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*The PAGAN Festivals*  
*of*

**CHRISTMAS**  
and  
**EASTER**

by Shaun Willcock

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CHRISTMAS AND EASTER**

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# FOREWORD

by Donald R. Blanton

It is my pleasure before my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to bear witness to the truth of God as to the relationship that a disciple of Jesus should have to the "seasons" ("holy days") of "Christmas" and "Easter." Shaun Willcock, my friend and brother in the Lord, has written this book that you, the reader, may know the truth about these pagan seasons, and that the Lord would set his people free from this bondage. This book will teach you the origins of today's holiday traditions and what the Bible has to say on this subject (God's judgement and call for separation).

It should be noted by all Christians that the command of the Lord after his resurrection, as stated in Matthew 28:19,20 to the apostles and to his Church was, "*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*" Can anyone point to one verse in the Scriptures where Christ has commanded the keeping of either of these pagan "holy" days or where he gave the command to *christianize* them? No, the Lord has always called for separation (examples: read 2 Cor. 6:14-17 and Eph. 5:1-21).

Every believer will admit that millions of unconverted professing "Christians" keep the seasons, as do the Catholics, Mormons, etc., and the so-called "unchurched," and all these people think God is pleased with this worship. Well, God has a surprise for them: if you have read the book of Amos you have seen the Lord's strong judgement upon religious people who are not regenerated but think highly of themselves due to their outward worship services. Don't forget that these people of the house of Israel were keeping the feast days decreed by God, and this cannot be said of *Christmas* and *Easter*. The prophet Amos rebuked the religious people of his day in chapter 5, vss. 18-23: "*Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! to what end is it for you? the day of the Lord is darkness, and not light ... I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols.*"

Dear Christian, if Christ is truly your Lord and Saviour by his grace, do not bring shame to his name and judgement upon yourself by refusing to hear his reproach, which you will hear if you refuse to bow to the religious and secular tradition of participating in the Babylonian/Romish traditions that dominate the world. Hebrews 13:13 says it best, "Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." You will heed this command if you truly "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18:4).

I would like to close on a personal note and state that as a former Roman Catholic, who after my conversion joined a Baptist denomination for a short period, the "Protestants'" keeping of Romish holy days was very troubling. Jn. 4:23: *"But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him."* If I could have mixed paganism (Romanism) with Christianity, then I would have stayed a Roman Catholic and not faced the persecution and rejection by family and friends as I tried to wake people up to the lost spiritual state of Roman Catholics. As long as you, if you are a true Christian, keep the Romish holy days, you will never be an affective witness to Roman Catholics, because they will not see that you are really following a different Jesus; they will only know that you disagree with some of their teachings.

The Lord has exhorted his people to earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3), which by his amazing grace I have set forth to do in obedience to him who elected me to salvation, and to bring forth fruit by the work of the Holy Spirit.

Least of all saints:

Donald R. Blanton  
Contending for the Faith Ministries  
Victorville, California, USA  
November 1991

## INTRODUCTION

Every year, all over the world, people naming the name of Christ hold "Christmas" and "Easter" services, and believe that in so doing they are honouring and serving Christ; and yet these are pagan festivals which do not honour or please Him.

This will shock and anger many. The truth, however, must be told. The purpose of this book is to teach what the Word of God has to say about these pagan festivals, and about the birth, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The prayer of the author is that it will be used, by the Lord, to convict true Christians of their sinful participation in heathen practices, and to repent of all such participation; and to show unbelievers that very much of what passes for "Christianity" these days is nothing but paganism *dressed up* as "Christianity"; that they may search the Scriptures for themselves, and if God opens their hearts, attend unto the truths contained therein, being made wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

What very, very few in our day are aware of, is that the pagan festivals of Christmas and Easter are powerful examples of the satanic influence which the Great Whore of the book of Revelation, the Roman Catholic Institution, exercises over the nations and peoples of the world.

That the Roman Catholic Institution is not a Christian Church, but a diabolical, gigantic counterfeit, was well known to believers in past ages. However, in more recent times, the Protestant world, and even true believers, have been bombarded with the teaching that Popery is Christian, thanks to the Second Vatican Council, the Ecumenical Movement, and the infiltration of the Protestant denominations by the Jesuits and other papal agents over the centuries.<sup>1</sup>

The book of Revelation perfectly describes the religio-political system known as Roman Catholicism, in the 17th chapter. There it is revealed as a *false* ecclesiastical system, not a true Church of Christ at all. It is called "the Great Whore" (vs. 1), whereas the *true* Church is called the "bride" of Christ (Rev. 21:9; 19:6-9; Eph. 5:21-32). It is described as sitting upon "many waters" (vs. 1), which are said to be "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" (vs. 15) — a picture of its worldwide power. The rulers of the earth are said to "commit fornication" with it (vs. 2); and the Papacy has always been deeply involved in

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<sup>1</sup> See *Satan's Seat*, by Shaun Willcock. Bible Based Ministries, South Africa, 1995.

the politics of nations, and is to this day.<sup>2</sup> It is said to be "arrayed in purple and scarlet" (vs. 4) — the very colours of Popery. It is also extremely wealthy (vs. 4).<sup>3</sup> It is called "Mystery, Babylon the Great" (vs. 5), because the religious system now known as Roman Catholicism originated in ancient Babylon;<sup>4</sup> and this book will amply reveal that the festivals of Christmas and Easter originated in that ancient city of idolatry. And it is said to be "drunken with the blood" of Christians (vs. 6). History is filled with the Roman Catholic Institution's dreadful persecutions of Christians.<sup>5</sup>

Much more could be written to prove, beyond the shadow of doubt, that Romanism is not Christian, but fulfils the prophecies of Daniel, Revelation, 2 Thessalonians 2, and elsewhere, which show it to be the religion of the Antichrist, and the pope of Rome to be the Antichrist himself. But what has been written above is sufficient for the present. Popery is, as one has said,<sup>6</sup> nothing but "baptized paganism", and is in no way Christian. Even if the reader has never been aware of this before, this present work contains sufficient evidence in itself, to convince any true Christian of the absolutely pagan nature of Roman Catholicism. As will become evident to the reader of these pages, ancient heathenism, Romanism, and the festivals of Christmas and Easter, are inextricably intertwined.

This book is divided into two parts. Part One has to do with the Christmas festival, and Part Two with the Easter festival. In both parts, the *origin* of the festival is examined first; and then the true, scriptural accounts of the birth, death and resurrection of Christ are examined. No true child of God should have anything to do with these Babylonian/Romanist festivals, so loved by the world. The following pages contain the proof.

Shaun Willcock

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<sup>2</sup> *The Vatican Moscow Washington Alliance*, by Avro Manhattan. Chick Publications, Chino, California, 1986.

<sup>3</sup> *The Vatican Billions*, by Avro Manhattan. Chick Publications, Chino, California, 1983.

<sup>4</sup> *The Two Babylons*, by Alexander Hislop. Loizeaux Brothers, Neptune, New Jersey. Second American Edition, 1959.

<sup>5</sup> See, among many other works, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, by John Foxe; *The History of Protestantism*, by J.A. Wylie (Mourne Missionary Trust, Kilkeel, Northern Ireland, 1985); *Martyrs Mirror*, by Thieleman J. van Braght (Herald Press, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1992).

<sup>6</sup> *The Two Babylons*, p.2.

**PART ONE**

**CHRISTMAS**



# CHAPTER ONE

## THE PAGAN ORIGIN OF CHRISTMAS

What will be set forth here will be surprising, and shocking, to many.

In Gen. 10:8-10, we read: "And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar."

In this passage, we are told that the beginning of Nimrod's kingdom was Babel (or Babylon). This was where Nimrod, the first great king of Babylon, began his rebellion against God, not long after the flood.

And there, in ancient Babylon, the festival of "Christmas" originated!

Now, of course, it was not called "Christmas" then; but the festival that is today called "Christmas" had its origin in the empire and in the religious system established by this man, Nimrod, who was the son of Cush, who was the son of Ham, who was the son of Noah — *many hundreds* of years before the Lord Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem.

Semiramis was the name of Nimrod's wife, as has been discovered from ancient records.<sup>7</sup> These two people instituted a heathen religion. And when Nimrod was killed, Semiramis developed it further, even giving birth to a son and including the son in the worship. This was the origin of the "Mother-and-Son" worship.

The worship of Semiramis and her son, beginning at Babylon, spread throughout the world, and in different parts of the world it took on different forms. Inspired by Satan, this woman wanted to have her son worshipped by the heathen as the Messiah himself! In those early days, men *knew* that the Messiah was to come. Many of them were aware of the promise (recorded in Gen. 3:15) that the Messiah would come, which was made by God in the garden of Eden. What had happened in the garden of Eden was known to them; the fall of their first parents, and of all mankind in them, was known to them. And Satan formulated a plan that would result in an *imitation* "Messiah" being worshipped long before the TRUE Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, appeared on earth in the flesh.

At the time of year which corresponds to our month of December, the ancient

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<sup>7</sup> *The Two Babylons*, chapters 1 and 2.

heathens held a *festival* to honour the birth of the son of the Babylonian "queen of heaven"; and this "queen of heaven" was none other than Semiramis herself. Under this title, she is mentioned in the Bible in Jer. 7:18 and 44:17-25. She was worshipped as the great goddess, although she had of course merely been a woman, who eventually died, as every other human being does. Yet nevertheless, she was worshipped; and during the month we know as December, at the time of the winter solstice in the northern hemisphere (i.e. at precisely the time that we know as the "Christmas season"), they honoured the birth of her son. In fact, there were heathens who celebrated the birthday of Tammuz, or Baal, the sun-god, on that very day which we know as December 25!

Both names of the sun-god are found in Scripture: Tammuz in Ezek. 8:14, and Baal in many places, e.g. 1 Kings 18.

Tammuz was illegitimate, but Semiramis claimed that it was a *virgin birth*. Satan was preparing the world for his counterfeit religion; his masterpiece. The legitimate successor of ancient Baal worship is Roman Catholicism. The pope of Rome holds the position of the ancient kings of Babylon. For the headquarters of this satanic religion established in Babylon was later transferred to Pergamos, and then to Rome; and control of it finally passed into the hands of the popes of Rome, after the Papal system came into being.<sup>8</sup>

The religion of Baal spread worldwide, and everywhere he was worshipped as God incarnate.<sup>9</sup> Proof of this can be found if one studies the religions of various ancient lands. For example, in Egypt, Semiramis was called "Isis" (the queen of heaven). Isis, a well-known Egyptian deity, gave birth to a son at about this very time, the time of the winter solstice, it was believed.<sup>10</sup> Now why, when the religion had begun in Babylon, do we find the *same* story in Egypt, the deities merely bearing different names? The reason is that Babylon's religion had spread to Egypt. And not only to Egypt, but to all parts of the world.

Another example is pagan Rome. The festival there was called the feast of Saturn — the *Saturnalia* — and it lasted five days. During this period, there was drunkenness, revelry, and licentiousness.<sup>11</sup> Schools were closed, gambling was practiced, and gifts were exchanged, the most common being tapers and clay dolls, the latter being especially given to children.<sup>12</sup> Does all this sound

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<sup>8</sup> *The Two Babylons*, pp.239-242.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p.96.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p.93.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p.96.

<sup>12</sup> *The Americanized Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1900, Vol. IX, p.5236, as quoted in *The Truth About Christmas*, by R.F. Becker, p.15. Reiner Publications, Swengel, Pennsylvania.

familiar? It sounds like the Christmas season today! The same sins are committed, and the same custom of gift-giving is practiced, during Christmas festivities! Times have changed, and the names have changed, but what goes on at that time of year has not changed. It is the same now, as it was centuries ago.

In Babylon, they celebrated the feast of Bacchus.<sup>13</sup> This was held in their month of Thebeth, which corresponded with our month of December. The date, December 25, also coincided with the birth of Attis, a Phrygian cult of the sun-god. And the feasts in commemoration of the births of other sun-gods, such as Mithras, were also observed at the time of the winter solstice.<sup>14</sup> One can find the pattern repeating itself over and over again.

Among the Arabian Sabians, the moon, rather than the sun, was the symbol of their favourite god; and on the 24th December, they celebrated the birthday of this god. And the ancient Saxons celebrated precisely the same birthday on the 25th December.<sup>15</sup>

Christmas was known as "Yule day" among the Anglo-Saxons. This word is still used. What is its meaning?

"Yule" is the Chaldean name for an "infant". Long before the coming of either Christianity or Roman Catholicism, the heathen Anglo-Saxons called the 25th December "Yule day"; in other words, "infant day" or "child's day" — the day they celebrated the birth of the false "messiah"!<sup>16</sup>

The night before "Yule day" was called "Mother night". Today it is called "Christmas eve". And who was it called "Mother night" after? After Mary, the mother of the Lord? No; for "Mother night" was observed *centuries* before Jesus was born. *Semiramis* was the inspiration for "Mother night". And "Child's day" was the supposed birthday of her son, the sun-god!

Thus we find, among the pagan Anglo-Saxons, the *same thing* that went on in Babylon, Egypt, Rome, and other places around the world as well. As with so many other evil practices, *Babylon* was the source. Chapter 51 of the book of Jeremiah deals with Babylon, and God's judgements upon that wicked, idolatrous city, that at one time ruled the then-known world. In vs. 7 we read the following:

"Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD'S hand, that made all the earth

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<sup>13</sup> *The Two Babylons*, p.97.

<sup>14</sup> *Christmas: An Historical Survey Regarding Its Origins and Opposition to It*, by Kevin Reed, p.2. Presbyterian Heritage Publications, Dallas, Texas, 1983.

<sup>15</sup> *The Two Babylons*, p.94.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.93,94.

drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad."

This is a very revealing passage of God's Word. The rebellion against God by the people of Babylon resulted in Baal worship: a *counterfeit* of God's true religion. And as it spread, all nations "drank" of it. ALL nations became intoxicated on the "wine" of Babylon's false religion. EVERY religious system in the world stems from there. The facts of history bear this out.

And that description of Babylon in Jer. 51 is virtually identical to the description of the Roman Catholic Institution in Rev. 17! It must be borne in mind that Jeremiah was prophesying of the ancient, *literal* Babylon, which was destroyed. But the Holy Spirit, in the New Testament, employs almost the same language to describe the Roman Catholic Institution, the *mystical* "Babylon": "With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication" (Rev. 17:2).

Again in chapter 18, we read: "For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication" (18:3).

Why this close parallel? Nothing is by coincidence in the Word of God. The Holy Spirit, who inspired Jeremiah, also inspired John the apostle. And He deliberately employed, in Rev. 17:2 and 18:3, almost identical language with Jer. 51:7. The reason He did so is this: the Roman Catholic system is the *New Testament* "Babylon"; the *same* religious system as that which existed in the Babylon of the Old Testament. Of course, now it appears in a "Christian" disguise, using New Testament names and terms: e.g. Mary, Joseph, Jesus; salvation; church; etc. But it is the *same* idolatrous system. The world is drunk on the same wine, now, as was the world at the time of Babylon!

"And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Rev. 17:5). This is Romanism. And one (just one!) of her many abominations is Christmas. The festival we know as "Christmas" originated in the old, literal Babylon. The early Christians had nothing to do with this heathen celebration! It was *not* part of true Christian worship. You will find no record anywhere in Scripture of the early Christians celebrating the birth of the Lord Jesus, neither at the time of the heathen festival in honour of the birth of the Babylonian sun-god, nor at any other time. Nor is there a single commandment, anywhere in Scripture, to do so. Search the Scriptures, and see! Read them from Genesis to Revelation. No such commandment is ever given.

Christians are given two ordinances to keep, in the New Testament: baptism and the Lord's table (see, for example, Matt. 28:19 and 1 Cor. 11). But nowhere are believers commanded to hold a yearly celebration in honour of the birth of Christ. It was sufficient for the early Christians that Jesus, their Lord and Saviour, had been born. They praised God the Father that His Son had

indeed come in the flesh. The day and the time of His birth had no relevance to them, because Jesus was no longer physically on earth. He had returned to heaven. And it was the *risen, exalted* Christ whom they looked to, by faith — not a babe laid in a manger. Jesus Christ is *no longer* a baby; *no longer* the "Christ-child"; but the exalted Lord of all. And He does NOT somehow return to earth as a baby every year at Christmas-time — although this is the impression given, even in certain hymns sung in Protestant services.

Satan set up his own, counterfeit "Christianity". It was what later came to be known as *Roman Catholicism*, pretending to be Christian, but in no way Christian. It had been developing, step by step, throughout the first three centuries AD. Finally, under the Roman emperor Constantine, in the fourth century, what was called the "Catholic Church" was established as the official religion. And in the fourth century,<sup>17</sup> this religious system adopted the pagan festival, known variously as the feast of Bacchus, the feast of Saturn, etc., and gave it a "Christian" appearance! That is the REAL origin of Christmas.

Popery did the same with other heathen festivals, simply renaming them. One which has particular relevance to the present subject is the Romish festival known as "the Annunciation of the Virgin". This is observed on the 25th of March, supposedly to commemorate the miraculous conception of Christ in Mary's womb. The Bible, of course, is absolutely silent as to when this took place. But in ancient pagan Rome, *on that very day*, a festival was held in honour of Cybele, the mother of the Babylonian messiah! Coincidence? Certainly not, especially in light of the fact that there are exactly nine months between March 25 and December 25. As the Babylonian messiah was supposedly conceived on that day, and born nine months later on December 25, the false "Church" of Rome adopted this festival, calling it the "Annunciation of the Virgin", or "Lady-day" (this name furnishes even further proof: for at Rome, the common title of Cybele was Domina, or "the Lady"; and the Roman Catholic "Mary" is called "Our Lady", a title derived from the heathen goddess). The choice of date was certainly not coincidental. It was deliberate, being exactly nine months before Christmas day.<sup>18</sup>

What was the purpose in doing this? Why did Rome adopt heathen festivals, and rename them? It was done to *gain control* over more and more people. Whenever it has found something in heathenism that would suit its purposes, it has adopted it and adapted it, merely making it *appear* "Christian" to those ignorant of the Scriptures. This has been its policy through the centuries. For

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<sup>17</sup> *Encyclopaedia Britannica: Micropaedia*, Vol. II, p.903.

<sup>18</sup> *The Two Babylons*, pp.102,103.

example, the Roman pope, Gregory, in the year 606, instructed an abbot named Mellitus to promote the conversion of the people of Britain to the religion of Rome by the following method:

"The temples of the idols among the people should on no account be destroyed. The idols themselves are to be destroyed [in very many cases, the idols were simply assimilated as well, and declared to be images of various "saints", etc.), but the temples themselves are to be aspersed with holy water, altars set up in them, and relics deposited there. For if these temples are well-built, they must be purified from the worship of demons and dedicated to the service of the true God. In this way, we hope that the people, seeing that their temples are not destroyed, may abandon their error and, flocking more readily to their accustomed resorts, may come to know and adore the true God. And since they have a custom of sacrificing many oxen to demons, let some other solemnity be substituted in its place, such as a day of Dedication or Festivals of the holy martyrs whose relics are enshrined there.<sup>19</sup>

This is one of the means whereby this institution has come to have so many adherents. One form of heathenism was simply exchanged for another! The old gods were still worshipped, and even in the same buildings, but under different names! Even today, all over the world, the Papacy permits its subjects to keep certain heathen customs. For example, in a letter to the African Roman Catholic bishops, dated March 25, 1988, the "Vatican Secretariat for Non-Christian Religions" urged them to find ways to adapt traditional African religions to African Roman Catholicism, and also to study African religious movements which have blended traditional beliefs with Roman Catholicism. It said that the "Church" must identify elements within traditional African religions which it can adopt, or adapt, or "purify". And it stated that the result would be a "Church" more at home in Africa, and Africans more at home in the "Church".<sup>20</sup>

Modern examples of the "Romanization" of various religions are to be found. In India, there are many monasteries and religious centres where Romanism and Hinduism are being blended together. Romanism and Buddhism are being actively amalgamated in some places as well<sup>21</sup> Things have not changed. What Popery is doing today, it was doing in the fourth century. Its purpose now is the same as it was then — to gain more proselytes. When the "Catholic Church" adopted the festival of the birth of the

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<sup>19</sup> *A History of the English Church and People*, by Bede, pp.86,87. Penguin Books, 1955,1968. Quoted in *Christmas: An Historical Survey Regarding Its Origins and Opposition to It*, p.3.

<sup>20</sup> *The Southern Cross* (southern African Roman Catholic weekly), 29 May 1988. Cape Town, South Africa.

<sup>21</sup> *30 Days* (Roman Catholic monthly), September 1989. Ignatius Press, San Francisco, California.

sun-god in the fourth century, and "catholicized" it, the pagans *flocked* into the "Catholic" places of worship. For they were still able to worship their old gods, but merely under different names! It mattered not to them, whether they worshipped the goddess-mother and her child under the old names, or under the names of the "Virgin Mary" and the "Christ-child". Either way, it was the same old religion.

And around the world, when the festival of Christmas has been introduced into a culture, it has often been joined to some heathen custom. As just one example, the Xhosa tribe, in South Africa, traditionally celebrated the ceremony of firstfruits (*ulibo*) at the time of the summer solstice, which of course coincides with the Christmas season in the southern hemisphere. And after the Christmas festival was introduced, *iKresmesi* (a corruption of the word "Christmas") became the greatest festivity in the pagan Xhosa calendar, celebrated in the rural areas with orgies of drinking, and in the urban areas by girls dancing in men's clothing, and men dressed up as women.<sup>22</sup>

Centuries before Christ was born, Satan set up a Mother-and-Child religion. Popery was (and is) also a Mother-and-Child religion. The Mary of the Bible, who was chosen to be the mother of Jesus, was a humble disciple of the Lord. She was a sinner saved by grace, as all God's true children are (Lk. 1:46,47; Rom. 3:10,23). She was chosen by God for a great and blessed task; but she was not conceived without sin, or assumed bodily into heaven, as Romanism claims she was; nor are men to pray to her, seek her intercession, etc., as indeed Roman Catholics do. The position of Mary within Romanism is that of a deity. But the "Mary" of Romanism is NOT the Mary of the New Testament! The religion of Rome is the ancient religion of the goddess-mother and son; it is NOT biblical Christianity. Only Christ was conceived without sin; only by Christ can men come to the Father (Jn. 14:6); only by Him, can men be saved (Acts 4:12). Any religious system that points to *another*, is an abomination to God. The Roman Catholic Institution came into being through a satanic blend of the ancient Babylonian mystery religion and certain elements extracted from Christianity. The great virgin goddess of heathenism became "Mary", the sun-god became "Christ", and various other gods became the "saints".

What about the word, "Christmas", itself? The word is derived from "Christ-mass", or "mass of Christ"<sup>23</sup> Thus we find that even the *name* of this festival

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<sup>22</sup> *Imvubu* (Kaffrarian Museum Newsletter), December 1989, Vol. I, No. 3. The Kaffrarian Museum, King William's Town, South Africa.

<sup>23</sup> *Encyclopaedia Britannica: Micropaedia*, Vol. II, p.903.

is Roman Catholic! That name — used freely by multitudes of Protestants the world over — comes out of idolatry. It is a "name of blasphemy" (Rev. 17:3) — for the mass is a terrible blasphemy, and to associate the blessed name of the Son of God with it is to create a "name of blasphemy" indeed.

What is the mass? It is Rome's perversion of the scriptural ordinance of the Lord's table. According to Roman Catholic doctrine, the priest has the power to change the wafer and wine into the *actual* body and blood of Christ. This change is called "transubstantiation". And then the supposed "body and blood" of Christ are *offered* to God on the altar by the priest, as a sacrifice. It is supposed to be the *same* sacrifice as that of Christ on the cross.

In addition, when the people partake of these things, they are told that they are literally *eating* Christ.<sup>24</sup>

This Roman Catholic sacrament originated in ancient Babylon, centuries before the Roman Catholic Institution came into being.<sup>25</sup> Rome simply adopted it, and made it appear to be "Christian". The Bible is very emphatic that the Lord Jesus Christ offered Himself *once only* for His people (Jn. 19:30; Heb. 7:27; 9:12,24-28); and also, that the bread and cup in the Lord's supper simply represent His body and blood. They are not changed *into* His body and blood (1 Cor. 11:23-28). It is blasphemous heresy to teach or believe otherwise. True Christians have always opposed the doctrine of the mass, as being absolutely contrary to holy Scripture.

By its name alone, "Christ-mass" is shown to be a pagan festival, without sanction in the Word of God.

This festival, once it was incorporated into the so-called "Catholic Church", became its most popular festival. It still is today. And not surprisingly, for it is a *worldly* thing, and the things of the world are always popular with the world. If it was not part of the world, it would be hated and despised. But, being of the world, it is loved by it.

But not only is Christmas the most popular festival in Romanism — it is also the most important and popular time of the year for most *Protestant* churches and denominations, who have aped Rome in this matter!

Precisely for this reason, what is being dealt with in this book will anger many Protestants. By God's grace, however, those who truly know and love the Lord will be led into a closer walk with Him. Though many become angry, this

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<sup>24</sup> *The Documents of Vatican II*, "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church", by Walter M. Abbott, SJ. Geoffrey Chapman, London-Dublin, 1966. Also *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church*, chapter 15, by J. Newner, SJ, and J. Dupuis, SJ. Collins Liturgical Publications, London, 1983.

<sup>25</sup> *The Two Babylons*, pp.156-165.

should not surprise the saints of God. The Lord Jesus, during His earthly ministry, boldly spoke out against the sinful traditions of men. He did not "beat about the bush", as so many who claim to be His ministers do today. Nor did the apostles. They preached in exactly the same manner as their Lord had done. The tread-softly, watered-down, mincing, man-pleasing approach of so many preachers today is sickening! They are *so* afraid of offending their hearers! The devil's work must not be covered up. It must be brought out into the light, so that people can see it. "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather *reprove* them" (Eph. 5:11). It does not concern me if countless supposed "Christians" are offended by what I am writing about here; it does not concern me if they become angry, shouting that the "holy days" of the "Church" must not be tampered with. There are *NO* "holy days" on the calendar, for Christians!

In Gal. 4:9,10, we read: "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years."

And in Col. 2:16,17, we read: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."

Now, the important thing to note here is that both these passages of Scripture refer to the *Jewish* holy days under the law of Moses. If Christians are not even commanded to observe the *Old Testament* holy days — days which *did* have divine sanction, for an appointed time — but are free from any obligation to observe them, they are certainly not to observe *pagan* holy days! Christians should have absolutely nothing to do with these things. To observe a pagan holy day is to participate in idolatry.

Some have tried to justify the keeping of Christmas by appealing to Rom. 14:5,6: "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it." This passage, however, in no way gives permission to Christians to keep Christmas if they so wish. For it is referring, *not* to any *pagan* holy days, but to the "days" which the Lord *did* ordain at one time, for His people under the law of Moses, and which certain weak believers were still observing. This passage does not in any sense sanction the observation of pagan holy days.

Yes, when Christmas is exposed for what it really is, this angers people. It angers *Protestant* people! And there is a reason why it does so. When the pagan celebration of Christmas is rooted up, and rejected, then what has become

a *Protestant tradition* is rejected! And *that* is why people become angry. It began as a heathen holy day, then it became a Popish (and still heathen) holy day, and then it became a Protestant (but still heathen) holy day! And if anyone dares show it up for what it really is, he faces the wrath of the Protestant religious machine. And these days, that can be very ugly. For most of what goes by the name of "Protestantism" today is almost as corrupt as Romanism. It bears little resemblance to biblical Christianity, for it is not biblical Christianity.

The Roman Catholic Institution has been so successful in influencing the Protestant denominations, that if anyone touches one of their "holy days", he is touching something which they consider to be just that — holy and sacred and pure. The fact that it is not found in the Word of God does not bother them in the least.

Christmas is a Romish trapping *within* Protestant churches. The Lord commands His true people to be separate from the world. 2 Cor. 6:14-18 says: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore *come out* from among them, and be ye *separate*, saith the Lord, and *touch not* the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

Christians are to come right out of the things of the world, living absolutely separate from all pagan idolatry. All believers who have been in any way involved in Romish trappings must *repent*, and come out, and stand up against such evil.

## CHAPTER TWO

### CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS

Let us now examine some of the *customs* of Christmas. There are many customs, of course; but this chapter will be devoted to an examination of the principal ones.

To many people, the Christmas customs appear to be so harmless. But are they?

We will begin with the most well-known of all — the *Christmas tree*.

Trees were used in the religious systems of ancient Rome and Egypt. In Rome the trees used were firs, and in Egypt they were palms; but they both symbolised the same thing. The palm denoted the pagan "messiah", "Baal-Tamar", and the fir denoted "Baal-Berith".<sup>26</sup>

It may be asked, How did a tree come to represent the sun-god?

The sun-god was also called Adonis. His mother was said to have been changed into a tree, and while she was in that form she supposedly gave birth. To the true child of God, of course, this sounds ridiculous, and it is; but to the ancient heathen, it was accepted as truth. Many intelligent people, today, believe some very strange things. There are fanciful tales and supposed "miracles" aplenty in Roman Catholicism, which are nevertheless believed by millions of people! A power is at work there, a spirit that is not of God. How is it possible, for example, that an intelligent man can hold a wafer in his hand, and believe that that wafer is the literal, physical body of Jesus Christ? How is it possible that an intelligent man can hold a cup of wine in his hand, and believe that although it looks, smells, and tastes like wine, it is not wine — it is the actual blood of Jesus Christ? Truly Satan, the god of this world, has *blinded the minds* of them that believe not (2 Cor. 4:4).

Way back in ancient times, people believed that a woman had been changed into a tree, and had given birth to the sun-god while in that form. Such is the nature of heathenism. Any creature will be set up and worshipped, rather than the Creator (Rom. 1:21-25).

When she gave birth, and because she was supposedly a tree, her son was known as "the Man the Branch". That is very significant, because in the Word of God, the TRUE Messiah, Jesus Christ, is given this name (Jer. 23:5; 33:15;

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<sup>26</sup> *The Two Babylons*, p.97.

Zech. 3:8; 6:12)! The devil, using great cunning, set up the worship of the "mother and son", and gave the pagan "son" the very name that belongs to the true Christ alone!

It must be understood that heathenism is very complicated. There are so many variations of the same story, so many different accounts, that were developed through the centuries. After almost 2000 years, Christians still have, today, the same faith that was "once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). But after thousands of years, heathenism has many branches, all stemming originally from Babylon.

The name, "Zero-Ashta", which was just another name for the same god, signified "The seed of the woman" (a name of blasphemy, for the true seed of the woman is Christ — Gen. 3:15); and it also signified *Ignigena*, "born of the fire". He was supposed to have entered the fire on "Mother night", the night before December 25th; and then he was supposed to have been "born" the next day out of the fire, as the "branch of God", the tree that brings divine gifts to men. This is simply another variation of the same belief. What blasphemy! And also, what nonsense! And yet in some places today, what is called the "Yule log" is placed in the fireplace on Christmas eve. The next morning, behold! there is a Christmas tree! The *same custom* being practiced today! Only the names have changed.

It may be asked, How did this particular symbolism originate? Nimrod, when he was eventually killed, was cut into pieces.<sup>27</sup> The Bible reveals that this was something men in ancient times used to do, on occasion (see Judg. 19:29,30 and 1 Sam. 11:7). After Nimrod was killed, Semiramis conceived, and when she gave birth, as noted earlier, the claim was made that it was a *virgin* birth. Of course, the child was conceived illegitimately, but this was the lie that was spread; and she claimed that the child was Nimrod *incarnated*.

Now, the dead Nimrod was symbolised by a tree, stripped of its branches, and cut down almost to the ground. But then, the great serpent, which was the symbol of Aesculapius, the "life-restorer", twisted itself around the dead stock, and according to the legend, from the dead tree a young palm sprouted. The palm, of course, was a symbol of *victory*. The meaning of all this symbolism was obvious: the god had returned to life, victorious over death! And what we know as the 25th December was observed as the day on which the god reappeared on earth. He had been killed, and was "reborn" on that day! It was called, in ancient Rome, "the birthday of the Unconquered Sun."<sup>28</sup>

Thus, the log placed in the fireplace represented the dead Nimrod; and the tree

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<sup>27</sup> *The Two Babylons*, pp.55-58,64.

<sup>28</sup> *Encyclopaedia Britannica: Macropaedia*, Vol. 4, p.499.

(which today is called the "Christmas tree"), which appeared the next morning, was Nimrod alive again, or Tammuz (the name of the illegitimate child born to Semiramis).

The Word of God speaks plainly about what we know as the "Christmas tree", in the book of the prophet Jeremiah.

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

That is a perfect description of the Christmas tree!

Jeremiah had a lot to say about Babylon. A tree was used in Babylon, as part of their idolatry. Someone would go and cut down a tree in the forest. The same thing still occurs today. It is, of course, much easier for many people today: they simply go and buy one. And today there are artificial trees too. In ancient times, once the tree was procured, it was decorated with silver and gold. And thousands of years later, all over the world, the same things takes place in the homes of countless numbers of people, every December.

The tree could not move, or speak, and had to be carried about — like all dumb idols (Psa. 115:4-8). And note, the *palm* tree is particularly mentioned — the very same tree which symbolised the victorious reappearance of the sun-god on earth, in heathen idolatry.

God commanded His people to have nothing to do with those heathen Babylonian customs. He called such customs "vain". They were HIS people, and were to be separate from all such things (Lev. 20:26). And what are all the Christmas tree customs of today, but *vain* customs of the heathen?

In many Bible passages, the Lord refers to the ungodly committing idolatry under a "green tree". For example, in Deut. 12:2, He commanded the Israelites, "Ye shall utterly destroy all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree." See also 1 Kings 14:23; 2 Kings 16:4; Jer. 2:20; etc. Nothing has changed! What was being done thousands of years ago, by idolatrous people, is still being done today. Idols are set up on the Christmas tree; idolatry is committed *before* the tree; even the tree itself is a form of idolatry. At Christmas-time, that tree occupies the central place in the living room. Furniture is often moved around to make room for it, and even to face

it. It becomes the central piece of "furniture" during the Christmas period.

Most children are more interested in the tree than in the Lord Jesus Christ. They become so excited when "Christmas is coming". Why? Despite all the good intentions of those parents who vainly attempt to make Christ the centre of Christmas, the fact remains that children get excited about Christmas because of the *tree*, the *tinsel*, the *decorations*, and the *gifts* associated with the tree.

The Christmas tree is a part of ancient idolatry. It must be forsaken by true believers.

Moving on from the Christmas tree, we come to another Christmas custom: the use of *candles*.

Candles were lit by the ancient Babylonians in honour of their god, and his altars had candles on them. And as is well-known, candles are a very important part of the ritualism of Roman Catholicism, which adopted the custom from heathenism.

Candles are to have *no part* in Christian worship, for nowhere in the New Testament is their use sanctioned. And yet they are used by many supposedly "Protestant" institutions! Once again, it is a Romish trapping within "Protestantism".

In ancient times, candles were made of beeswax. In the Chaldean language, "Dabar", the expression signifying "bee", also signified "Word". The *true* "Word" is Jesus Christ (Jn. 1:1). But Nimrod was declared by the heathen to be the "messiah" and was therefore considered to be the "Revealer of spiritual life"; the "Enlightener"; "the Word"! And he was represented as a lion, with a *bee* in its mouth — since the expression for "bee" and "Word" was the same.

*Christ* is the true Word, and the "light of men" (Jn. 1:4); but in the pagan mysteries, Nimrod was worshipped as the "Word" and the "light" — and candles, which give light, were made of beeswax, to symbolise Nimrod. The evidence for this is abundant.<sup>29</sup>

Next, let us consider the custom of "kissing under the mistletoe".

In the religion of the Druids — who controlled ancient Britain and Saxony long before the Lord Jesus Christ was born — mistletoe represented the false "messiah". Now, of course, the Druids' religion had originated in Babylon. The mistletoe was considered by the Druids to be a divine branch (again, a perversion of God's prophetic Word concerning Christ, "the Branch"), coming down from heaven, and growing upon an earthly tree. In other words, it symbolised God being reconciled to man, by God coming down to earth from

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<sup>29</sup> *The Two Babylons*, pp.97,191-197.

heaven. Again, as with so much in that religious system that started in Babylon, this was a perversion of the truth — for the *true* "branch of God" is Jesus Christ, who is both God and man, and thus the only one fitted to be the mediator between God and men (1 Tim. 2:5), by whom God and His elect are reconciled (2 Cor. 5:18-21).

The mistletoe, then, in the Druidic religion, symbolised the reconciliation between God and man. And a *kiss* is the well-known symbol of reconciliation! *That* is how "kissing under the mistletoe" became a custom: both were symbols of reconciliation.<sup>30</sup>

This whole perverted idea could have come from a corrupt interpretation of Psa. 85:10,11: "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have *kissed* each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven. " This psalm was written soon after the Jewish captivity in Babylon ended. Large numbers of Jews remained in Babylon even after their fellow-Jews had returned to Palestine; and certainly this inspired psalm, being part of the Word of God, would have been known to the Jews in Babylon as well. And the heathen Babylonians would have heard it, and perverted the inspired symbol of verses 10 and 11 to suit themselves. And from Babylon, the error spread around the world.<sup>31</sup>

A kiss is also something which is, at times, associated with *lust*. On the Celtic midsummers-eve feast, when mistletoe was gathered, men would kiss one another to display their homosexuality, an abomination to God. Later on, the celebrations involved both men and women, but at first it was a homosexual custom.<sup>32</sup>

In addition, mistletoe, holly, and ivy, were symbols of fertility and immortality among the heathen; for these plants are evergreens. By tradition, holly was considered masculine and ivy feminine, so both were supposedly needed if all in the house were to share the blessing of fertility.

Mistletoe was also once known as the "plant of peace", and in ancient Scandinavia, enemies were reconciled under it. It was supposed to bring "good luck" and fertility, and even to protect the house from witchcraft.<sup>33</sup> Naturally, Christians would not keep these customs for such evil and perverse reasons, but the fact remains: "the customs of the people are vain" (Jer. 10:3).

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<sup>30</sup> *The Two Babylons*, p.99.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p.99.

<sup>32</sup> *The Origins of Christmas Traditions* (pamphlet), by Albert James Dager. Media Spotlight, Costa Mesa, California, 1985.

<sup>33</sup> *The Shocking Truth About Christmas*, by Russell K. Tardo, p.9. Faithful Word, Arabi, Louisiana.

They must be rejected by all who know and love the Lord.

Other Christmas customs are the "Christmas goose" (or its equivalent in various parts of the world), and "Yule cakes" or "Christmas cakes". Both were used in Egypt and Rome in the worship of the Babylonian "messiah". The goose was sacred in many ancient lands: Rome (where an offering of a large goose and a cake supposedly pacified the offended deity), Asia Minor (where it was the symbol of the god Cupid), India (where it was sacred to the god Brahma), and of course in Chaldea.<sup>34</sup> In Egypt the goose, which in addition to being the symbol of the god Seb, was the favourite offering of Osiris and could not be eaten except in the depth of winter (i.e. around what is called "Christmas time" today, in the northern hemisphere) was a symbol for a *child*, ready to *die*! In other words, a symbol of the pagan "messiah", ready to give his life (supposedly) for the world. Blasphemy! A satanic mockery of the truth.

As for the boar's head, eaten traditionally at Christmas dinners in England: in many countries, the people sacrificed a boar to the god, because a boar was supposed to have mortally wounded Adonis, or Tammuz, according to mythology. Diana, another name under which the so-called "mother of the gods" was worshipped (in other words, Semiramis), was frequently associated with a boar's head, because she was said to have killed the boar whose tusks proved so fatal to the god. The Continental Saxons, *on* what is now called "Christmas day", used to sacrifice a boar to the sun (the sun was the *goddess* to them), to propitiate her for the loss of Adonis. The Egyptians sacrificed swine once a year at the feast of the moon, to the moon deity and to Osiris, or Bacchus. And the Romans, during the feast of Saturn, feasted on boar.<sup>35</sup>

Now we come to *Santa Claus* or "Father Christmas". This strange-looking figure, who appears in department stores at Christmas-time, and brings gifts for "good" children, originated with the so-called "saint", Nicholas. He was a bishop in Myra, Asia Minor, in the time of the Roman emperor Diocletian. He was tortured and imprisoned until the time of Constantine. He used to give gifts to the poor at night. He is considered, by the spiritually blind, to be the "patron saint" of Russia, and the special protector of children, scholars, merchants and sailors. He is also invoked by superstitious travellers against robbers. In Dutch, he was called "Sinterklaas", from which the American version of his name was derived: "Santa Claus". Dutch settlers brought the custom to America. His feast

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<sup>34</sup> *The Two Babylons*, pp.101,102.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.99-101.

day was December 6, the anniversary of his death. Later, he became associated with Christmas, and became a part of the Christmas tradition.<sup>36</sup>

In Holland, "St." Nicholas supposedly appeared in a mediaeval bishop's colourful outfit, with a *red* mitre and long cape. In America, this outfit was altered to become what it is today: the red cap and suit worn by Santa.<sup>37</sup>

In Holland and other European countries, he was represented as being stem, threatening to leave a *whip*, not toys, for naughty children. A Knight Rupert supposedly went ahead of Nicholas in the Black Forest area to frighten naughty children and threaten them.<sup>38</sup>

As for his association with *snow*, *reindeer*, and the *North Pole*: these come from the Scandinavian and Norse traditions. The northern European peoples believed that their god, Woden, brought gifts in the middle of the winter. Nicholas later replaced Woden. It was believed that on the eve of his feast day, Nicholas rode across the sky on a white or pale-grey horse — exactly as Woden had done! He brought gifts for good children, and rods for the naughty ones, and was accompanied by a small elf who slid down chimneys.<sup>39</sup>

The sun-god, Odin, or Saturn, was said to live near the North Pole, or heaven; and he was said to come secretly, accompanied by demons and weird animals. Furthermore, being the sun-god he was associated with *fire*, which accounts for Santa's connection with chimneys.<sup>40</sup>

Furthermore, Santa Claus bears a very close resemblance to the Egyptian god, Bes. This god was a little, round, gnome-like figure, the patron of children; and he was said to live at the North Pole, and to make toys for "good" children.<sup>41</sup> That is Santa to a tee!

Santa Claus is given powers and attributes which only GOD has. Think about it. He is made out to be *omniscient*. That means he is all-knowing. He knows exactly what every child wants. Yet only God is omniscient (Heb. 4:13; Psa. 139:2-4; Jn. 21:17; Psa. 147:5; Acts 15:18). He is made out to be *omnipotent*. That means he is all-powerful, so that he can give to each child exactly what each one wants. Again, only God is omnipotent (Dan. 4:35; Rev. 1:8; 4:8; Gen.

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<sup>36</sup> *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 16, p.416. 1959. See also *Holidays: Christian or Pagan* (tract), by Milton Martin. Christian Truth and Victory Publications, Fridley, Minnesota.

<sup>37</sup> *The God Man Has Made* (tract), by Bob McCurry. Calvary Temple Bible Fellowship, East Point, Georgia.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> *The Southern Cross*, 20 December 1987; and *The God Man Has Made*.

<sup>40</sup> *The Shocking Truth About Christmas*.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

1; Col. 1:16,17). And he is also made out to be almost *omnipresent*. That means he can be almost everywhere at once. On one night of the year he visits all the "good" children in the world, and leaves gifts for them. Yet only God is omnipresent (Matt. 18:20; Psa. 139:7-10; Isa. 66:1; Jer. 23:23,24). There is a well-known song about Santa Claus:

He's making a list, and checking it twice,  
Gonna find out who's naughty and nice —  
Santa Claus is coming to town!

He sees you when you're sleeping,  
He knows when you're awake,  
He knows if you've been bad or good —  
So be good for goodness' sake!

Clearly, Santa is made out to be a *god*; eternal, good, omniscient, omnipotent, and almost omnipresent.

Parents are *lying* to their children about Santa Claus. All lying is sinful (Rev. 21:8). And they are taking the attention of their children away from God, and causing them to focus on a fat man in a red suit. How can a parent punish a child for lying, when the *parent* lies to the *child* for years about Santa? That is hypocrisy, and the Lord hates it.

All of this teaches the child to believe that, just like Santa, *God* can be pleased with "good works", done in order to earn His favour. Also, that no matter how bad the child has been, he will *still* be rewarded by God — just as Santa never fails to bring gifts. As every Christian knows, man's works are NOT pleasing to God (Isa. 64:6; Eph. 2:8,9). No one can be saved by his own works, but only by God's grace, through faith in Christ. There *is* a hell for the wicked (Psa. 9:17); God will not reward everyone with eternal life. Every Christian knows this — and yet so many who name the name of Christ perpetuate the Santa myth to their children: Santa, the blasphemous substitute for God!

Santa has even been called "Kriss Kringle". This is a corruption of the German for "Christ child"!<sup>42</sup> Are you beginning to see what Satan has done? What vile blasphemy this is!

What about the custom of *gift-giving*? At this time of year, people give gifts to one another. But — what do they give gifts *for*? Vast numbers give in order to get, or because they know they will be receiving, and so feel obliged to reciprocate. They know that if they do not give, their family and friends are going to be very upset. And perhaps, next year, they will not receive anything.

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<sup>42</sup> *The Origins of Christmas Traditions.*

But are these the right motives for giving gifts?

Vast sums of money are spent, and stores get all geared up for Christmas, because like no other time of the year they rake in millions from a gullible public. In Rev. 18, which is a prophecy of the Roman Catholic system, we read that the merchants of the earth get *rich* through such things as this Roman Catholic holiday! "For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies" (Rev. 18:3). Yes indeed! —toys, food, alcohol, and all kinds of other merchandise, sold in vast quantities at this time of year.

People justify all this by saying that the wise men gave gifts, so we should give gifts to one another. But, apart from the fact that nowhere are Christians commanded to celebrate the birth of Christ, there is another little fact that is conveniently overlooked: *to whom* did the wise men give gifts? To one another? No — they gave their gifts to Christ! And therefore, to use the gift-giving of the wise men to attempt to justify this custom, is foolish and unscriptural.

The custom of gift-giving at this time of year had its origins in the pagan festivals of the sun-god, which, as has been seen, were held in December. Gifts were exchanged by the Romans during their Saturnalia festival. And this custom, along with all the others, was adopted by the Roman Catholic Institution.<sup>43</sup> The most common gifts exchanged during the Saturnalia were tapers and clay dolls, with children being the chief recipients of the dolls. Varro, a Roman antiquarian, believed that these dolls represented original human sacrifice to the infernal deity.<sup>44</sup>

As for the "Christmas stocking", or boot: according to tradition, a poor widower of Myra, in Asia Minor, where the so-called "saint", Nicholas, was a bishop, had three daughters, for whom he could not provide dowries. "Saint" Nicholas supposedly threw three bags of gold through the window. One rolled into a shoe, another into a stocking. And there you have the origin of *that* yearly tradition!<sup>45</sup>

The Christmas customs are thus found to be of heathen origin. "Learn not the way of the heathen," the Lord says; "for the customs of the people are vain" (Jer. 10:2,3). God has spoken. Let His true Church be obedient.

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<sup>43</sup> *Encyclopaedia Britannica: Micropaedia*, Vol. II, p.903. Also *The Origins of Christmas Traditions*.

<sup>44</sup> *The Americanized Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1900, Vol. IX, p.5236, quoted in *The Truth About Christmas*, p.15.

<sup>45</sup> *Sunday Times Magazine*, December 15, 1985 (The Sunday Times, Johannesburg, South Africa). See also *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 16, p.416. 1959.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE BIBLICAL ACCOUNT OF THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

Let us now examine what the Bible *really* says about the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Firstly, *nowhere* are we told the date of His birth. God did not want us to know it, or He would have told us in His Word; for all that we need to know about the Lord is in the Bible. And what we have not been told, we must not look into. Why did He keep it from us? The reason is simple. If we had been given the birthday of Jesus in Scripture, men would have done exactly what they have done with the *supposed* birthday of the *false* "messiah": they would have made the date of His birth a "holy day".

Christians rejoice when reading the scriptural account of the birth of Christ! Without His birth, there would not have been His death; nor His resurrection; nor His teachings. But that day which is called "Christmas" has nothing to do with the birth of the Saviour.

Matt. 2:7 says, "Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared." The wise men must have answered him. Yet their answer has not been recorded for us in Holy Scripture. The Holy Spirit did not place it in the inspired Word, because it is not the will of God for us to be able to calculate precisely when the Lord was born.

One thing is for certain: we may not know the date, but we know what date it was *not*! It was NOT December 25. For the Bible tells us that the angel announced the birth of Jesus to shepherds, who were in the fields that night (Lk. 2:8-15). The nights were cold in Palestine, from about December to February, and shepherds did *not* watch their flocks at night, in the open fields, after the month of October.<sup>46</sup> That is an historical fact. Furthermore, that time of year would not have been suitable for pregnant women to travel; and Mary, who journeyed with Joseph to Bethlehem from Nazareth, was "great with child" (Lk. 2:5). Roman laws were (it is well-known) reasonable and considerate when it

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<sup>46</sup> *An Exposition of the New Testament*, 'Vol. I, pp.520,521 (notes on Lk. 2:8), by John Gill. Mathews and Leigh, London, 1809. Reprinted in 1989 by the Baptist Standard Bearer, Inc., Paris, Arkansas. See also *The Two Babylons*, pp.91,92.

came to such matters,<sup>47</sup> and therefore Caesar Augustus would not have issued such an unreasonable decree as to force pregnant women to travel in the depth of winter (Lk. 2:1).

Jesus Himself said, in Matt. 24:20, "But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter". Winter was a difficult time to travel in those days.

In conclusion: Jesus could not have been born on December the 25th.

Secondly, the Christmas carols, Christmas cards, and the "nativity plays" put on by various groups, including Protestant ones, present an entirely unscriptural account of the visit of the wise men.

"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem" (Matt. 2:1). "Wise men", the inspired text tells us — not "kings". There is — all too often — a difference between a wise man and a king! There have been many kings who were not wise men, and there have been many wise men who were not kings. And yet, in carols, cards, and plays, *kings* are said to have visited the young Jesus.

And there are always three of them! Nowhere in Scripture, however, is a number given. Where, then, did this number come from? From *tradition*. The reasoning goes like this: three types of gifts were brought to Jesus, gold, frankincense, and myrrh (Matt. 2:11); therefore, there must have been three "kings"! But such a conclusion cannot be automatically drawn. Gold, frankincense and myrrh were valuable gifts, and it is entirely conceivable that, if there were only two wise men, one brought two gifts, and the other brought one; or, if there were four or more wise men, *each* man brought gold, frankincense, and myrrh. There may have been only two wise men, there may have been three, or there may have been more than three. We just do not know. The Bible is silent.

When the wise men came to Jerusalem, they said, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him" (Matt. 2:2). They did not *follow* the star from their home in the east, as the unscriptural "Christmas story" goes. Read the verse again. Being wise men, they knew that the Messiah would be born in the land of the Jews. As their words reveal, they knew that He would be King of the Jews; they did not need a star to lead them there! When the star appeared in the east, they went *straight* to the land of the Jews. The star was the sign that it was time for them to go there. It only *led* them, once they were *in* Judaea! "When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went

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<sup>47</sup> *The Two Babylons*, p.92.

before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was" (Matt. 2:9). The tradition (for that is all it is) of the wise men following a star for many, many miles from the east, not knowing where they were going, is false. They only needed the star to point out to them *where*, in the land of the Jews, the Lord was — not which *land* He was in!

Matt. 2:11: "And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh." Here we come to one of the greatest errors of all, regarding the wise men. They did *not* visit Jesus at the time of His birth! They were not there on that night when He was born, as the pictures and the carols and the "nativity scenes" lead people to believe. For the inspired text tells us that Jesus was a "young child" when the wise men arrived; whereas in the Gospel of Luke, we read that when the *shepherds* came, He was a "babe." The angel said to them: "And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger" (Lk. 2:12). They visited Him on the night of His birth; but the wise men did not. Here is further proof:

When the shepherds visited Him that night, He was in a manger (Lk. 2:7,12); but when the wise men visited Him, they visited Him in a *house* (Matt. 2:11). When Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem, there was no room for them in the inn (Lk. 2:7); and the babe Jesus was laid in a manger. But by the time the wise men arrived, Jesus was a "young child" , Joseph and Mary had already gone from Bethlehem to Jerusalem, and back to Bethlehem — and were living in a house!

How do we know all this?

We must go back to the Old Testament law, to the book of Leviticus. Lev. 12:1-4 says: "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a woman have conceived seed, and born a man child: then she shall be unclean seven days; according to the days of the separation for her infirmity shall she be unclean. And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. And she shall then continue in the blood of her purifying three and thirty days; she shall touch no hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying be fulfilled."

Mary, being a devout Jewess, obeyed this commandment. We read in Luke 2:21, "And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS" — in obedience to Lev. 12:1-3. Then Luke 2:22-24 says, "And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished [that is, the law in Lev. 12:4], they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord; (as it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) and to offer a sacrifice

according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons [which law is found in Lev. 12:6-81."

Thus, in obedience to the law, Jesus was circumcised on the eighth day; then the days of Mary's purifying lasted another 33 days; then they brought Jesus to the temple, in *Jerusalem*. Jesus was, then, 41 days old when He was presented to the Lord. And *then* we read, in Lk. 2:39, "And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth."

However, this does not mean that they *immediately* returned to Nazareth. We know, in fact, that after leaving Jerusalem, they first went back to *Bethlehem*, then to *Egypt*, and *then*, finally, to Nazareth. Luke's Gospel passes over this period, summarising it by saying, simply, "they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth." But Matthew's Gospel fills in the details.

According to Matthew's Gospel, when the wise men came, Jesus must have been almost two years old. For Herod "slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, *according to the time* which he had diligently inquired of the wise men" (Matt. 2:16) — that is, the time of Jesus' birth.

Not only was He about two years old, but Joseph and Mary were living in *Bethlehem* still — for God warned Joseph to take Mary and the child, and flee to Egypt (Matt. 2:13). The Lord knew that Herod would kill all the children in *Bethlehem* and its surroundings (Matt. 2:16). Obviously, then, Joseph, Mary, and Jesus lived in Bethlehem, or God would not have warned Joseph to flee.

When Herod died, Joseph, Mary and Jesus returned to the land of Israel, and came to *Nazareth* (Matt. 2:19-23) — which is what Luke says in Lk. 2:39. Reading only Luke, one would have the impression that they went straight from Jerusalem to Nazareth; but comparing Scripture with Scripture, one finds that one Gospel supplies what the other omits.

Now, because this can be somewhat confusing, and yet needs to be understood, I will summarise what the Gospels of Matthew and Luke tell us about the birth and first two years in the life of the Lord Jesus.

He was born in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:1; Lk. 2:4-7). That very night, His birth was announced to the shepherds, who then went to see the babe (Lk. 2:8-20). According to the law of Moses, Mary's days of purification lasted 40 days in total (Lev. 12:1-4). When they were accomplished, Jesus now being over 40 days old, they brought Him to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord, and to offer the sacrifice required by the law of Moses (Lk. 2:22-24; Lev. 12:6-8). They then returned to Bethlehem, where they lived for some two years; and it was when Jesus was about two years old, that the wise men visited Him (Matt. 2:1-12). After their departure, God warned Joseph to flee to Egypt, with Mary

and Jesus, which he did (Matt. 2:13-15). Herod had all the children in Bethlehem, who were two years old and under, killed (Matt. 2:16-18). After Herod died, Joseph brought Mary and Jesus back to the land of Israel, to the city of Nazareth (Matt. 2:19-23; Lk. 2:39).

What a different picture emerges now! The date of Christ's birth is not known, although we know it was NOT in December; the shepherds visited Him that night, but not the wise men, who came some two years later; they were wise men, not kings, and Scripture does not say that there were three (nor does Scripture give their names, as Roman Catholic tradition does); and they did not follow the star to the land of the Jews, but saw it in the east, came to the land of the Jews, and only followed it once they were in Judaea, when it reappeared, and guided them to the house where the child was.

Is Christmas ordained of God? Is it biblical? Has it anything to do with true Christianity? According to the Word of God, the answer is a definite NO. We saw in Jer. 10:3 that "the customs of the people are vain", and God's people are not to participate in such customs.

If Christmas had been ordained of God, then the world would HATE it. Think about that! True Christianity, like Christ Himself, is ALWAYS hated by the world. Jesus said, in Jn. 15:18-20, that, as the world hated Him, it would hate His disciples as well. He also said that Christians would be persecuted, and killed — even by their own families, at times (Matt. 10:21,22,34-36).

Christmas is not despised. It is the most popular festival in the *world*, loved by Romanists, members of other false religions, and even atheists and agnostics. It is loved so dearly by the world, because it is *part* of the world.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CHRISTMAS: CONCLUSION

Exod. 23:2 says, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil". Christians are to stand against the tide. They are a "holy nation" and a "peculiar people" (1 Pet. 2:9). They are to be separate from the world (2 Cor. 6:14-18). Christian! Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called, as you are exhorted to do (Eph. 4:1). You are not to flow with the *tide* of evil, but to stand *against* it. No one ever stood against the evil tide as the Lord Jesus Christ did. As Christians, we are to "follow his steps" (1 Pet. 2:21). That means that we are to follow His example, and live as He lived, and preach as He preached, and teach as He taught.

We are not to follow a multitude to do evil. And what is Christmas-time, but one of the most evil times of the year? The world loves it! It is easy for the world to accept a baby in a manger. Heathen nations were doing that long before Jesus was born! Everyone loves a baby! When they worshipped the Babylonian "queen of heaven" and her son, they were worshipping an image of a woman holding a *baby* in her arms. An unregenerate person can readily worship a baby, because everyone likes babies. Anyone can accept a babe in a manger, but *no one*, unless the Lord quickens them (Eph. 2:1; Jn. 6:44), can bow before the King of kings and Lord of lords, the Lord God Almighty (Rev. 19:16). This is who Jesus Christ is! Once, yes, He was a babe in a manger; but He did not remain a babe. He, who was and is God, and who had existed from all eternity, assumed a human nature and was born of a woman; but then He grew to manhood, and suffered, and died; and then He rose from the dead, and ascended back to heaven. He is the glorified and exalted Lord of all, whose name is above every other name (Phil. 2:9-11), who receives the worship of all the hosts of heaven (Rev. 5:11,12), whose eyes are as a flame of fire, whose voice is as the sound of many waters, and whose countenance is as the sun (Rev. 1:13-16)! All power is given unto him in heaven and in earth!

Yes, people will accept a babe, but they will NEVER receive the glorified Lord to reign over them (Lk. 19:14), unless God makes them willing by His grace. Man's will is in bondage to sin until then (Eph. 2:1,2; Rom. 3:11; Jn. 8:34).

Matt. 15:8 says, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me." Does that not describe the multitudes who flock into "church" buildings every year on

"Christmas day"? Drawing nigh unto the Lord with their *mouths*, honouring Him with their *lips*, but their *hearts* so very far from Him! This is not *true* honour, and He will never accept it. They pretend to honour the Saviour they neither love nor know, nor want to know.

Every single year, well-meaning people try to "put Christ back into Christmas". They say, indignantly, "Look at what the world has done to Christmas!" But they have *never once* succeeded in putting Christ into Christmas, and they never will, because Christ was never in it in the first place! They cannot "put Him back" into something that He was never in.

Christmas day, and the Christmas "rush" preceding it, is the most popular and the most sinful time of the entire year. Satan and his devils are very active at this time of year. The lusts of men reach fever-pitch. Evil stalks the land at this time of year, more so than at any other time. It can be seen in the dancing, the drinking, the carousing, the revelling, the lusting, the lying, the gluttony, the waste of money, the cursing of the Lord Jesus Christ, the taking of the Lord's name in vain, the filthy, vile language that pours out of peoples' mouths as they become more intoxicated. It can be seen in the soaring crime rate, in the alcohol-related road deaths that escalate so drastically. Yet everyone says, "Merry Christmas", to everyone else. They decorate trees, and they claim it is the "season of goodwill".

Many even attend religious services! Vast numbers of people attend a service twice a year: at Christmas and at Easter. And they believe that they have done their "good deed" for God, and that God will see it and mark it in His book, and they will enter heaven.

*This* is the TRUE "spirit" of Christmas.

Now, when *Christians* participate in Christmas, what are they, in fact, doing? They are joining hands with the religious system of the *Antichrist* — Roman Catholicism! They are celebrating the birth of the *sun-god* of ancient Babylon, along with the Romanists! That is blasphemous. It is NOT the birthday of Jesus Christ our Lord. Christians are not commanded to celebrate His birthday. He grows no older. He lived on earth some 33 years, and then He returned to heaven. He is the eternal GOD. God does not have a birthday. As man, Christ had a beginning in time; but as God, He is "from everlasting to everlasting" (Psa. 90:2; Micah 5:2; Jn. 1:1; Rev. 1:8).

The celebration of Christmas is a powerful force in the Ecumenical Movement. Protestants are keeping a Roman Catholic "holy day". That is what it boils down to, and there is no getting away from it. And it is just one more thread in the

Papal Antichrist's web, whereby unregenerate, ecumenical "Protestants" are being drawn into the clutches of the Papacy. For when such trappings of Popery as its "holy days" are enthusiastically embraced by "Protestants", then another barrier between Popery and Protestantism has been broken down. Between *biblical* Protestantism (true Christianity) and Popery there will never be peace and fellowship; many godly Protestants of the past strongly opposed this festival, and churches would have nothing to do with it, knowing it to be of pagan and Popish origin, nowhere commanded in God's Word; but it has always been the case that vast numbers of unregenerate souls, and indeed entire churches and denominations, call themselves Protestant merely because they differ in certain beliefs and practices from Roman Catholicism, and they are more than willing to find as much common ground as possible, for they are strangers to God and His Word. Significantly, Christmas observance among Protestants increased as Protestant opposition to Popery decreased. When those termed "Protestants" see little wrong with Popery, then they see little or nothing wrong with its festivals. Today's ecumenical, unregenerate "Protestants", without the Holy Spirit in their hearts or the Word of God as their authority, when informed that Christmas is of pagan and Popish origin, and not sanctioned by the Word of God, simply say, "So what?" It means nothing to them, for God and His Word mean nothing to them. But what of the *biblical* Protestant — the true Christian? What ought *his* response to be, when he discovers a trapping of Popery within his own life?

In Rev. 18:4,5, a command is given to the believer in Christ. Every Christian should know this Scripture by heart. "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, *Come out of her*, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities."

The Lord commands, "COME OUT of her." "Her", here, is the Roman Catholic Institution, and those Protestant "daughters" which are flocking to be reconciled to her, and which ape her in doctrine and practice. "Her" refers to all trappings of Roman Catholicism found within the lives of true Christians. "Her" includes the Christmas festival, and *everything* that has originated within that Babylonian system. The Lord says, "MY people"; these words are addressed to *Christians*. THEY must "come out", otherwise they are partakers of her sins.

"COME OUT from among them, and be ye SEPARATE, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:17,18).



# **PART TWO**

## **EASTER**



## CHAPTER ONE

### THE PAGAN ORIGIN OF EASTER

The Lord Jesus Christ *did* die for the elect. He *did* rise from the dead for them. Christians praise Him for His death and resurrection from the tomb. They rejoice that on the first day of the week, He rose from the dead! If He had not done so, no person would ever be saved; all would be damned (Rom. 4:25; 5:6-11,19).

The Easter festival, however, has nothing to do with the true Christ of God. It was never ordained of God.

Firstly (as with Christmas), the pagan origins of this festival will be examined; and secondly, what the Bible really teaches about the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

Let us commence with a passage from Matt. 24. This is a chapter containing prophecies regarding the end times, which began during the *first* century AD (according to Heb. 1:2, for example). There are certain key verses in this chapter.

"And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many" (Matt. 24:4,5).

Multitudes of people are deceived, but Jesus, speaking to His followers, said, "Take heed that no man deceive you." Now, according to the context, by whom will men be deceived? Who are the greatest deceivers of all? Jesus said, "For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many." He was referring primarily to the dynasty of the *popes* through the centuries. The followers of the pope, and the popes themselves, have claimed that the pope is Christ: e.g. "Christ in office, Christ in jurisdiction and power"; <sup>48</sup> "Jesus Christ Himself, hidden under the veil of flesh"; "King of kings and Lord of lords"; "our Lord and God"; "the living Christ"; "the Way, the Truth, and the Life"; <sup>49</sup> etc. He comes saying, "I am Christ", and deceives many! He is the greatest deceiver in the world. The Lord has therefore told us, in His Word, where the greatest

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<sup>48</sup> *Secrets of Romanism*, by Joseph Zacchello, p.34. Loizeaux Brothers, Neptune, New Jersey, 1983.

<sup>49</sup> *The Antichrist*, by Baron Pocelli, pp.25,28-32. The Protestant Truth Society, London, Fourth Edition.

deception comes from. It comes from the Vatican.

Easter is one deception, promoted for centuries by the Antichrist; the one who claims to *be* Christ. The Easter celebration, like Christmas, was carried over from Romanism into Protestantism, deceiving even many true believers.

Let us examine Rev. 17:2: "With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication." Now compare this passage with one in Jeremiah 51. The prophecy of Jeremiah 51 concerns the literal city of Babylon, which was destroyed many centuries ago. The Lord said that He would destroy it, and He did. Today we have *mystical* "Babylon", in Rome. So there are many parallels between this chapter, and Revelation 17. In Jer. 51:7, it says, "Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD'S hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad." A drunk man will act like a madman. The Great Whore, the Roman Catholic Institution, has made the nations *mad*, by making them spiritually *drunk*. As the Christmas and Easter festivals approach, we see the nations, drunk on the harlot's wine, becoming mad. There are satanic spiritual powers at work. Murders and other horrifying crimes occur. The nations are mad through imbibing the wine of the Great Whore.

There has always been satanic power at work through the Papacy. Satan is the deceiver (Rev. 12:9), and he works mightily through the Papacy; and Jesus said, "Take heed that no man deceive you." Satan has, though "that man of sin" (2 Thess. 2:3) sitting in the Vatican in Rome, caused the greatest deception the world has ever known, and Christians must take heed. We must not allow any man, and least of all *that* man — that greatest of all the enemies of Christ — to deceive us.

Now to come to the origin of Easter. The festival of Easter is not sanctioned by the Word of God. It is not of God, there is no commandment about it anywhere in Scripture at all. The very name, "Easter", is of pagan origin. You will find it in the King James Version of the Bible in one place only, in 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." Peter had been imprisoned by Herod, who intended "after Easter" to bring him forth to the people. The word, "Easter", refers in this place to the *Passover*. The Greek word is the word for the Passover. Why, then, did the translators of the King James Version use the word, "Easter", instead of "Passover", in this one instance?

The Oxford Universal Dictionary, third edition, 1959, gives the following as an *obsolete* meaning of the word, "Easter": "The Jewish Passover — 1611" (the very year the King James Version was first published); and it quotes Acts 12:4.

Thus, in that day and age, the Jewish Passover was *also* called "Easter". As is well known, the King James Version translators made much use of the Bible translation work of the godly William Tyndale, when preparing their version; and that dear martyr of God used "Easter" instead of "Passover" in his translation of the New Testament. That Tyndale *meant* the Jewish Passover is clear from the following: in his 1526 translation of the New Testament, he translated Jn. 2:13 as follows: "And the Jews' Easter was even at hand" (the KJV says, "And the Jews' passover was at hand"). Again, he translated 1 Cor. 5:7 as follows: "for Christ our Easter lamb is offered up for us" (the KJV says, "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us"). Tyndale, by his use of the word "Easter", quite obviously meant the Jewish Passover.

In the Matthew's Bible of 1537 (which basically contained Tyndale's revised New Testament), Matt. 26:17-19 is translated as follows: "The first day of sweet bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the Pascual lamb? And he said, Go into the city, unto such a man, and say to him, the Master saith, My time is at hand, I will keep mine Easter at thy house with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them, and made ready the Easter lamb." Note how the same Greek word (the word for "Passover") is rendered both as "Pascual lamb" *and* as "Easter".

These references show that, in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries (as the Oxford Dictionary confirms), "Easter" meant, in addition to the Romish festival, the Jewish Passover. The King James Version translators retained much of Tyndale's excellent work, but they replaced the word "Easter" with "Passover", in all places except Acts 12:4. But, knowing that in the early seventeenth century, "Easter" was another word for the Jewish Passover, it is perfectly evident that this was no error on their part — they were using a word that *had that meaning* at that time!

It may be asked, How did the word "Easter", which (as shall be seen presently) is of pagan origin, and was applied for centuries to the Popish festival, come to be used as a word meaning "Passover"? Probably in the following manner: Christ died at the time of the Passover, and as Easter was (falsely) considered to be a festival in commemoration of the death and resurrection of Christ, the word came to be used as synonymous with "Passover".

So, in our King James Version, this one instance of "Easter" was retained by the translators; but in their day it had a broader meaning that it does now, and they propagated no error by using it. Even today, when the word has a more restricted meaning, the use of it in this one instance does not affect any scriptural doctrine. And even if one did not know that "Easter" and "Passover" were synonymous when the King James Version was produced, one could not justify the observance of the Easter festival from this single reference! For in

the first place, there are a number of words in the Bible which have meanings different from, or broader than, those which we usually give to them. And in the second place, Acts 12:4 says absolutely nothing about who observed it, how it was observed, or whether it was a festival instituted by God or not; and before we are justified in observing anything, we must be certain that God has instituted it (Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Matt. 28:20). If the word "Passover" had been used instead, would anyone be justified in assuming that Christians ought to keep the Passover? Certainly not. That would be reading far more into the text than is there. Luke, who wrote Acts by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, referred to the Passover at this point to explain why Peter was not *immediately* put to death, but put in prison for a time; this is clear from the context (note the words in vs.3, "Then were the days of unleavened bread", and those of vs.5, "Peter *therefore* was kept in prison"). No more can be read into Luke's reference to the Passover than that. In no sense was he teaching that the Passover should be kept by Christians.

All this simply serves to emphasize a very important truth: the Scriptures cannot be read as one would read any other book; they must be "rightly divided" (2 Tim. 2:15); and the failure to do this has been the cause of many false interpretations being given to various portions of God's Word. If a reader comes to Acts 12:4, or to any other portion of God's Word, he must not just assume that his immediate impression of its meaning is the correct one; he must "search the Scriptures", carefully examining the immediate context (which certainly throws light on Acts 12:4: note vs.3!), comparing one place with another, and when necessary even consulting a good dictionary, etc., in order to arrive at the correct interpretation.

There are a number of words in our English version of the Bible that are archaic or obsolete, and that could be improved upon without altering any doctrine of Scripture. But that does not alter the fact that the King James Version is the most reliable, accurate, faithful translation of God's Word into English, *far* superior to any modern version.<sup>50</sup>

The term, "Easter", is derived from the name of the "queen of heaven" in Nineveh. The worship of the god Bel and the goddess Astarte came to ancient Britain via the Druids.<sup>51</sup> This worship was nothing less than the worship of

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<sup>50</sup> See, for example, the various pamphlets documenting the superiority of the KJV, published by the Trinitarian Bible Society, London; as well as such works as *The King James Version Defended*, by Edward F. Hills, The Christian Research Press, Des Moines, Iowa, 1979; and *The Revision Revised*, by John William Burgon, A.G. Hobbs Publications, Fort Worth, Texas, 1991.

<sup>51</sup> *The Two Babylons*, p.103.

*Nimrod* and *Semiramis*. In Nineveh, Astarte was known as "Ishtar"; and our English word, "Easter", is derived from "Ishtar" <sup>52</sup> The Easter festival is therefore the festival of *Ishtar*, the "queen of heaven"!

The religion of Baal and Astarte (or Ashtoreth) spread from Babylon all over the world, and is the basis of *every false religion* in the world today. It is, however, most perfectly developed in the Roman Catholic Institution. Romanism is the greatest masterpiece of Satan in the world.

No matter what names are used, they all can be traced back to the same source. The religions of various countries can be examined, and this will be found to be so. Historians who have done it are amazed that the worship of the goddess-mother and her son is to be found all over the world. Even when Roman Catholic Jesuit missionaries went to Tibet and China, taking their worship of the "virgin-mother and child" with them, they found this worship *already well established* in the heathen cultures! <sup>53</sup> It was, consequently, a relatively simple matter for them to "Romanize" it. Romanism took the false deities, adopted them, and changed their names to "Mary" and "Jesus". This is the greatest blasphemy of all. It is the worship of "another Jesus" (2 Cor. 11:4). It is NOT the worship of the living Lord Jesus Christ, who is revealed in the Bible. It is the worship of a false god, who is *called* "Jesus", and given the same *titles* as Jesus, but who is NOT the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the worship of Nimrod. Just as every priest of Rome claims to be "another Christ", so they *worship* "another Christ". The Papal religion is a religion of another "Christ".

As stated previously, the name "Ishtar" gave rise to the name "Easter". The month of April, in which Easter is observed, was known to the early Britons as "Easter-monath".<sup>54</sup>

The early Christians had nothing to do with any festival of "Easter". No true believer kept pagan festivals, neither was any special day set aside annually on which to remember the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, or His resurrection. These events *were* remembered — but not by an annual festival.

In later centuries, the so-called "Church" of Rome *adopted* this heathen festival, and "catholicized" it — just as it did with the festival which came to be called "Christmas".<sup>55</sup> It did this for a very good reason (from its point of view!). This heathen festival was observed in commemoration of the death and

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<sup>52</sup> *The Two Babylons*, pp.103,104.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.76,77.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p.104.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, chapter 3, section 2.

supposed resurrection of the god *Tammuz*! It is therefore not surprising that the Roman "Church" would want to adopt it, and turn it into a so-called "Christian" (i.e. Romanist) festival. According to the religion of Babylon and the mythology that developed around it (based on a core of truth that had been grossly distorted, as myths generally are), this god was killed, and supposedly later resurrected.<sup>56</sup> The heathens commemorated this death and "resurrection" every year, around the world. Rome adopted this festival of the false "messiah", Tammuz, who had been worshipped centuries before Jesus was born, and gave it a "Christian" appearance. Semiramis became "Mary", and Tammuz or Baal became "Jesus". The purpose was to swell the numbers of adherents of the Roman "Church". So-called "Christianity" (the Romish religion, not true Christianity) had become the State Religion of the Roman Empire. Anyone who was not "Catholic" was an enemy of the Empire. If all that was required, in order to be "Catholic", was to worship the old gods, but under different names, the heathens were willing to do it! They did not have to forsake them, they simply had to address them by different names!

Truly, Popery is nothing less than baptized paganism.

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<sup>56</sup> *The Two Babylons*, p.105.

## CHAPTER TWO

### EASTER CUSTOMS

What is Lent? Lent is the forty-day period preceding Easter in the Roman Catholic religion, as well as in certain institutions which style themselves as "Protestant".

The whole concept of Lent originated in ancient Babylon, where it was observed as a preliminary to the festival commemorating the death and resurrection of Tammuz,<sup>57</sup> just as today it is observed as a preliminary to the supposed festival of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It spread from Babylon around the world. By the ancient Egyptians, this forty-day period was kept in commemoration of Osiris or Adonis, supposedly the mediatorial deity.<sup>58</sup> A solemn fast of forty days was observed by the pagan Mexicans in honour of the sun, centuries before either Roman Catholicism or true Christianity reached Mexico.<sup>59</sup> The devil-worshippers of Koordistan observed it as well.<sup>60</sup> It was literally observed all over the world. It was a forty-day period of weeping and fasting. When it ended, the festival began; eating, drinking, sexual orgies, etc. — the most vile sins were committed at that time of year by the heathen.<sup>61</sup>

This evil practice is referred to in the book of the prophet Ezekiel, chapter 8. There were Israelites who were observing the false religious practices of Babylon, which God utterly condemned.

"He said also unto me, Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations that they do. Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the LORD'S house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women *weeping for Tammuz*" (Ezek. 8:13,14). These were Israelite women. They should have been worshipping the true God, but they were "weeping for Tammuz". They were observing the annual period of weeping that the heathen nations observed.

Now in Roman Catholicism, what is Lent? The so-called "Church" of Rome simply adopted the heathen custom. Prior to about 519 AD, not even in the so?

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<sup>57</sup> *The Two Babylons*, p.105.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p.104.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p.106.

called "Church" of Rome was a forty-day period of fasting observed: a period of fasting before Easter *was* observed, but not for forty days. But in about 519 AD, during the reign of the so-called bishop of Rome, Hormisdas, a council was held at Aurelia, and at this council it was decreed that Lent had to be observed before Easter. And an abbot, Dionysius the Little, readjusted the calendar so as to bring this about.<sup>62</sup>

Lent, in Roman Catholicism, is a period of penance preparatory to the Easter festival. It begins on "Ash Wednesday". It used to be that, during Lent, Roman Catholics "fasted", by eating only one full meal a day, and abstained from meat;<sup>63</sup> but today the rules have been somewhat relaxed, and they must only fast, and abstain from meat, on "Ash Wednesday" and "Good Friday"<sup>64</sup> However, even this is not always the case: when the new Roman Catholic code of canon law came into force in 1983, many of the canons required local adaptation by Romish bishops' conferences to reflect "regional needs" — and the Southern African bishops' conference, for example, approved decrees for several canons, which came into effect on November 1, 1990. It was affirmed that "Ash Wednesday" and "Good Friday" were days of "fasting" and abstinence; but instead of abstaining from meat on Fridays, Roman Catholics were given permission to substitute abstinence from alcohol, tobacco, or luxury foods, or to do other forms of penance, in particular acts of charity or exercises of piety.<sup>65</sup>

Indeed, some Roman Catholics give up their favourite snacks, or smoke fewer cigarettes, or drink less alcohol during Lent.<sup>66</sup> They try to *earn* their salvation by showing God how "good" they are, by these "sacrifices". Roman Catholicism is a religion of *works*.<sup>67</sup> It is tragic indeed.

Many will have heard of the "Mardi Gras". The day Roman Catholics call "Shrove Tuesday", the Tuesday before Lent begins, is called in French "Mardi Gras", or "Fat Tuesday". And in the United States the festival season preceding Lent is known as the Mardi Gras. It ends with parades and other festivities on Shrove Tuesday. It was introduced by French colonists.<sup>68</sup> It is an opportunity

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<sup>62</sup> *The Two Babylons*, pp.105-107.

<sup>63</sup> *Roman Catholicism*, by Loraine Boettner, p.275. The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, Phillipsburg, New Jersey, 1986.

<sup>64</sup> *The Code of Canon Law*, p.218, canons 1249-1253. Collins Liturgical Publications, London, 1983. Imprimatur: George Basil Hume, Roman Catholic Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster.

<sup>65</sup> *The Southern Cross*, November 11, 1990.

<sup>66</sup> Lent, Good Friday, and Easter, by R.F. Becker, pp.11,12. Reiner Publications, Swengel, Pennsylvania.

<sup>67</sup> *The Council of Trent*, "Decree on Justification"; also, the Profession of Faith of Pius IV, Bull "Iniunctum Nobis", 1564.

<sup>68</sup> *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 20, p.587.1959.

for wild and sinful pleasures before the Lent "fast" begins. There is dancing, drunkenness, revelry. They wear masks which hide sin. Yes! — they hide behind those masks, and commit all kinds of sins anonymously. Husbands and wives may be unaware of what their own spouses may be doing. It is a very wicked time.

By the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul wrote in Gal. 5:19-21: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, sedition's, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, revelling, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall *not inherit* the kingdom of God."

Lent is an abomination in the sight of a holy God, as is the entire Easter celebration! All this is exactly what the ancient Romans did before *their* period of mourning!

Roman Catholics are trying to earn God's favour during Lent. They are, in effect, saying, "Look at me. I am doing this, I am doing that, I am trying to be good, I am fasting." But this is not true fasting! The prophet Isaiah tells us what true fasting is all about (Isa. 58:5-11). The purpose of fasting is absolutely clear in the Bible. This false Popish "fast" is an attempt to earn salvation by works. But Eph. 2:8,9 says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: *not of works*, lest any man should boast." Salvation is by God's grace, through faith. It CANNOT be earned by man's works.

The traditions that are observed at this time of year *appear* to be innocent until we understand what they are really all about.

What would Easter be without the consumption of buns and eggs? The "hot cross buns" and the dyed or painted or chocolate eggs are to Easter what Santa and gift-giving are to Christmas. What very few know is that as early as 1500 BC, buns, or cakes, were used in the worship of the "queen of heaven"! They were made of fine flour and honey, and were offered to this pagan deity. They were eaten as part of the general revelry at this time of year!<sup>69</sup> We read of this in Jer. 7:17,18: "Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, *to make cakes* to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger." That "queen of heaven" was none other than Semiramis. And "queen of heaven" is one of the titles of the *Madonna* of Roman Catholicism to this

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<sup>69</sup> *The Two Babylons*, pp.107,108.

day!<sup>70</sup> But the truth is that there is NO "queen of heaven" in heaven! There is only the King of heaven and earth, the Lord God Almighty. Mary *is* in heaven, because she was saved by God's grace, through faith in Jesus Christ. She is in heaven, as all departed believers are, but she is not the *queen* of heaven! She is like any other true Christian who has died and gone to be with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23).

"Then all the men which knew that their wives had burned incense unto other gods, and all the women that stood by, a great multitude, even all the people that dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying, As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the LORD, we will not hearken unto thee. But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil. But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine. And when we burned incense to the queen of heaven, and poured out drink offerings unto her, did we *make her cakes* to worship her, and pour out drink offerings unto her, without our men?" (Jer. 44:15-19).

Both passages from Jeremiah are very clear: cakes were used in the worship of this deity.

It is not good enough to simply say that we do not do that today. That is not the point. The point is that it is participation in what was used in paganism in the worship of Semiramis — the very deity Roman Catholics now worship as "Mary". This is an abomination in the sight of the Lord.

To justify the use of "Easter eggs", some have said that these are used to represent the empty tomb of Christ. That is absurd. How possibly can an egg, whether chocolate, real, or plastic, have any connection with the tomb of Christ?

Eggs were the sacred emblem of the Druids. The heathen "mysteries" in the worship of the god Bacchus in Athens involved the consecration of an egg. In the fables of the Hindus, golden eggs played a part. The sacred eggs of the Japanese were brazen.<sup>71</sup> The Chinese used dyed or painted ones during their sacred festivals. The Egyptians and Greeks used eggs in their religious rites,

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<sup>70</sup> See, for example, *The Glories of Mary*, by Alphonsus de Liguori, pp.11-21. Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., Rockford, Illinois, 1982.

<sup>71</sup> *The Two Babylons*, p.108.

even hanging them up in their temples for mystic purposes.<sup>72</sup> In Rome, expectant mothers wore eggs around their necks to ward off evil.<sup>73</sup> WHY this universal usage of the egg in worship?

Jer. 51:7 says that the nations were made mad by Babylon's wine. Babylon made all the earth drunken. And we read in Rev. 17 that the mystical "Babylon" is the "*Mother* of abominations" (vs.5). Babylon (physical and mystical) is responsible, whether the festival is called the festival of Bacchus, or Easter.

In ancient Babylon, they believed that a huge egg fell from heaven into the river Euphrates; it was rolled to the bank by fish, and doves sat upon it and hatched it; and the goddess Venus came out of it.<sup>74</sup> Later on, this Venus came to be called Astarte or Ishtar. The egg was one of her symbols, because she was supposed to have come from one.

All this may sound absurd, even to non-Christians, and it is. But to the ancient heathen, who worshipped this goddess, the egg was her symbol. And in addition, the egg was also a symbol, to the ancient heathen, of the ark of Noah! Perverting the truth of God, they applied the egg, falling into the Euphrates river, to Noah's ark. This was how they did it: firstly, the ancient pagans believed that the world was shut up in an egg, which floated on the waters. One can easily perceive how they associated the ark of Noah with such an idea; for certainly the entire human race sprang from the sons of Noah after the flood, and thus (to use biblical language) were "in the loins" of his sons when they were in the ark (compare with Heb. 7:9,10). Secondly, just as Noah and his family were shut up inside the ark, so a chicken is shut up inside an egg. And finally, the Hebrew word for an egg is very similar to the Chaldean word for "house".<sup>75</sup> The heathen reasoned this way: the ark was a house with new life in it, because Noah and his family would create a new world, just as a chicken is a new life springing from an egg. We can also discern traces of the truth, horribly corrupted by heathenism, in their belief that the egg fell from heaven (God commanded Noah to build the ark), and doves sat upon it (Noah, of course, released a dove from the ark).

Strange as this may sound to many people today, it was not strange to the ancient pagans. The truth of God's revelation was perverted. That is what heathenism has always done. It has always taken the truth and distorted it. All

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<sup>72</sup> *The Two Babylons*, p.109.

<sup>73</sup> *Rabbits, Eggs, and Other Easter Errors*, by Russell K. Tardo, p.6. Faithful Word, Arabi, Louisiana.

<sup>74</sup> *The Two Babylons*, p.109.

<sup>75</sup> *ibid.*, p.110.

mankind descended from the sons of Noah after the flood; but not all mankind worshipped the true God, or held to the divine revelation. And the ungodly distorted the true account of the events of the flood.

But there is more. In the Babylonian mysteries, the great goddess hatched from the egg; and she was considered by the heathen to be the greatest blessing ever given to the human race. Her worshippers believed that, in a previous incarnation, she had lived in the world *before* the flood, and that she passed safely through it.<sup>76</sup>

Now, the so-called "Church" of Rome, in its usual manner, adopted the egg of Astarte, and turned it into a symbol of the resurrection of Christ.

The Roman pope, Paul V, taught Roman Catholics to pray, at Easter-time: "Bless, O Lord, we beseech thee, this thy creature of eggs, that it may become a wholesome sustenance unto thy servants, eating it *in remembrance of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"<sup>77</sup> Blasphemy! What does the Word of God say?

"For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took *bread* [not eggs!]: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: *this* do in remembrance of me" (1 Cor. 11:23,24).

The bread of the Lord's Supper is eaten by God's people in remembrance of Christ Jesus. The festival of Ishtar has nothing to do with Christ! We read in Acts 20:7 that the church came together on the first day of the week "to break bread". This was the same ordinance as that described by Paul in 1 Cor. 11. We read nowhere of anyone eating *eggs* in remembrance of the Lord's death, nor of any commandment to do so! That is vile perversion! The egg was not ordained by the Lord to represent His body. Bread was.

What has all this resulted in? Rev. 18:3 says, "For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the *merchants* of the earth are waxed *rich* through the abundance of her delicacies." Truly, the merchants of the earth profit greatly from the vast sale of buns and eggs and chocolate during the Easter season. Easter, and all that is associated with it, is, like Christmas, an extremely profitable time for merchants.

Rev. 18:11-13 (referring to the destruction of the Roman Catholic system) says, "And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: the merchandise of gold, and silver,

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<sup>76</sup> *The Two Babylons*, p.110.

<sup>77</sup> Quoted from *The Scottish Guardian*, April 1844, in *The Two Babylons*, p.110.

and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men."

What about the Easter bunny? In ancient heathenism, rabbits were symbols of the moon. Now, how is the date of Easter determined? The false "Church" of Rome determined it: it was set by the Nicene Council, in 325 AD — and it was determined according to the movements of the moon.<sup>78</sup> Rabbits were also symbols of birth and new life in Egypt. They were symbols of fertility, as well, in pagan rites.<sup>79</sup>

*That* is the origin of the "Easter bunny". The Papal system simply "baptized" all these heathen customs.

The festival of Easter, with all its traditions, was brought over from Romanism into Protestantism. Even in churches which are, in general, biblically sound in various other matters, one will find the Easter festival being observed. Rev. 18:4,5 says, "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, *Come out of her, my people*, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." It says, "MY people". The people of God! It is a command to those converted from Roman Catholicism to Christ, and it is also a command to all who are true Christians, even if they were not Roman Catholics before their conversion, but who are keeping Roman Catholic customs and traditions. The forms of Babylonianism, the Romish trappings, which are found even within true churches and the lives of true Christians, must be rejected and forsaken. Many professing Christians are quite willing to speak out against Rome, and to do so loudly; but when Romanism is found within their *homes*, or their *families*, or their *churches*, or their *hearts*, then they are silent! As long as they view Romanism as being a religious system "out there" with other false religious systems, they are prepared to speak out against it; but when to condemn Romanism means to condemn something which they are doing, their voices are not heard!

True Christians, who have been keeping these heathen festivals, must repent

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<sup>78</sup> *Encyclopaedia Britannica: Macropaedia*, Vol.4, p.499.

<sup>79</sup> *The Influence of Baal-Ashtoreth Upon Modern-Day "Christianity"*, by Everett C. Lerch, pp.10,11. Biblical Publications, Bristol, Tennessee. See also *Encyclopaedia Britannica: Macropaedia*, Vol .4, p .605.

and forsake them. It matters not that you say you keep them with a right motive. The Lord says that we are to have nothing to do with the customs of the heathen (Jer. 10:1-5). We are not to follow the Great Whore in any of her abominations. She is the masterpiece of Satan, and Satan is the father of lies (Jn. 8:44). Whatever is derived from that institution is absolutely corrupt. Jesus Himself said, "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit" (Matt. 7:18). There CANNOT be good fruit from a corrupt tree! Job 14:4 says, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." Christians are described by Peter, in I Pet. 2:9, as a "peculiar people". "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." We are therefore called OUT of the world, to be a separate people.

Lev. 20:26 says, "And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have *severed* you from other people, that ye should be mine." This means that the Lord has cut His people off from the world. If Christians attempt to join together what God has severed, they sin.

## CHAPTER THREE

# THE BIBLICAL ACCOUNT OF THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

Having dealt with the origins of Easter and its customs, what is the *truth* about the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ? He *did* die, and He *did* rise from the dead; and the saints praise God for that, for without His death and resurrection there would be no salvation for any sinner. But even leaving aside the pagan origins of Easter, the plain fact of the matter is that the "Easter story" we have heard for so long is not even *scripturally* correct. The true facts about the death and resurrection of Christ are distorted at Easter-time.

Did the Lord Jesus, in fact, die on a Friday?

In Matt. 12:40, Jesus said, "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be *three days and three nights* in the heart of the earth." Even as a young boy I used to wonder how anyone could calculate three days and three nights from late Friday afternoon to early Sunday morning. It is impossible. Mk. 8:31 says, "And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and *after three days* rise again."

How long did Jesus consider a day to be? Of course, the Lord knew perfectly how many hours were in a day. In Jn. 11:9 we read, "Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day?" There are twelve hours in a day, and twelve hours in a night, making a day and a night to be twenty-four hours. Three days and three nights would be seventy-two hours.

The Jewish reckoning of time began with the evening. In Genesis 1 it says: "And the evening and the morning were the first day" (vs.5); "And the evening and the morning were the second day" (vs.8); etc. It does not say, "morning and evening", but evening first, and then morning; the first part of the night being put for the whole, and then the first part of the day being put for the whole. With the Jews, the day began at sundown (about 6:00 Pm), and lasted until the next sundown, a night and a day.

Jesus died "about the ninth hour" (Matt. 27:46-50) — that is, about 3:00 PM. Now, the law of Moses stated that the body of one put to death on a tree was to be buried *before sundown* (see Deut. 21:22,23). Therefore, Joseph of Arimathaea, and Nicodemus, must have placed Jesus' body in the tomb just before sundown (see Jn. 19:38-42). And in fact, Mk. 15:42,43 says that "the

even was come" when this was done.

On what day, then, was Jesus crucified and buried? Was it a Friday? The Bible declares plainly that He was buried before the Sabbath began (Mk. 15:42; Lk. 23:53,54). The Sabbath would begin at sundown. The weekly Sabbath began at sundown on what we would call Friday, and lasted until sundown on Saturday. Was Friday, then, the day on which Christ died?

No, it could not have been. True, the Scriptures declare that He was buried before the Sabbath began, and it is therefore immediately assumed that He died, and was buried, on a Friday; because everyone knows that Saturday is the Jewish Sabbath. However, a very important passage of Scripture is overlooked. In Jn. 19:31, it says, "The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (*for that sabbath day was an high day,*) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away." There was a *special* Sabbath at that time. It was NOT the weekly Sabbath; it was a "high day" Sabbath.

What was this "high day" Sabbath?

We need to go back to Exodus 12, to the institution of the Passover. This feast was kept on the 14th day of the month Abib, in the evening (Exod. 12:6). But it must be remembered that the Jewish day *began* with the evening. On the evening of the 14th day, the lamb was killed (vs.6); and it was eaten, with unleavened bread, that night (vs.8).

Then, for seven days *following* the Passover (i.e. the 15th to the 21st days of the month), the feast of unleavened bread was held (vs.15); and the *first* of those seven days, and the *seventh*, were *Sabbaths*. This is clear from vs. 16.

The Israelites, therefore, ate unleavened bread for *eight* days: on the Passover day (14th), and then during the feast of unleavened bread (15th to 21st).

Let us now move on to the Passover period during which Christ was crucified. By His time, "the Passover" was a term given to *both* the feasts of Passover AND unleavened bread; likewise, "the feast of unleavened bread" was a term given to BOTH feasts as well. Understanding this fact helps us to understand such passages as Matt. 26:17, Mk. 14:12, Lk. 22:7,8, Jn. 18:28, and Jn. 19:14.

The Passover was kept by Jesus and His disciples the evening of the 14th day, according to the law. That same night He was betrayed, and arrested, as the Gospel accounts tell us. He was crucified during the *day* of the Passover (still the 14th, since it *began* with the evening). This brings us to Jn. 19:31. "The Jews therefore, because it was *the preparation*, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (*for that sabbath day was an high day,*) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away." "The preparation" for what? For the Sabbath. NOT, however, the weekly Sabbath, which was held on Saturday, but the "high day" Sabbath —

the *15th* day, which was the first day of unleavened bread, and which was, remember, a *Sabbath day* (Exod. 12:16). See also Mk. 15:42,43.

Jesus kept the Passover meal during the *evening* of the 14th; He was crucified during the *day* of the 14th (the Passover day, thus becoming "our Passover" — 1 Cor. 5:7); and was buried before the beginning of the 15th, which was the first day of unleavened bread (i.e. before the evening, which for the Jews was the beginning of a new day).

Jesus, therefore, was not buried before the weekly Saturday Sabbath, but before this other, special Sabbath.

What day of the week was it?

The Lord was not buried on Friday evening. If He had been, 72 hours later would mean that He rose on Monday evening. But we know He did not rise on a Monday evening! For we know that, when the women arrived at the tomb "very early in the morning the *first day* of the week" (i.e. Sunday), He was already risen (Mk. 16:2). Nor could He have been buried on Thursday evening, because then He would have risen on Sunday evening; but we know that when the women arrived on Sunday *morning*, the tomb was already empty.

Nor did He *rise* early on Sunday morning, as is generally supposed, because 72 hours earlier would be Thursday morning; but He did not die on Thursday morning, nor any morning for that matter, but at about 3:00 Pm (Matt. 27:46-50).

We have seen that He was buried towards the evening when the Sabbath began. He must then have risen after the *end* of the third day; i.e. after about 6:00 PM in the evening, which was the beginning of a new day, according to Jewish reckoning. For it was at approximately this time that He had been buried.

Mk. 16:1 says, "And when the sabbath *was past*, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had *bought* sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him." Think carefully about this verse. They *bought* spices, *after* the Sabbath (for they would not have been able to buy them *on* the Sabbath). But if this was the Saturday Sabbath, they would not have been able to buy AND prepare (see Lk. 23:56) spices in time for Sunday morning. Yet they definitely bought them *after* the Sabbath, and *before* Sunday morning!

According to Lk. 23:56, the women prepared the spices *before* resting on the Sabbath. So we find that Mk. 16:1 tells us they BOUGHT the spices AFTER the Sabbath, and yet Lk. 23:56 tells us they PREPARED the spices BEFORE the Sabbath! These two Scriptures cannot be harmonised, UNLESS there were two Sabbaths.

What is the truth here? It is this: Jesus must have been crucified on what we call *Wednesday*. He was buried before the "high day" Sabbath began; and this

would have begun on Wednesday evening, and continued through Thursday. And then on Friday, which was a normal day, the women bought the spices, according to Mk. 16:1, and prepared them, according to Lk. 23:56. Then came Saturday, which was the normal weekly Sabbath, and they rested on that day. And then early Sunday morning, they went to the tomb, and found it empty (Matt. 28:1-8; Mk. 16:1-8; Lk. 24:1-10; Jn. 20:1). There are TWO SABBATHS in the biblical accounts of His death and resurrection. One of them was a "high day" Sabbath. 72 hours after Wednesday evening would be Saturday evening, the end of the weekly Sabbath. Jesus was in the tomb Wednesday evening, Thursday evening, and Friday evening (three nights); and Thursday, Friday, and Saturday (three days). And He rose sometime after the end of the Saturday Sabbath, *and thus on the first day of the week* according to Jewish reckoning, exactly as Scripture states — even though this is what Westerners would today call Saturday evening!

Lk. 23:54-24:2 says: "And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on. And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment. Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre." This passage makes it clear. If it is kept in mind that there were two Sabbaths at that time, a special one on what we call Thursday and the other, the weekly one, on Saturday; and that the day in between the two Sabbaths was when they bought (Mk. 16:1) and prepared the spices; and that they rested on the Saturday, and then came early Sunday morning; then the Lord must have been crucified on the Wednesday, and He rose after the end of the Saturday Sabbath. When, therefore, they came to the tomb early on Sunday morning, He had already been gone from the tomb for some time. He rose on the first day of the week, but according to the Jewish reckoning of time — what we would call Saturday evening! It must be understood that the stone was not rolled away to let the Lord out — it was rolled away to let the women in (Matt. 28:1-6)! The resurrected Christ was perfectly able to leave the sealed tomb, as a subsequent event proved (Jn. 20:19).

To all this it may be objected that, although in Matt. 12:40 it is said that the Lord would be in the tomb "three days and three nights", and although in Mk. 8:31 it is said that He would rise "after three days", yet other passages speak of Him rising "the third day" (e.g. Matt. 16:21; 17:23; Mk. 10:34; Lk. 24:7; 1 Cor. 15:4; etc.).

This objection, however, may be answered thus:

1. All the scriptural facts given in this chapter *prove* that He was in the tomb for three days and three nights.
2. Matt. 27:63 reveals that the *Jews* understood Him to mean that He would rise "*after three days*". Yet He had said, many times, that He would rise "the third day". So they understood His expression, "the third day", to mean "*after three days*".
3. In Matt. 27:64, "until the third day" could not have meant, "until the third day *began*" — for they themselves knew He said He would rise "*after three days*" (vs.63). It must have meant, "until the third day was *past*". This furnishes a further clue to understanding the expression, "the third day".

And so in conclusion, the entire "Easter story" is a *false* account of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### EASTER: CONCLUSION

Easter was not celebrated by the early Christians, the Church of the New Testament. Acts 2:42 declares, "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. " The apostles' doctrine, now recorded in the pages of the New Testament, nowhere commands or permits the observance of Easter. It is of pagan Babylonian origin and has nothing to do with the death and resurrection of the Lord Christ. It was the festival of the death and supposed "resurrection" of the false "messiah" of the heathen. And it was deliberately incorporated into the Romish system in order to attract the heathen into it.

The observance of Easter, then, being without sanction anywhere in the Word of God, is sinful. It must be rejected by God's people, for whom the Bible must be the sole rule of faith and practice. Christians are "called out". They are called to be *separate* from the world and its ways.

Many professing "believers" will say, "Everyone is keeping it, and I shall continue to do so." Of course everyone is keeping it! People will readily observe anything when it has nothing to do with the truth! If this festival was a truly Christian one, you can be certain that the world would hate it. The world never wants anything to do with the true Christ of God. Matt. 7:13,14 says, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because *strait* is the gate, and *narrow* is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." The way of Christ is not a wide road with vast multitudes on it. It is very narrow. His way is NEVER popular with the world. It is always despised, because the Lord Jesus Himself was "despised and rejected of men" (Isa. 53:3), and He said that the servant is not greater than his lord (Jn. 15:20). What the world did to Him, it will do to His disciples. The way of Christ is not without suffering. Christ Himself was rejected, and suffered, and the Bible promises that His followers will be rejected, and suffer, too. One such passage is Matt. 10:34-36. "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household." These are hard words; painful words. Where one member of a family is a true believer, there is going to be conflict. The believer will not want it, but conflict

there will be. Consider verses 37 and 38: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." Family ties are very strong, and if a family does certain things, it is the natural desire of the flesh to want to do what they do; but Christ's words here are very plain. He was not saying that Christians must not love their families: of course they must! But He was saying that *He* must be loved above all. Many followers of the Lord Jesus Christ have suffered greatly at the hands of their families for their stand for the Lord and His Word, even unto death; yet today, those who profess to follow Him will not even forsake such festivals as Easter, or Christmas, for fear of their families and friends!

It all boils down to this: obedience to God, or disobedience. Disobedience is sin. The death of Christ is to be remembered by Christians. How? According to 1 Cor. 11, by the ordinance of the Lord's Supper! "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me" (vss. 23-25). *This* is Scripture! *This* is ordained of God! *This* is what true believers are commanded to observe! But NEVER an annual Babylonian festival of Ishtar!

"Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach" (Heb. 13:13).



## **CONCLUSION OF THE BOOK**



## CONCLUSION OF THE BOOK

It has been my purpose, in this book, to set before the reader solid evidence of the pagan origin and nature of the Christmas and Easter festivals, and the falsification of the true, biblical accounts of the birth, death and resurrection of Christ in the Christmas and Easter stories. The Christian reader, who desires above all else to obey the Lord and reject the traditions of men, will readily perceive that the observance of such festivals is a sin in the eyes of the Lord.

However, it is very important that I make one point as clear as I possibly can: even if the reader of this book was unaware, before reading it, of all the details from ancient history presented in it, and of the details of Scripture, he cannot hide behind his previous ignorance and argue that, as he was ignorant, he cannot be guilty of any sin before the Lord. For, even if these facts were never before known to the reader, yet nevertheless to observe Christmas and Easter is **NOWHERE COMMANDED** in the Bible. There is **NOT ONE** verse in all of God's Word, commanding His people to keep these festivals, to which one can point and say, "It is **WRITTEN**." This fact, alone, settles the matter. The Lord has not commanded!

The true believer must strive to walk by this rule: "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it" (Deut. 12:32). His commandments are to be obeyed; but that which is **NOT** commanded, is not to be a part of the true believer's worship. We are not to add to His commandments. Jesus said, "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:9). The observance of Christmas, or of Easter, is the observance of "the commandments of men" — and it is a worshipping of God in vain. It matters not how holy, nor how "correct" these festivals look — God has not commanded them, and so no Christian is to keep them.

For the Christian, then, there is no excuse. The fact that he did not know of the pagan origins of Christmas and Easter, nor of the falsification of the inspired scriptural record in the Christmas and Easter stories, makes no difference. Nowhere is their observance commanded. If God had wanted His people to keep Christmas (even the very name associates the holy name of Christ with the Roman Catholic blasphemy of the mass), He would have said so. And He would have revealed the day on which Christ His Son was born. But He did not. As for remembering the death of the Lord Christ, Christians have been given the ordinance of the Lord's Table. We need no more than that.

ALL false religion is an abomination to the Lord. But when false religious

practices are part of the lives of those who profess to be God's people, that is the greatest abomination of all. Consider again Ezek. 8:13,14: "He said also unto me, Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations that they do. Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the LORD'S house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz." The annual period of mourning for the pagan god Tammuz was being observed in the Lord's house, by those who professed to be *His* people! Today, there are many who profess to be the servants of Christ, who observe the same heathen religious rites as those Israelites did! Within the Church, which is the house of God (not a building, but the people of God, a spiritual house — 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Pet. 2:5), these abominations are practiced.

How dare any true child of God say that this is pleasing to God! No Christian would say, "It's December; time to celebrate the birth of the sun-god." But the festival of the birth of the sun-god, by any other name, is still the same festival — even if the name of Christ has been attached to it.

With all my heart, I call upon true believers to *repent* of this sin, and to forsake it entirely. COME OUT of the religious practices of Babylon! Come out and be separate! Touch not the unclean thing! Repent, and serve God according to His Word alone.

When Jeremiah the prophet spoke the words of the Lord to the people, they replied: "As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the LORD, we will not hearken unto thee. But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven..." (Jer. 44:16,17). There will be many, I know, who will say, "Despite what the Word of God says, we shall continue to follow our own traditions." Many have said this in the past, and many will say it in the future. To God they must answer. Following a religion of their own devising, they will have to give account before Him.

But those true saints who, having read these pages, have been humbled by the work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts; who have now seen these festivals for what they really are, and who feel the sorrow that the children of God feel when they have grieved their heavenly Father — *they* will seek His face, and confess their iniquity to Him, and rejoice in His forgiveness.

Jesus said, "If ye love me, *keep my commandments*" (Jn. 14:15). Here are three divine commandments:

"Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen" (Jer. 10:2).

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (2 Cor. 6:17).

"Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18:4).

Forsake these pagan, Romish festivals, and cleave to the Word of God alone.

Now I must address the unconverted: those who have read this book, but are not Christians. There is, today, much in the world that is called "Christianity". This book reveals that not all that is *called* "Christian", *is* Christian. Perhaps you have looked at all that goes on in the name of "Christianity" at Christmas-time and Easter-time, and have been disgusted by it. Or, perhaps, you have thought yourself to be a Christian because you have believed in the "Christ" presented at Christmas-time. I say with all solemnity, that the "Christ" of Christmas is NOT the Christ of God. It is a false "Christ", a "Christ" of men's imaginations. At Christmas-time, multitudes worship an infant, a baby-doll, and speak of the "Christ-child", the "holy babe", etc. Wicked, satanic deception! The Christ of God is not a babe in a manger, with a halo around its head, and represented by infant images which are nothing less than *idols*!

True it is that a virgin named Mary "was found with child of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 1:18); that the Holy Ghost came upon her, and the power of the Highest overshadowed her; and that the holy thing which was born of her was the Son of the living God (Lk. 1:35); that, "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman" (Gal. 4:4); that (blessed incarnation!) "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (Jn. 1:14); that "God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3:16). Divine and glorious truth! He who is *God*, became man. The Creator of all things came into the world as a little babe.

But it was not to *remain* as a babe that He came! No; "the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him" (Lk. 2:40). "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. 1:15). He had been sent by God the Father for this purpose.

All men and women are sinners. Only the Lord Jesus Christ was born without sin; all others who have ever been born into this world have been born sinners, and were in fact sinners from their very conception. "Wherefore, as by one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12). Being "*dead* in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1), no man is able to save himself, or even to *will* to be saved. All are utterly "without strength" (Rom. 5:6); "the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:7,8). "There is *none* that understandeth, there is *none* that seeketh after God" (Rom. 3:11).

Yet God, in His infinite mercy, elected some of the race of mankind to eternal life, by Jesus Christ, from before the foundation of the world. As it is written by one believer to other believers: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath *chosen* us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having

*predestinated* us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved" (Eph. 1:3-6).

The Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to save His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21). He is the ONLY Saviour of sinners; there is no other (Jn. 14:6; Acts 4:12). He came to give eternal life to as many as the Father had given him (Jn. 17:2). "But God commendeth his love toward us [the elect], in that, while we were yet *sinners*, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). Christ "loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:25). He died on the cross for those He came to save; suffering the punishment they should have suffered for their sins. Their iniquities were laid on Him (Isa. 53:6). Christ, who knew no sin, suffered for the sins of others, "the just for the unjust" (1 Pet. 3:18).

In God's appointed time, each one for whom Christ died is effectually *called* to salvation in Christ. He is given a new heart and a new spirit (Ezek. 36:26), so that he is able to see his great sin, and the beauty of Christ the only Lord and Saviour; he is drawn, by God's irresistible grace, to Christ for salvation (Jn. 6:44); he is, by regeneration, or the new birth, made willing and able to repent of his sins, and to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

I declare to the reader of this book: if you are worshipping the "Christ" of Christmas, a babe in a manger, you are on most dangerous ground. If you are a Roman Catholic, a follower of that false religion, bowing before man-made idols of "Mary" and the "Christ-child", which are nothing less than the false idols of Ashtoreth and Baal, which the ancient heathen worshipped, you have been terribly deceived, and are on your way to a Christless eternity in the lake of fire. And if you are a Protestant by religion, but have not called upon the name of the Lord for salvation, you shall likewise perish! Your case is no better.

But if the Lord has opened your heart to attend to the Gospel (Acts 16:14), so that the earnest cry of your heart now is, "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30), then hear the Word of the Lord: "Repent" (Acts 2:38); "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31); "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. 10:13).

**THE END**

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**by Shaun Willcock**

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This book is an in-depth examination of the festivals of Christmas and Easter, in the light of the Word of God. They are shown to be of Babylonian and Roman Catholic origin, and furthermore, to be perversions of what the Bible really teaches about the birth, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. No true Christian should have anything to do with them.

Shaun Willcock is a minister of the Gospel. He operates Bible Based Ministries, the purpose of which is to teach the Word of God, and to expose and biblically refute Roman Catholicism, its "daughter" institutions, its assaults upon the Christian faith and the Christian Church, and the various Popish trappings to be found even amongst true Christians.