis. As mentioned, Semiramis was a moon goddess, and therefore we see an image of the moon atop her sacred egg.

The mystery religions teach that Semiramis was herself immaculately conceived and was lowered from the heavens to the earth in a giant egg. This egg came to rest in the waters of the Euphrates river. Eggs are also symbols of fertility, and as Semiramis was also a fertility goddess the symbol of the egg became thoroughly associated with her worship. Those who knew Semiramis under the name of Ishtar spoke of Ishtar's egg, from which we get our current Easter egg.



Egg Roll on White House Lawn, Easter 2006

The above picture was taken in April 2006 during the annual White House Easter celebration. An egg roll has been held on the South Lawn since 1878. There was some controversy on this particular year as 200 gay and lesbian families planned to attend this event. Some saw this as an attack on Christian values, not understanding the true origins of the Easter celebration.

In the presentation "Freemasonry, the Spirit of Babylon" it was demonstrated that America serves as the seat of Babylon at this time, even occupying the country of Iraq in which the ancient city of Babylon was located. It should give Christians something to consider when they realize that the United States government has banned all Christian symbols from government spaces, even to the recent order to remove the ten commandments from all courthouses, yet this same government has no complaint about the annual observance of an Easter Egg roll on the White House lawn. Why is this? It is because Easter Eggs have no association with Christianity. They are clearly pagan in their origin and can be traced directly back to Babylon.

When one looks into the sexually immoral practices of the worship of the fertility goddess, it is actually more appropriate that gay and lesbian couples attend this event than that Christians attend.



Another tradition of Easter that is clearly pagan is that of hot cross buns. These buns were initially made in memory of Tammuz, the son of Semiramis, who suffered an early death from being injured by the tusk of a boar. There were forty days of weeping for Tammuz leading up to the Ishtar celebration, which now finds its correspondence in the Catholic Church's forty days of Lent,

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which is a time of mourning.

The women involved with the mystery religions would bake buns for Tammuz (originally called bouns). These were either marked with the sign of a horn, or possibly a tusk, or with the letter T for Tammuz. The sign of the cross, where a Catholic uses his fingers and marks the sign of the cross on their chest can also be traced back to the worship of Tammuz.

Jeremiah 7:18

"The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead dough to make cakes for the queen of heaven; and they pour out drink offerings to other gods in order to spite Me."

Even if done in ignorance, is it not an offense to God to carry on traditions that are steeped in idolatrous worship and profane practices? We read in Ezekiel that the women of Israel were weeping for Tammuz. The Israelites also offered oblations to the Queen of Heaven (Semiramis) and her son Tammuz, as is seen in the above verse from Jeremiah, and elsewhere.

Jeremiah 44:16-19

"As for the message that you have spoken to us in the name of Yahweh, we are not going to listen to you! But rather we will certainly carry out every word that has proceeded from our mouths, by burning sacrifices to the queen of heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, just as we ourselves, our forefathers, our kings and our princes did in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; for then we had plenty of food and were well off and saw no misfortune. But since we stopped burning sacrifices to the queen of heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have lacked everything and have met our end by the sword and by famine. And," said the women, "when we were burning sacrifices to the queen of heaven and were pouring out drink offerings to her, was it without our husbands that we made for her sacrificial cakes in her image and poured out drink offerings to her?"

The pagan traditions of the mystery religions have even been passed down to our children as the sing the little song that speaks of hot cross buns.

Hot cross buns

Hot cross buns

One a penny

Two a penny

Hot cross buns

If you have no daughters

Give them to your sons

One a penny

Two a penny

Hot cross buns

What does this mean "if you have no daughters, give them to your sons?" Remember, this was the celebration of the goddess of fertility and her son. By offering oblations of liquid and foods to Semiramis and Tammuz the people were asking for the gift of fertility. This fertility was petitioned from the goddess by offering drinks and cakes in order that their crops, livestock, and their own families might be blessed with abundance. Many a tradition that seems innocent today has found its origin in practices that are detestable to Yahweh.



An Offering Left for Santa on Christmas Eve

Some of these rites find their correspondence both at Easter and Christmas, for both celebrations were centered around the same gods and goddesses. Even as hot

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cross buns were baked at Easter, we see cookies and milk being left out for Santa Claus at Christmas. This is simply another form of the votive offering to incur the favor of the god or goddess being figured. It is no coincidence that Santa is depicted as flying in the heavens and descending to earth, for this same imagery evokes the worship of the deities of the heavens, even the Sun and the Moon, whose favor was being enjoined by leaving out an offering for them.



Christmas and Easter

Ham/Boar's Head

As mentioned previously, Tammuz is regarded as having been killed by the tusk of a boar. It is for this reason that eating boar's heads is a tradition associated with these pagan celebrations. Although there are relatively few who eat the actual boar's head in America today, the traditional meat served at both Christmas and Easter is ham. If one were truly celebrating the Jewish Messiah on these dates, then there would be no reason to eat ham. In fact, swine flesh is considered unclean by the Jews, and was forbidden to be eaten in the law of Moses.

Swine are always associated with that which is unrighteous and unholy. Thus we find Yahshua declaring the following:

Matthew 7:6

"Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine..."

The words holy and pearls are contrasted with the words dogs and swine. The Scriptures teach that Yahshua was the Lamb of God, and it was at Passover that He was slain. The Jews were instructed to take a lamb or a goat and eat it at Passover. There was never any association with eating ham. Clearly, the pagan practice has once more superseded the Divine and holy ordinance of Yahweh.

Ham is appropriate for these festivals, however, for in God's sight they stand as that which is unclean and unholy in His sight.



U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree

One of the most widespread symbols and rites of Christ-

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mas is the Christmas Tree, and the decorating of it. How many Christian homes make this a prominent feature of their household during the days and weeks leading up to Christmas? Yet what is the actual origin of this symbol? Once more we can find it being featured prominently in the ancient mystery religions.

The Christmas Tree, now so common among us, was equally common in Pagan Rome and Pagan Egypt. In Egypt that tree was the palm tree; in Rome it was the fir; the palm tree denoting the Pagan Messiah as Baal-Tamar, the fir referring to him as Baal-Berith. The mother of Adonis (another name for Nimrod), the Sun God... was mystically said to have been changed into a tree and when in that state to have brought forth her divine son... And this entirely accounts for the putting of the Yule Log in the fire on Christmas Eve, and the appearance of the Christmas Tree the next morning. As Zero-Ashta "The seed of the woman," which name also signified Ignigena, or "born of the fire," he has to enter the fire on "Mother Night" that he may be born the next day out of it, as the "Branch of God," or the Tree that brings all divine gifts to men...

Now the Yule Log is the dead stock of Nimrod, deified as the Sun god, but cut down by his enemies; the Christmas Tree is Nimrod *redivivus* - the slain god come to life again.

[source: Alexander Hislop, "The Two Babylons"]

This is where the practice of placing the Christmas presents under the Christmas Tree originated. It is a symbol of this false pagan god bringing divine gifts to men. This is also why it is very common to place a lighted star atop the Christmas Tree, for the tree is merely another symbol of the Sun god.

Again, we should wonder why the government has no aversion to prominently placing Christmas Trees on government property when all overt symbols of Christianity have been removed. The reason is that there is no real association between the Christmas tree and Jesus Christ, Yahshua the Messiah. Whereas manger scenes that depict the birth of the Son of God in a stable, surrounded by animals, Joseph and Mary, shepherds and wise men are not allowed to be openly displayed on government property, there is no objection to the symbols arising from Babylon.

Yet, should a Christian be enraged at this discrimination, let them consider that there is no admonition in the Bible to commemorate the birth of Christ. Neither is there any mention of the apostles or early church observing such a holiday. Nor is it true that the Son of God was even born at this time of year. Everything about this celebration was originally pagan, and focused upon the worship of the Sun. Why then bring in elements relating to Christianity when they merely serve to perpetuate the observance of a corrupt pagan festival? Again, God desires that we make a distinction between the holy and the profane and that we not bring together a mixture of that which is righteous and unrighteous.



Sol Invictus/Saturnalia

How did we arrive at the date that Christmas and Easter are observed upon. They are directly related to the worship of the heavenly bodies, particularly the Sun. The following is an entry from the Internet site wikipedia on the topic of Sol Invictus.

[Sol Invictus was a religious title applied to at least three distinct divinities during the later Roman Empire: El Gabal, Mithras, and Sol.](#)

[The Romans held a festival on December 25 called Dies Natalis Solis Invicti, "the birthday of the unconquered sun." The use of the title Sol Invictus allowed several](#)

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solar deities to be worshipped collectively, including Elah-Gabal, a Syrian sun god; Sol, the patron god of Emperor Aurelian (270-274); and Mithras.

Emperor Elagabalus (218-222) introduced the festival, and it reached the height of its popularity under Aurelian, who promoted it as an empire-wide holiday.

December 25 was also considered to be the date of the winter solstice, which the Romans called bruma. It was therefore the day the Sun proved itself to be "unconquered" despite the shortening of daylight hours. (When Julius Caesar introduced the Julian Calendar in 45 BC, December 25 was approximately the date of the solstice. In modern times, the solstice falls on December 21 or 22.)

The Sol Invictus festival has a "strong claim on the responsibility" for the date of Christmas, according to the Catholic Encyclopedia.

[End Excerpt]

Easter and the holidays that are related to it are moveable feasts, in that they do not fall on a fixed date in the Gregorian or Julian calendars (both of which follow the cycle of the sun and the seasons). Instead, the date for Easter is determined on a lunisolar calendar... The rule has since the Middle Ages been phrased as "Easter is observed on the Sunday after the first full moon on or after the day of the vernal equinox." [Source: wikipedia]

Note that the determination of the date for Easter is based upon the heavenly bodies that are worshiped in the Mystery Religions, the Sun and the Moon. Both of these heavenly deities are honored in this fertility celebration, therefore the date is always on a Sunday, a day set aside in honor of the Sun god, and it is the first Sunday after a full moon, picturing the Moon goddess in her greatest glory. There are other symbolic reasons relating to fertility that are also pictured in these events, the full moon being associated with female ovulation, and these are all taken into consideration in establishing the date for the celebration called Easter.

It should be noted that the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Yahshua the Messiah, which the

church claims to be commemorating on this date, is not determined by the same method and Passover and Easter rarely fall on the same date. Passover, the day on which Christ was crucified, was determined as follows:

Exodus 12:1-6

Now Yahweh said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, "This month shall be the beginning of months for you; it is to be the first month of the year to you. Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying, 'On the tenth of this month they are each one to take a lamb for themselves, according to their fathers' households, a lamb for each household... Your lamb shall be an unblemished male a year old; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight.'"

The month referenced is the Hebrew month Nisan. Because the Hebrew calendar and the Roman calendar are different in months and days, the celebrations of the Pagan Easter and the Jewish Passover are always in flux from one another. For example, this coming year (2008) Easter is set to be observed on March 23rd while Passover is observed April 19th. This is a discrepancy of nearly a month, and it reveals that what is actually being observed by the church is not the crucifixion of the Son of God, but the pagan fertility festival.

A very interesting insight can be gained as we once more look at the examples found in Scripture. As Solomon said, "There is nothing new under the Sun." Even as the church has forgotten the feast days established by Yahweh and has replaced them with celebrations of their own devising, so too did the same thing occur in ancient Israel. Due to Solomon's sin of leading the people into idolatry, Yahweh determined that ten tribes should be taken away from his descendants and given to another. This other person was Jeroboam.

Jeroboam, although informed by Yahweh's prophet that God was giving him ten tribes, and that he and his descendants would continue to rule over God's people as long as they remained faithful to Him, immediately departed from God and established idols in the land. Jeroboam did this because he feared that if the ten tribes of Israel that he was ruling over continued to go up to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast days of Yahweh that they

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would eventually be drawn back and want to rejoin Judah and Jerusalem. Therefore Jeroboam set up altars at either end of his kingdom, at Dan and at Bethel. He then instructed the people to worship God there, and he set up false gods in the image of calves. He also instituted holy days that were similar to Yahweh's feast days, though not the same.

I Kings 12:26-33

26 And Jeroboam said in his heart, "Now the kingdom will return to the house of David..."

28 So the king consulted, and made two golden calves, and he said to them, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; behold your gods, O Israel, that brought you up from the land of Egypt."

29 And he set one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan.

30 Now this thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one as far as Dan.

31 **And he made houses on high places**, and made priests from among all the people who were not of the sons of Levi.

32 **And Jeroboam instituted a feast in the eighth month on the fifteenth day of the month, like the feast which is in Judah**, and he went up to the altar; thus he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves which he had made. And he stationed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made.

33 **Then he went up to the altar which he had made in Bethel on the fifteenth day in the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised in his own heart**; and he instituted a feast for the sons of Israel, and went up to the altar to burn incense.

This is a most telling passage of scripture. King Jeroboam was entrusted with shepherding Yahweh's people. He was given ten tribes of Israel yet, because he was afraid that he would not be able to keep their hearts and their loyalty, he established the worship of false idols to keep their hearts turned closer to home, and ultimately keeping the people from worshipping Yahweh in His temple.

We are further told that Jeroboam set-up one of these idols in Bethel whose name means "house of God." The

church has also set-up its idols in the house of God to keep people's loyalties firmly associated with the church, even when the end effect is to draw people away from a pure worship of Yahweh. The church has been more worried about losing its role as a shepherd of the people of God than it has been concerned about these same people actually worshipping God in spirit and in truth.

The Catholic Church originally adopted pagan observances because they wanted all the people of the Roman Empire to fall into their embrace. They knew the people would be unwilling to give up the festivals and rites and symbols that were dear to them, even as Solomon's many wives wanted to keep the rites and worship practices that they had grown up with. Therefore they kept the pagan celebrations and merely sought to Christianize them. They came up with alternate meanings for the symbols and rituals being practiced, yet in truth they departed from the will of God and the word of God and set up dates and observances of their own devising.

We just read that Jeroboam established feast days "which he devised in his own heart" to be a substitute for the feast days in Jerusalem. The Christian church has done the same, and she even calls one of the feast days by the name of the pagan goddess to whom it originally belonged. This is a manifestation of the spirit of Babylon whose name means "confusion." The church has entered into great confusion as she has mixed the holy and the profane together.

What will the saint do who comes to understand the horrendous deception that Satan has foisted upon the people of God? Each Christian who receives the truth will be faced with the same pressures that confronted Solomon and Jeroboam. Will the saint of God choose their loved ones, or their own soul's desires over the will of God. If so, then they must be warned of the words of Christ:

Luke 14:26-27

"If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."

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There is a cost to discipleship. There is an even greater cost to be borne by those who refuse to take up their cross. Among the judgments of God upon those who refuse to follow where He leads, and He is leading men out of Babylon, they will be given over to confusion.

II Thessalonians 2:10-12

Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who obeyed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Revelation 18:4-5

I heard another voice from heaven, saying, "Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues; for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.

Revelation 18:1-8

After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illumined with his glory. And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird. For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed acts of immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality." I heard another voice from heaven, saying, "Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues; for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. Pay her back even as she has paid, and give back to her double according to her deeds; in the cup which she has mixed, mix twice as much for her. To the degree that she glorified herself and lived sensuously, to the same degree give her torment and mourning; for she says in her heart, "I SIT AS A QUEEN AND I AM NOT A WIDOW, and will never see mourning.' For this reason in one day her plagues will come, pestilence and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for the Lord God who judges her is strong.

The church of this hour says that she is a queen, being betrothed to the King of Kings. She says she is not a widow, that God will never abandon her. Yet God has testified that judgment must begin at the house of God. A church that has embraced all the vile practices and pursuits of the world will be spued out of the mouth of Christ.

A day of great trouble is coming to the earth. In that day God has testified that He will hide His face from all idolaters. He will judge His ministers who have not taught the people the difference between the holy and the profane. Those who refuse to come out of Babylon, with all of its trappings, its mystery religions, its symbols and rites, will be partakers of the plagues which will be poured out. The call of the Holy Spirit is "Come out of her My people!"

I would like to end this message on a positive note. There was a king of Israel who fully removed all symbols of idolatry from the land. When all the other kings had passed over the high places, he alone tore them all down. As revered as Solomon was to the people, Josiah did not fall short of tearing down the high places he erected to pagan deities. Josiah also tore down the high places erected by Jeroboam. And because Josiah was zealous to remove ALL idolatry from the land God promised him that he would not see all the judgment and trouble that He would bring upon the land.

We are in the midst of Babylon. Great judgment is at the door. There is only one hope of being hidden in a place of safety when the wrath of God is poured forth in full strength upon a perverse and idolatrous generation. We must humble ourselves before Yahweh and pursue righteousness and holiness. We must come out of Babylon.

Zephaniah 2:3

Seek Yahweh, all you humble of the earth who have carried out His ordinances; Seek righteousness, seek humility. Perhaps you will be hidden in the day of Yahweh's anger.

Revelation 3:10

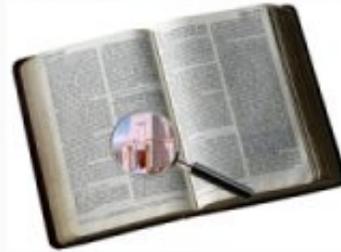
"Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour

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which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.”



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Charles Haddon Spurgeon - Bible Devotion

*"Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe."
John 4:48*

A craving after marvels was a symptom of the sickly state of men's minds in our Lord's day; they refused solid nourishment, and pined after mere wonder. The gospel which they so greatly needed they would not have; the miracles which Jesus did not always choose to give they eagerly demanded.

Many nowadays must see signs and wonders, or they will not believe. Some have said in their heart, "I must feel deep horror of soul, or I never will believe in Jesus." But

what if you never should feel it, as probably you never may? Will you go to hell out of spite against God, because He will not treat you like another? One has said to himself, "If I had a dream, or if I could feel a sudden shock of I know not what, then I would believe." Thus you undeserving mortals dream that my Lord is to be dictated to by you! You are beggars at His gate, asking for mercy, and you must needs draw up rules and regulations as to how He shall give that mercy. Think you that He will submit to this? My Master is of a generous spirit, but He has a right royal heart, He spurns all dictation, and maintains His sovereignty of action. Why, dear reader, if such be your case, do you crave for signs and wonders? Is not the gospel its own sign and wonder? Is not this a miracle of

miracles, that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish"? Surely that precious word, "Whosoever will, let him come and take the water of life freely" and that solemn promise, "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out," are better than signs and wonders! A truthful Savior ought to be believed. He is truth itself. Why will you ask proof of the veracity of One who cannot lie? The devils themselves declared Him to be the Son of God; will you mistrust Him?