

Christ's Last Word to His Church SERIES: Pergamum, Balaam & How Romanism Entered the Church Rev. 2:12-17

As we open to Revelation 2:14-15, and see the next section of Christ's message to the saints at Pergamum, the story behind these words actually starts way back in the book of Genesis with the life of Abraham. Follow along in your Bibles:

*Revelation 2:14-15 (NKJV) **But I have a few things against you**, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things **sacrificed to idols**, and **to commit sexual immorality**. 15 Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.*

The saints at Pergamum had gotten too close to the wickedness of the idol worship around them. They had slowly gotten comfortable going back to the old haunts of those idols they had been saved out of and away from. Then, overcome by the temptations and lusts of the flesh, they gave in to sinful practices. Idolatry is very hard to resist.

Beware of Idols

Turn back a few pages with me to the last chapter of I John. Always remember that the very last warning the Apostle John gave to the Church was in v. 21:

1 John 5:21 (NKJV) Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

Abraham was Saved from Idolatry

About 2000 B.C. God called Abraham away from all the idolatry of Babylon. Abram lived in Ur of the Chaldees. Babylon was also known as the realm of the Chaldeans. Abram was an idolator, he worshipped the images of the gods of his land. God saved him out of that idol worship. Listen to Joshua:

Joshua 24:2-3 (NKJV) And Joshua Said To All The People, "Thus Says The Lord God Of Israel: 'Your Fathers, *Including* Terah, The Father Of Abraham And The Father Of Nahor, Dwelt On The Other Side Of The River In Old Times; **And They Served Other Gods**.³ Then I Took Your Father Abraham From The Other Side Of The River, Led Him Throughout All The Land Of Canaan, And Multiplied His

Descendants And Gave Him Isaac.

When God saved Abram from idols, and then God led him into the Promised Land, and gave him the nation of Israel as his descendants. But a thousand years later, in the ninth century B. C., Israel had returned to the same idol worship Abraham had been saved from, under the influence of wicked Jezebel (see 1 Kings 16:30-33). At this time the cult was worshiped under the name of Baal.

By the time of the prophet Jeremiah, the idolatrous worship of Babylon's religion, Abraham was saved from, permeated the nation of Israel. Please turn with me to Jeremiah 44.

Jeremiah 44: The Queen of Heaven's Idolatous Religion

The words "Queen of Heaven" are found in five verses in the Bible (Jeremiah 7:18; 44:17-19, 25).

In Jeremiah, we are introduced to this whole idolatrous form of worship.

Jeremiah 44:17-25 (NKJV) But we will certainly do whatever has gone out of our own mouth, to burn incense to **the queen of heaven** and pour out drink offerings to 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 we had plenty of food, were well-off, and saw no trouble. 18 But since we stopped burning incense to **the queen of heaven** and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have lacked everything and have been consumed by the sword and by famine."19 The women also said, "And when we burned incense to **the queen of heaven** and poured out drink offerings to her, did we make cakes for her, to worship her, and pour out drink offerings to her without our husbands' permission?"

22 So the LORD could no longer bear it, because of the evil of your doings and because of the abominations which you committed. Therefore your land is a desolation, an astonishment, a curse, and without an inhabitant, as it is this day.

Do you know where the queen of Heaven came from? It came right out of Egyptian idolatry, Isis and Osiris. It has nothing to do with the New Testament at all. And if you have ever heard that Roman Catholics say the **Queen of Heaven** is Mary, and wondered where that came from—look at these words in Ezekiel 8:12-16.

The prophet Ezekiel is taken by God into the temple, the house of God; and he sees that there are idols there and God is very unhappy. And just to see what is offending God so greatly, he's shown this scene:

Ezekiel 8:13-14, 16 (NKJV) And He said to me, "Turn again, and you will see greater abominations that they are doing." 14 So He brought me to the door of the north gate of the LORD's house; and to my dismay, **women were sitting**

there weeping for Tammuz. 16 So He brought me into the inner court of the LORD's house; and there, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men with **their backs toward the temple of the LORD** and their faces toward the east, and **they were worshiping the sun** toward the east.

There it is, the idolatry of Babel exported to Israel: the worship of the virgin goddess in Jeremiah 44, the worship of her son as they were weeping the 40 days awaiting his resurrection in Exekiel 8.

Semiramis, Lent & Romanism

Let me just give you some interesting details from a book entitled, "The Two Babylons" by Alexander Hislop. The worship of **Semiramis** throughout history has often had these elements:

- **Semiramis** was called the Queen of Heaven;
- **Semiramis** was worshipped by the offering of a wafer, or cake;
- **Semiramis** began the practice of 40 days of weeping over Tammuz before the feast of celebrating his resurrection.
- These mystery cults around **Semiramis** also had purgatory, which they taught and believed and adhered to.¹

The worship of Mary as the Queen of Heaven and the 40 days of Lent for her Son, has no basis in Scripture, but rather developed from the pagan celebration of Semiramis's mourning for forty days over the death of Tammuz before his alleged resurrection—another of Satan's mythical counterfeits.

The majority of those who call themselves Christians in our world today follow a way of worship that would have offended the apostles and early saints. What do I mean?

The statues of Mary, calling her the Queen of Heaven, the images of Christ and saints; and all of them being revered with candles and incense burning before them are idolatrous. God through His Word calls each of us to always be on guard and to:

BEWARE OF THE NEW PAGANISM IN THE CHURCH

What are some of the pagan rites that have crept into the Church? To name a few would be:

The incense burning before images, the orders of priests and monks that are so contradictory to Christ-like humility, the calendar of observances that each originate

¹ John MacArthur preached this in a Mother's Day message on 5/14/72

with pagan events that have only been renamed with Christian events, the titles of pagan priests like: Pontifex Maximus, pontiff, vicar, and most excellent.

Then there are also all the pagan originated and never recorded in the Bible practices like: holy water, purgatory, prayers for the dead, indulgences, and so much more.

All of these names, observances, and practices came directly from the pagans; the very pagans that the early saints tried to convert! Now look back at our text in Revelation 2:12-17 where we find:

Christ's ADMONITION v. 14-15

*Revelation 2:14-15 (NKJV) **But I have a few things against you**, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things **sacrificed to idols**, and **to commit sexual immorality**. 15 Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.*

The saints at Pergamum had gotten too close to the wickedness around them. They had slowly gotten comfortable going back to the old haunts they had been saved out of and away from. Then, overcome by the lusts of the flesh, they gave in to sinful practices.

They were not being obedient to the clear commands Christ had already given them, thus they were not pleasing Him. What had Jesus already asked for them to do, and taught them through their pastor's ministry of the Word to them?

2 Corinthians 6:16-17 (NKJV) **And what agreement has the temple of God with idols?** For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: **"I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people."** 17 Therefore **"Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you."**

Christ said you are in sin "I have few things against you!"

1. First, you have **Balaam's doctrine** = what is that?

- ✓ "Put stumbling block..." Numbers 22-25 records how Moabites contacted Balaam a prophet for hire, he prophesied 4x promising Israel's conquest of Moab and Christ's coming, they angrily fired him and God killed 24,000 of Israel with a plague.
- ✓ What? 24,000 Israelites killed by God? Yes, that's the doctrine of Balaam, "If you can't defeat it, join it and defile it and God will judge it". Balaam said get them involved in sexual sin and God will judge them and did...

- ✓ Balaam's doctrine is still here, such as people who actually say they are Christians and yet continue to live in sexual sin. Others say they belong to Christ yet support false doctrine that is completely opposed to Christ.
- ✓ Today if you are living in such sin and drawing in others, to you Christ says, "I am coming to war against you".

2. Second, **Nicolaitans**, what's that? Nicolas supposedly started a cult but any record in church history is sketchy. Many Bible teachers through the centuries take this to be **nike-laioi**, which translated means one who "conquered people". How can that be seen in the history of the Church?

- ✓ This would cover the many who over the centuries have arisen as, self-made prophets ruling with rods of iron, building ecclesiastical kingdoms of wealth and power. This type of disobedience is still with us today, sadly.
- ✓ Just quickly a side note- How did it happen? How did the pure, simple gospel get in purple robes with gold rings and set in paganism, idols and adopt false "work your way to heaven" doctrines?

Balaam's doctrine is when sinful and false practices are brought into the Church and the Nicolaitans are those who lord over Christ's Church instead of humbly leading and serving it.

So how did the Church inherit this wickedness? Hold on to your seats, here is an overview of world history in 3 minutes:

The Pagan Origins of Romanism

By the time of Christ, this cult had so influenced Roman life that the Caesars were not only crowned as emperors of Rome but also bore the title Pontifex Maximus, meaning, "high priest." They were high priests of the Babylonian idol worship.

When Christ came into this world the mystery of iniquity was everywhere holding sway, save where the truth of God as revealed in the Old Testament was known. Thus, when the early Christians set out upon the great task of carrying the gospel to the ends of the earth, they found themselves everywhere confronted by this system, in one form or another; for though Babylon as a city had long been but a mystery, her mysteries had not died with her.²

Babylon to Pergamos

² Henry Allen "Harry" Ironside (October 14, 1876-January 15, 1951) was a Canadian-American Bible teacher, preacher, theologian, pastor, and author. Found also on Lambert Dolphin's site at: <http://ldolphin.org/semir.html> This article copied from: <http://www.biblelineministries.org/articles/basearch.php3?action=full&mainkey=BABYLONIAN+RELIGION+%28By+Harry+A.+Ironside%29>

When Medes and Persians moved in and took the city and temples of Babylon in 539 BC, the high-priest fled with a company of initiates and their sacred vessels and images to **Pergamos**, where the Symbol of the serpent was set up as the emblem of the hidden wisdom.³

The chief priests wore mitres shaped like the head of a fish, in honor of Dagon, the fish-god, the Lord of life-another form of the Tammuz mystery, as developed among Israel's old enemies, the Philistines. The chief priest took the title Pontifex Maximus, and this was imprinted in on his mitre.⁴

Pergamos to Rome

Three hundred years later, Rome moved into power, Julius Caesar had all the priestesses and priests of Semiramis moved from Pergamos to Rome. That's history. You can read that yourself. Julius Caesar had a great idea about having more power if he could combine a false religion with his system. You see, he knew what every good conqueror knows; you've got to get the people religiously.⁵

When the worship of Semiramis arrived in Rome, the chief priest of the Mystery Religions in Rome took the title Pontifex Maximum and it was imprinted on his miter. The title had to do with the worship of a god called Dagon the Fish-god. From then on, every emperor in Rome wore the title Pontifex Maximum. It had nothing to do with Christianity; it meant you were the chief priest of the worship of Semiramis.⁶

Constantine & Christianity

During the year A. D. 306 a Roman emperor named Constantine was threatened by a very powerful enemy army. Realizing that his uneasy troops needed confidence, Constantine claimed to have seen a vision on the eve of the battle. He saw a large blue flag with a red cross on it and heard a mighty voice that said ***In hoc signo vinces*** -- "in this sign conquer."

He thereupon marched his troops into a shallow river, claimed them to be officially baptized, and ordered the sign of the cross painted on all his weapons. Thus inspired, he led his troops to victory and subsequently made Christianity the state religion of Rome.

Thus, for nearly 300 years the Devil had desperately attempted to destroy the church

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⁵ John MacArthur speaking at a Q&A 10/7/1973 said these things. http://www.gty.org/Resources/Sermons/1332_The-Destruction-of-the-Nations-Part-3?q=lent

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from outside by his terrible persecutions. But with the advent of Constantine he changed his tactics, walking the aisle, applying for membership, and joining the church!

The Roman Empire's official priests of Tammuz soon discovered that they could easily make the transition into Christianity (with certain changes) and thereupon carried their traditions forward without interruption by promoting the Mother-Child worship concept, the holy-water sacrament, and many other practices imported from the pagan mystery religions.

Up until the Roman emperor **Constantine** Christianity in the early 4th century A.D., were both head of the Roman empire and also Pontifex Maximus--head of the pagan church. Constantine's proclamation of Christianity led to the merger of Christianity and paganism in the Roman empire. As head of the pagan church, Constantine wore the garb and paraphernalia of Babylon's idolatry which had been passed down through the Babylonian empire, preserved in Pergamum, willed to Rome, and was worn by Julius Caesar and the subsequent Roman emperors. The Roman emperor Constantine had the fish hat, the crosier, and the keys of Janus and Cybele.⁷

Babylonianism to The Church

In 381 A.D., the Roman emperor **Gratian** refused to wear the paraphernalia of Babylonianism, but he passed it to the Roman Pope Damasus. Since Damasus, every Pope of Rome has worn the garb of Babylon--the fish hat, the crosier, and the keys of Janus and Cybele. In our days, Pope John Paul II and his most recent successor, Pope Benedict XVI, wears the garb of Babylonian idolatry. As the pagans had worshipped their gods (icons of their deceased pontiffs) in their pantheons and temples, they now worshipped their patron saints and their Icons in cathedrals and churches.⁸

Semiramis: who was Ashtoreth in Canaan, Aphrodite in Greece, Venus in Rome, known also as Astarte, Ishtar, Aurora, Diana, Rhea, Urania, and Isis: was worshipped now as Jesus' mother Mary.⁹

Historian Will Durant¹⁰ states that paganism conquered Christianity, saying that paganism continued "in the form of ancient rites and customs condoned or accepted and transformed by an often indulgent Church."

Durant goes on to explain: "An intimate and trustful worship of saints replaced the cult of the pagan gods, and satisfied the polytheism of simple or poetic minds. Statues of Isis and Horus were renamed Mary and Jesus."

Many yars ago as a professor of Church History at the Masters Seminary and College, I

⁷ Hislop, The Two Babylon's, page 241. <http://philologos.org/eb-ttb/default.htm>

⁸ Hislop, The Two Babylon's, page 241. <http://philologos.org/eb-ttb/default.htm>

⁹ Hislop, The Two Babylon's, page 241. <http://philologos.org/eb-ttb/default.htm>

¹⁰ William James Durant (November 5, 1885 – November 7, 1981) was a prolific American writer, historian, and philosopher. He is best known for The Story of Civilization, 11 volumes written in collaboration with his wife Ariel Durant and published between 1935 and 1975. The Story of Civilization, Vol. IV, page 73.

used to give a lecture series for 14 hours, from Church History and the History of Doctrine called:

Seven Reasons I am not a Roman Catholic

1. The first reason why the Roman Catholic church is wrong is because of the doctrine of Christ's being offered over and over in the **Mass**.
2. The second reason is because of the **inordinate place that Mary** has been given.
3. Thirdly, because they have **elevated tradition over the Scripture**. Mass, with their doctrine of Mary. They put it, their teachings which have become traditions, over the holy scriptures.
4. Fourthly, because of **the veneration or worship of images**. The scriptures tell us that God is not to be reduced into a physical form. He is not to be worshipped by anything we can make with our hands.
5. Because of the **false teachings about the sacraments**. The Roman church, teaches that grace is infused through the operation of these sacraments; and that grace can be earned instead of being imputed by God.
6. Sixthly, the teaching of the Roman Catholic church about **purgatory** is a falsehood.
7. Finally, many practices of Roman Catholicism are tied to **ancient paganism's rites**.

There are some people in the Catholic Church who have met Jesus Christ and I praise God for that, but they had to do it circumventing their own theology, if they even knew their own theology.

Christ's message for them and to us today is: *Stay separated from false doctrine and evil practices.*

APPENDIX of BACKGROUND & HISTORY

*Revelation 2:12-17 (NKJV) "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, 'These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: 13 **"I know your works,** and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. 14 **But I have a few things against you,** because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. 15 Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. 16 **Repent, or else** I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth. 17 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.'"*

PART FIVE: THE APPEAL

V. 16

Finally, now, the heart of the message. Let's review the lessons we've learned.

- ✓ God can save - the vilest offender - even Pergamum or you.
- ✓ The same Word of God that saves, can draw the destiny of one who neglects to be saved.
- ✓ Watch out since Satan can't conquer you, he will seek to defile you!

So what's the ultimate lesson? Well, the church at Pergamum had a problem...some had lost their vital birthrights of being born again.

They had lost THEIR PURITY, THEIR INTIMACY and THEIR NOURISHMENT. How? Because, they got too close to the world by mixing with them, or marrying them, or loving the system.

So Jesus lovingly offers a solution to theirs and sometimes our woeful problems.

- ✓ **If you have lost your purity** - Christ says, Come back and I'll give you my white stone. Do you want Christ's purity? Let Him wash and cleanse you and make you pure, as white as snow.
- ✓ **If you have lost your intimacy** - Christ says, Come back and I'll give you my new name. Do you want Christ's intimacy? Let Him start drawing you to spend time alone with Him, He's waiting for you.
- ✓ **If you have lost your nourishment** - Christ says, Come back and I'll give you my

hidden manna. Do you want Christ Jesus to help you grow? Let Him start feeding you in His word.

- ✓ **If you have lost your focus** - Christ says, Come back and I'll give you my new ears, listen. Do you want Christ's focus? Then go back to listening to Christ speaking to you in the word.

Note the Emphasis = You must let Him do this today!

PART SIX

THE ASSURANCE

V. 17

The last message Jesus has for us is His wonderful plan. He has spelled out what He wants us to be like. He has detailed how by His grace He will enable us to live! Jesus is here today. CHRIST SEEKING OUT HIS CHURCH: Our Lord Jesus Christ came to give so much. Have you received what Jesus came to give every one of His own born again children?

TRUE BELIEVERS HAVE AN ABUNDANT LIFE

Revelation 2:7

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. (KJV)

- ✓ This means we have infinite life in paradise regained - John 3:16
- ✓ an OVERFLOWing life: John 7:38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." (NIV)
- ✓ AN extraordinary LIFE: John 10:10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have [it] more abundantly. [perissos exceeding some number or measure or rank or need, over and above, more than is necessary, superadded, exceeding abundantly, supremely something further, more, much more than all, more plainly, superior, extraordinary, surpassing, uncommon, pre-eminence, superiority, advantage, more eminent, more remarkable, more excellent]

TRUE BELIEVERS HAVE AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

Revelation 2:11

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death. (KJV)

- ✓ SECURE FROM ANY PHYSICAL ADVERSARY: John 10:28-29 And I give unto them

eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any [man] pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave [them] me, is greater than all; and no [man] is able to pluck [them] out of my Father's hand. (KJV)

- ✓ SECURE FROM ANY SPIRITUAL ADVERSARY: Romans 8:38-39 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (KJV)

TRUE BELIEVERS HAVE AN INEXHAUSTIBLE SUPPLY

Revelation 2:17

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth [it].
(KJV)

- ✓ ALL SPIRITUAL NEEDS MET: John 6:35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. (KJV)
- ✓ ALL SPIRITUAL DESIRES FULFILLED: John 14:13-14 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. 14 You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it. (NIV)

The throne of Satan did not die, however. It was continued in the kingship of Pergamum in Asia Minor, which is Turkey today. The second chapter of the Book of Revelations describes Pergamum as the city of Satan's throne (Revelations 2:12-13). Once the kingship of Pergamum died out, the position of Pontifex Maximus needed a new home. The pagan title found its new home in the capital city in Rome. Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons* (1853)¹¹ writes about this event:

Pergamos itself became part and parcel of the Roman Empire, when Attalus III, the last of the kings, at his death, left by will all his dominions to the Roman people, in 133 BC. For some time after the kingdom of Pergamos was merged in the Roman dominions, there was no one who could set himself openly and advisedly to lay claim to all the dignity inherent in the old title of the kings of Pergamos. But when **Julius Caesar**, who had previously been elected Pontifex Maximus became also, as emperor, the supreme civil ruler of the Romans, then, as head of the Roman state, and as head of the Roman religion, all the powers and functions of the true legitimate Babylonian Pontiff were supremely vested in him, and he found himself in a position to assert these powers...Then, on certain occasions, in the exercise of his high pontifical office, he appeared in all the pomp of the Babylonian costume, as Belshazzar [an ancient Pontifex Maximus of Babylon himself] might have done, in robes of scarlet, with the crosier of Nimrod in his

¹¹ Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, page 241. http://philologos.org/_eb-ttb/default.htm

hand, wearing the miter of Dagon and bearing the keys of Janus and Cybele.¹²

Harlotry, or prostitution is the standing symbol in Scripture for one thing...it is the standing symbol in Scripture for idolatry. Wherever you see spiritual harlotry, or spiritual prostitution in Scripture it is the standing symbol of idolatry. Whenever people turned to other gods, rather than the true God, it was prostitution. It was joining oneself to a harlot¹³.

It is shocking for Roman Catholics to learn that the proposal of the Lord's Supper as a sacrifice was first made by a Benedictine monk, Radbertus, in the ninth century and was the subject of many fierce verbal battles by the bishops until Pope Innocent III declared it an official Roman doctrine in 1215 AD.

The very principles found in the bloodless sacrifice of the Mass as it is in the church of Rome today can be traced back through the labyrinth of paganism to the fountain of idolatry, ancient Babylon.

Rome's most blasphemous and massive religious fraud originated in Chaldean idol worship and will continue until the time of the end when, according to Revelation 17 and 18, amid the wonder and admiration of the world, Rome will be judged with violence and be thrown down and shall be found no more at all, for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her. This brutal, bloody, and blasphemous harlot is none other than the universal false church, the wicked wife of Satan!

Alexander Hislop, The Two Babylons (1853)¹⁴

Ba'Hai Faith¹⁵:

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¹³ http://www.gty.org/Resources/Sermons/66-59_The-Destruction-of-the-Final-World-Religion-Part-1?q=queen+of+heaven

¹⁴ http://philologos.org/_eb-ttb/default.htm

¹⁵ <http://www.alaska.net/~peace/trinity.htm>

¹⁶ The Two Babylon's, page 241.

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As the pagans had worshipped their gods (icons of their deceased pontiffs) in their pantheons and temples, they now worshipped their patron saints and their Icons in cathedrals and churches. Semiramis--who was Ashtoreth to the Jews, Aphrodite in Greece, Venus in Rome, known also as Astarte, Ishtar, Aurora, Diana, Rhea, Urania, and Isis--was worshipped now as Jesus' mother Mary.

Historian Will Durant¹⁷ states that paganism conquered Christianity, saying that paganism continued "in the form of ancient rites and customs condoned or accepted and transformed by an often indulgent Church." Durant goes on to explain: "An intimate and trustful worship of saints replaced the cult of the pagan gods, and satisfied the polytheism of simple or poetic minds. Statues of Isis and Horus were renamed Mary and Jesus."

BABYLONIAN RELIGION (By Harry A. Ironside)¹⁸

As we go back into the dim twilight of history with Scripture, we learn that the founder of Bab-el, or Babylon, was Nimrod, of whose unholy achievements we read in the 10th chapter of Genesis. He was the arch-apostate of the patriarchal age.

Ancient lore now comes to our assistance, and tells us that the wife of Nimrod-bar-Cush was the infamous Semiramis, the First. She is reputed to have been the founder of the Babylonian mysteries and the first high-priestess of idolatry. Thus Babylon became the fountainhead of idolatry, and the mother of every heathen and pagan system in the world. The mystery-religion that was originated there spread in various forms throughout the whole earth.

Building on the primeval promise of the woman's Seed who was to come, Semiramis bore a son whom she declared was miraculously conceived, and when she presented him to the people, he was hailed as the promised deliverer. This was Tammuz, whose worship Ezekiel protested against in the days of the captivity. Thus was introduced the mystery of the mother and the child, a form of idolatry that is older than any other known to man. The rites of this worship were secret. Only the initiated were permitted to know its mysteries. It was Satan's effort to delude mankind with an imitation so like the truth of God that they would not know the true Seed of the woman when He came in the fullness of time. To this Justin Martyr bears definite witness.

From Babylon this mystery-religion spread to all the surrounding nations, as the years went on and the world was populated by the

¹⁷ William James Durant (November 5, 1885 – November 7, 1981) was a prolific American writer, historian, and philosopher. He is best known for *The Story of Civilization*, 11 volumes written in collaboration with his wife Ariel Durant and published between 1935 and 1975. *The Story of Civilization*, Vol. IV, page 73.

¹⁸ Henry Allen "Harry" Ironside (October 14, 1876-January 15, 1951) was a Canadian-American Bible teacher, preacher, theologian, pastor, and author. Found also on Lambert Dolphin's site at: <http://ldolphin.org/semir.html> This article copied from:

<http://www.biblelineministries.org/articles/basearch.php3?action=full&mainkey=BABYLONIAN+RELIGION+%28By+Harry+A.+Ironside%29>

descendants of Noah. Everywhere the symbols were the same, and everywhere the cult of the mother and child became the popular system. Their worship was celebrated with the most disgusting and immoral practices. The image of the queen of heaven with the babe in her arms was seen everywhere, though the names might differ as languages differed. It became the mystery-religion of Phoenicia, and by the Phoenicians was carried to the ends of the earth. Ashtoreth and Tammuz, the mother and child of these hardy adventurers, became Isis and Horus in Egypt; Aphrodite and Eros in Greece; Venus and Cupid in Italy; and bore many other names in more distant places. Within 1,000 years, Babylonianism had become the religion of the world, which had rejected the Divine revelation.

Linked with the central mystery were countless lesser mysteries, the hidden meaning of which was known only to the initiates, but the outward forms were practiced by all the people. Among these were the doctrines of purgatorial purification after death, salvation by countless sacraments (such as priestly absolution), sprinkling with holy water, the offering of round cakes to the queen of heaven (as mentioned in [Jeremiah 44:12](#)), dedication of virgins to the gods (which was literally sanctified prostitution), weeping for Tammuz for a period of 40 days prior to the great festival of Istar (who was said to have received her son back from the dead); for it was taught that Tammuz was slain by a wild boar and afterwards brought back to life. To him the egg was sacred, as depicting the mystery of his resurrection even as the evergreen was his chosen symbol and was set up in honor of his birth at the winter solstice, when a boar's head was eaten in memory of his conflict and a yule log burned with many mysterious observances. The sign of the cross was sacred to Tammuz, as symbolizing the life giving principle and as the first letter of his name. It is represented upon vast numbers of the most ancient altars and temples, and did not, as many have supposed originate with Christianity.

From this mystery-religion, the patriarch Abraham was separated by the divine call, and with this same evil cult the nation that sprang from him had constant conflict, until under Jezebel, a Phoenician princess, it was grafted onto what was left of the religion of Israel in the northern kingdom in the day of Ahab, and was the cause of their captivity at the last. Judah was polluted by it, for Baal-worship was but the Canaanitish form of Babylonian mysteries, and only by being sent into captivity to Babylon itself did Judah become cured of her fondness for idolatry. Baal was the Sun-God, the Life-

giving One, identical with Tammuz.

When Christ came into this world the mystery of iniquity was everywhere holding sway, save where the truth of God as revealed in the Old Testament was known. Thus, when the early Christians set out upon the great task of carrying the gospel to the ends of the earth, they found themselves everywhere confronted by this system, in one form or another; for though Babylon as a city had long been but a mystery, her mysteries had not died with her.

When the city and temples were destroyed, the high-priest fled with a company of initiates and their sacred vessels and images to Pergamos, where the Symbol of the serpent was set up as the emblem of the hidden wisdom. From there, they afterwards crossed the sea and immigrated to Italy, where, they settled on the Etruscan plain. There the ancient cult was propagated under the name of the Etruscan Mysteries and eventually Rome became the headquarters of Babylonianism.

The chief priests wore mitres shaped like the head of a fish, in honor of Dagon, the fish-god, the Lord of life-another form of the Tammuz mystery, as developed among Israel's old enemies, the Philistines. The chief priest when established in Rome took the title Pontifex Maximus, and this was imprinted in on his mitre.

When Julius Caesar (who was an initiate like all young Romans of good family) had become the head of the States, he was elected Pontifex Maximus, and this title was held henceforth by all the Roman emperors down to Constantine the Great, who was at one and the same time, head of the church, and high priest to the heathen. The title was afterwards conferred upon the bishops of Rome, and is borne by the pope today, who is thus declared to be, not the successor of the fisherman-apostle Peter, but the direct successor of the high priest of the Babylonian mysteries, and the servant of the fish-god Dagon, for whom he wears, like his idolatrous predecessors, the fisherman's ring.

During the early centuries of the church's history, the mystery of iniquity had wrought with such astounding effect, and the Babylonian practices and teachings had been so largely absorbed by that which bore the name of the church of Christ, that the truth of the Holy Scriptures on many points had been wholly obscured, while idolatrous practices had been

foisted upon the people as Christian sacraments, and the heathen philosophies took the place of gospel instruction. Thus was developed that amazing system which for a thousand years dominated Europe and trafficked in the bodies of souls of men, until the great Reformation of the 16th century brought in a measure of deliverance.

MAC¹⁹:

Now, the Constantine Roman Empire that came about in about 300 or so, after that they wanted to sort of Christianize everything. And so in approximately 450 A.D., the Bishop of Rome decided that it would be really good if they could Christianize the festivals of pagans.

Another illustration, just before Easter, traditionally the Christian church celebrates what season? Lent. You know where lent came from? There's no lent in the Bible, none. It never appears in the Bible. It had nothing to do with the resurrection of Christ. But in ancient paganism, in the instructions of Baal and Ashteroth and the deities of the ancients, it was believed that Tammuz, or Baal, he goes by a lot of different names, Cupid, many names, but that Tammuz or Baal was killed by a wild boar. And when he was killed by a wild boar, his mother Semiramis, the high priestess of Babylonian paganism, mourned for him and cried for him for 40 days and at the end of those 40 days, he was risen from the dead. So the whole concept of the 40-day mourning and going without and fasting has absolutely nothing to do with the resurrection of Christ but was an imposition on Christianity from pagan mystery religions of Babylon.

The mother/child perspective where you see in the Roman churches, you know, the virgin or you see the pieta, the carving, this whole mother/child thing does not come, basically, from Christianity. Semiramis, it was said by the pagans, conceived her son Tammuz because she was implanted by a sunbeam. That would falsify what? The virgin birth.

And after that she gave birth to her son without a human father. So that the mother/child cult really came through mystery religions of Babylon and in its pagan origin, was superimposed on Christianity and, ultimately, the confusion came out in the Roman Catholic system where you have lent, which has no Biblical basis at all. In fact, that's only one part of it. You know the term "Queen of Heaven"? I was reading a Catholic book the other day. Queen of Heaven...Queen of Heaven you can find in the book of Ezekiel. And the first Queen of Heaven was Semiramis, the high priestess of Babylonian cults, the mother/child cult. Many of these features have come out of paganism and been superimposed across Christianity.

¹⁹ http://www.gty.org/Resources/Sermons/1301-J_Bible-Questions-and-Answers-Part-12?q=lent

In Babel...it's called MYSTERY, BABYLON and mystery means something that was hidden, right. This form was hidden. The Old Testament never saw this form of this world religion. It's now revealed.

Nimrod was the brains behind the first system of false religion. But Nimrod had a wife and his wife was a real winner. Her name was Semiramis...Semiramis. She was the Queen of Babel. Now, watch this. When Babel got scattered by God, the whole system revolving around Semiramis went with it.

And here's an interesting thing. When Babylon, later on was destroyed by the Medes and the Persians...the system had become very, very, oh, what should I say, very highly detailed...but when the Medes and the Persians came and destroyed Babylon, all the high priests and priestesses left there, who were still hanging on to the old Semiramis bit, fled and they went to Pergamos and they stayed in Pergamos for a little while.

But later on, when Rome moved into power, Julius Caesar had all the priestesses and priests of Semiramis move from Pergamos to Rome. That's history. You can read that yourself. Julius Caesar had a great idea about having more power if he could combine a false religion with his system. You see, he knew what every good conqueror knows; you've got to get the people religiously. Now, watch. When the worship of Semiramis arrived in Rome, the chief priest in Rome took the title Pontifex Maximum and it was imprinted on his miter. The title had to do with the worship of a god called Dagon the Fish-god. From then on, every emperor in Rome wore the title Pontifex Maximum. It had nothing to do with Christianity; it meant you were the chief priest of the worship of Semiramis.

Do you know who wears that title today?...the Pope. The Pope is not the direct successor of Peter; he is the direct successor of the Babylonian mystery religions and the servant of Dagon the Fish-god. Now, another interesting note is the fact that Semiramis became so well known around the world that every system of religion goes back to her.

- For example, in Assyria and Nineveh, they worship a woman called Ishtar. That's just Semiramis in their language.

²⁰ http://www.gty.org/Resources/Sermons/1332_The-Destruction-of-the-Nations-Part-3?q=lent

- In Phoenicia, it was Ashteroth.
- In Egypt, it was Isis.
- In Greece it was Aphrodite
- In Rome it was Venus.
- But it's all Semiramis. It's the same basic thing that got scattered and culturized a little bit.

Now, the story of Semiramis went like this. Semiramis gave birth to a son. Now, watch. She said her son was conceived, not by a man, no; she had a wild one. It was conceived by a sunbeam (laughter). That's what she said (laughter). And she offered this son as a promised deliverer. You know what was the...the son's name was Tammuz. Semiramis and the son, Tammuz. He was born not of _____ father, but by a sunbeam. What do you think Satan was counterfeiting there?...the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, wasn't he. He's subtle.

When Tammuz grew up, a wild boar killed him. But do you know what happened? After 40 days of his mother's crying, he arose. Do you know, for a long time, the Roman church has celebrated a period of time known as "lent." How long is it?...forty days. Do you find anywhere in the Bible a 40-day period between the death and resurrection of Christ?...absolutely not. You know where that comes from? It comes from the worship of Semiramis and Tammuz. It has nothing to do with Christianity at all.

Now, in the story of Semiramis and Tammuz was born the mother-child cult.

- For example, if you were to go to Phoenicia, you would find that the child in Phoenicia is called Baal.
- In Greece, the child is Eros.
- In Rome the child is that little cutie with the diapers and the bow...Cupid (laughter). But it is all the same thing. It is all the mother-child cult that Satan began. Now, why do you think he began that?...to provide in the midst of the world a counterfeit to Christianity to confuse the issue. And not only that, but when we talk about Christianity and we talk about Christ and virgin birth, then the critics say, oh, yeah, you just picked that up; that's what every religion says. You see the subtlety of it?

You know how they used to worship Semiramis? They worshiped her by offering a wafer to her and her name was Semiramis, Queen of Heaven.

And there were always 40 days of lent, weeping for Tammuz before the feast, which celebrated his resurrection. The worship of Semiramis also involved priests, sacramental rites, dedication of virgins and purgatory. You say, where did Catholicism come from? Pretty clear, isn't it.

Now, lest you think I'm pulling that out of the air, I want to show you something of very good interest in Jeremiah 44:15. Now, here, Jeremiah is describing the worship of Semiramis. It's interesting. Watch.

"Then all the men who knew that their wives had burned incense unto other gods, and all the women who stood by, a great multitude, even all the people who 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 whatever 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, our princes in the cities of Judah...' etc., etc., etc.

Verse 18: "'Since we ceased to burn incense to the queen of heaven and pour out drink offerings unto her, we have lacked all things and been consumed by the sword and famine. And when we burned incense to the queen of heaven...' etc., etc., etc.

Now, it's obvious that clear back there in the Old Testament they were worshipping the queen of heaven. Now, when you hear that Mary is the queen of heaven, where does that come from?... certainly not the New Testament. You see, what happened was, in the process of Babylonian religion migrating to Rome, Catholicism became amalgamation of Christianity and paganism. And really, it's fitting that the whole false system in the end center in that place. Incidentally, in Ezekiel, chapter 8, you'll find women weeping for Tammuz in that 40-day period. It's defined right there, Ezekiel 8:13, 14. You can look it up for yourself.

All right, verse 6, Revelation 17. Now, going on to describe this union with Satan, the final union with Satan, "I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I wondered with great wonder."

MAC Q&A ²¹

²¹ http://www.gty.org/Resources/Sermons/1301-C_Bible-Questions-and-Answers-Part-5?q=hislop

Okay, another question, and this one has come up, because I mentioned it a few weeks ago. Doesn't Lent represent Christ's 40 days in the wilderness? I made the statement that the observance of Lent...Lent is 40 days before Easter, right? Some of you comes...come from denominational backgrounds.

Lent is a 40-day observance before Easter where you don't do something. You...you can choose what you don't do, but you just don't do it for those 40 days.

Now, where did Lent come from? You can't find it in the Bible connected to Easter. You can't find it in the Bible connected to anything. You can never find the early church observing it. You can't find the early church fathers adhering to Lent. So where does it come from? I suggested that Lent came from a pagan custom, and someone asked, "Well, doesn't it come from the 40 days of Christ in the wilderness?"

No, it doesn't, because the 40 days that Christ was tempted in the wilderness were at the beginning of His ministry. It wasn't until three years later that He died and was risen from the dead. So that the gap of three years eliminates connecting the 40 days of His wilderness temptation to the resurrection. There's no way...Where does Lent come from then? Well, quoting from Hislop, it says this - and he's quoting a man, an ancient writer by the name of Cassianus.

"It ought to be known...said Cassianus, the monk of Marseilles, writing in the fifth century and contrasting the primitive church with the church in his day...that the observance of the 40 days had no existence so long as the perfection of the primitive church remained inviolate."

In other words, the testimony of this fifth century monk is that as long as the primitive church was pure, it never knew anything about Lent. It was until it got corrupted that Lent came in.

Where did it come from? It was borrowed from the worship of Babylonian mystery religions, and this is what we discussed. And we said, remember we said that all false religion began where? Tower of Babel, right? It all began there. The worship of whatever that Ziggurat was, that tower that

they built, that false worship.

And so God scattered them all; and when He scattered them, He changed their languages; and when they went to wherever they went, they took with them that false system of religion; and so that same system of religion found its way into all different cultures and all different societies and all different places in the world.

And you might be interested to know that Lent is still observed by certain pagan devil worshipers, even in rather modern times. Some historians have even found it among the pagans in Mexico. The observance of a 40-day period, but they do it in honor of the sun.

Historians have found it, and archeologists have found it in Egypt, in a 40-day commemoration of Isis and Osiris.

The Greeks even had a 40-day feast in connection with wailing for the rape of a certain goddess who was carried away by Pluto, who was known as the god of hell, and so they were weeping 40 days for this poor goddess named something like porcupine, but it's not porcupine. Persephone or something like that...

Now, it was a 40-day period of mourning prior to the supposed resurrection of the god Tamus, the false god. This was its...the way it was observed in Rome. To conciliate the pagans and to draw them into nominal Christianity, the Roman church, pursuing its usual policy, amalgamated the festivals of Christianity with pagan festivals; and since they celebrated Easter around April and May, and since the pagan Lent was celebrated in May in Egypt, and in April in Britain, it fit well with Easter; and so they just brought it together to kind of marry the pagans; and the Council of Orillia in 519 decreed that Lent should solemnly be attached to Easter and kept before Easter. That was 519 AD, so it has no Biblical base whatsoever.

Mac:²² For us, Easter is not the worship of a Astarte. By the way, that's where the word Easter comes from. Astarte, who was the goddess of spring, the Old Testament gives her the name Ashtoreth. Supposedly the mother Baal. We don't worship some pagan goddess who, by the way, was called the queen of heaven and of whom it was believed by the Egyptians was dropped out of heaven in a giant egg, landed in the Nile River, and was pushed to the shore by some very cooperative fish. The egg rolled its way up onto the shore and cracked open, and out came the queen of heaven, Ashtoreth, Semeramis, Astarte. Celebrating her came the festival of Easter...and eggs...and spring; but that isn't what it is for us.

The Madonna and Child on Christmas Cards, and Christmas stamps is just Semiramis, the Babylonian queen of heaven with her son Tammuz, adopted by the Church of Rome to represent the Virgin Mary and her son Jesus. "The Babylonians in their popular religion," wrote Alex. Hislop, "supremely worshiped a goddess Mother and a son, who was represented in pictures and images as an infant or child in his mother's arms. From Babylon this worship of the Mother and Child spread to the ends of the earth.

In Egypt the Mother and Child were worshiped under the names of Isis and Osiris. In India, even to this day, as Isi and Iswara; in Asia as Cybele and Devious; in Pagan Rome as the great Mother, with the babe on her breast, or as Irene, the goddess of Peace with the boy Plutus in her arms; and even in Tibet, in China, and Japan, the Jesuit missionaries were astonished to find the counterpart of Madonna and her child as devoutly worshiped as in Papal Rome itself; Shing Moo, the Holy Mother in China, being represented with a child in her arms, and a glory around her, exactly as if a Roman Catholic artist had been employed to set her up." (The Two Babylons. By Rev. Alex. Hislop. P. 20)

In the fifth century also the Church of Rome decreed that Lent should be kept before Easter. "It ought to be known" - said Cassianus, the monk of Marseilles, writing in the fifth century, and contrasting the primitive Church with the Church in his day - "that the observance of the forty days had no existence, so long as the perfection of the primitive Church remained inviolate". Whence then, came this observance? The Church of Rome, pursuing her usual policy of absorbing pagan rites and ceremonies in order to gain nominal adherents to the Church, added yet this evil of a "sacred fast" to her list of idolatries. The forty days abstinence of Lent was directly

²² 4/6/80

borrowed from the worshipers of the Babylonian goddess. Such a Lent of forty days in the spring of the year is still observed by the Yezidis or Pagan Devil-worshipers of Koordistan. They inherited this heathen fast from Their early Babylonian masters. A Lent of forty days was held in the spring by the Pagan Mexicans. A Lent of forty days was held in Egypt in honour of Adonis or Osiris. (The Two Babylons, by Rev. Alex. Hislop, Ch. III) So we can see Rome is by no means original in observing her pagan Lent.

You say, well, where did Mary worship come from? Where did we get this co-redemptrix queen of Heaven kind of thing if it isn't out of the New Testament? And I want to take a moment because I think it's important enough to show that.

It finds its origin in the Babylon cults as far back as Genesis, chapter 10. Satan had already begun in Genesis 10 to counterfeit what God would do. Now, we learned from the Old Testament from Genesis, chapter 10 that there was a city founded called Babylon and it was a Godless city and it was the home of the beginnings of idolatry.

You see, idolatry began in Babel. They built the first god, which was the Tower of Babel. And the guy that ramrodded the whole thing was a man named Nimrod. Now, Nimrod was a grandson of Ham, which makes him a great grandson of Noah. He was the apostate of the patriarchal age. And he started this whole false worship. He established false worship. It all began in Genesis 10. That's when it all began.

The Tower was the first idol and it became the object of men's worship, the point of their pride. It spawned a complex of weird, strange, mysterious religions that are still going on in our world today. Now, Nimrod had a wife and his wife's name was Semiramis, called Semiramis I. And Semiramis, because Nimrod founded all these weird religions, Semiramis became the high priestess of false cults and they're called the Babylonian Mystery Religions and you can study them in ancient history. They're all over everywhere and they're still with us today all in different forms. But it all spawned out of Babel and Semiramis was the high priestess of the whole menagerie of false systems. Now, that means that Babel, then, became the fountainhead of all false religion. That's why when false religion reaches its heyday again in the end times, the Bible calls it Babylon again in Revelation, chapter 17 and 18. So when Babylon was destroyed, here's what happened. God moved in and scattered everybody, right. Well, when He scattered everybody, everybody took all this false religion with them and it went all over the world at the same time. And it all fell under different names in different countries, but it was all the same thing. It was all this Semiramis worship. And it stayed in Rome until finally when Christianity reached Rome, Christianity became what Catholicism is today, a

combination of pagan Babylonian cultism and the New Testament. And it's all mixed together. Now, let me give you some background so you understand what I'm saying.

- This Semiramis became known in Assyria and Nineveh as Ishtar...and all of this due to different languages.
- In Phoenicia she was called Ashteroth, in
- Egypt, Isis, in
- Greece, Aphrodite and in
- Rome she was called Venus.

It was all the same high priestess of the false Babylonian religions. Now, Semiramis gave birth...according to her own religion, this is what they said...she gave birth to a son. His name was Tammuz and she said that he was born by a sunbeam. In other words she was impregnated by a sunbeam, thus, Tammuz was virgin born and she is a perpetual virgin...Semiramis. Now, when he was grown, he was attacked by a wild boar who killed him. And so Semiramis went into mourning for 40 days. And for 40 days she prayed and wept and denied herself and on the 40th day, he arose from the dead. Now, you know where Lent came from. Lent never has had any connection with the Bible. Lent comes from the pagan practice of 40 days of weeping and self-denial for the resurrection of Tammuz, the son of Semiramis and has absolutely no connection with Jesus Christ or the New Testament whatsoever. That's why we don't believe in Lent.

Now, in that false story we have the basis of religions all over the place.

1. In Phoenicia you know what Tammuz's name was?...Baal, in
2. Egypt, Osiris, in
3. Greece, Eros, in
4. Rome, Cupid.

It's all the same. It's the mother/child cult that's been going on through the systems of religion since Genesis 10. And, strangely, what happened when God brought the reality in Mary and Jesus, the whole pagan system got tangled up in it and we have what we know as Romanism today. This is Satan's counterfeit. And let me just give you some interesting things and I won't go into a lot of detail but there's a book entitled The Two Babylons by Hislop which covers all of this.

But in the worship of Semiramis several interesting things were done. For example,

- she was called the queen of Heaven,
- she was worshipped by the offering of a wafer, not only that,
- there were always 40 days of lent, weeping over Tammuz before the feast of celebrating his resurrection, which parallels lent today.
- These cults also had priests.
- They had sacramental rites.
- They had the dedication of virgins to these gods from which the whole idea of a convent comes.
- They had purgatory, which they taught and believed and adhered to and many other things that are today a part of Roman Catholicism.

Now, please understand me. I love those people who are in that and I desire that they know Jesus Christ. And it is only against the error of their theology that I speak. In Jeremiah, chapter 44, verse 15 we are introduced to this whole worship. And if you think the queen of Heaven is Mary, let me just help you to guess again. Listen to these words. Jeremiah 44:15, "Then all the men"...and they're all in idolatry here and Jeremiah's upset..."Then all the men who knew that their wives had burned incense unto other gods, and all the women who stood by, a great multitude, even all the people who 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'll not hearken unto thee"...we're not gonna buy that stuff about the Lord..."But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth"...that's really the essence of do your own thing. And what are you gonna do? Listen to what they do. We will "burn incense unto the queen of Heaven..." Did you get that? Verse 18, we will "burn incense to the queen of Heaven..." Verse 19, "when we burned incense to the queen of Heaven..."

Do you know where the queen of Heaven came from? It came right out of Egyptian idolatry, Isis and Osiris. It has nothing to do with the New Testament at all. Now, lest you're unconvinced, I show you another passage in Ezekiel, chapter 8. The prophet Ezekiel is taken into the temple, the house of God and he sees that there are idols there and he's very unhappy. And just to see who these idols are he's taken to verse 13. It says, "Turn...again" and see "thou shalt see greater abominations that they do." Listen to this. "Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the

Lord's house..."...this is the temple in Israel..."and behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz."

There it is, the worship of the virgin in Jeremiah 44, the worship of her son as they were weeping for his resurrection. That is in Ezekiel 8. Both of them, pagan idolatrous practices and have been carried over into Christianity and, thus, Mary has been given the title that rightfully belongs to a false priestess. Modern Roman Catholicism, beloved, is not Christian; it is an abominable mixture of pagan Babylonianism and the Scripture. And as I say, there are some people in the Catholic Church who have met Jesus Christ and I praise God for that, but they had to do it circumventing their own theology, if they even knew their own theology. And so there is no reason or rhyme in all of the world to assume that Mary deserves any kind of elevation above any other good and Godly woman. She does not. There is no reason or rhyme to ever pray to Mary, for Mary can't answer prayer. She needed to pray herself. That's what she was doing in a prayer meeting in Acts 1:14.