

DISCOVER the Truth About . . .
The Elijah Message

Malachi 4:5-6

Matthew 17:10-13

John 1:19-23

Luke 1:17

2 Kings 17:13-16

1 Kings 18:17-21

Revelation 14:6-12, 14

1 John 1:7

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EXPLANATORY NOTES

Elijah's message was to a church so infiltrated with paganism and practices of pagan sun worship that God's plan had nearly been forgotten. The Bible says they worshipped the "sun, moon, and stars." They especially devoted themselves to the worship of Baal, the god of the storm. Surprisingly, many practices of pagan sun worship have gradually become part of the Christian church, too, although most Christians are not aware of them. Is it possible some of these practices are hindering the plan of God?

Some examples. One practice which continues to the present day is hiding eggs and egg rolling. It is part of the Christian observance of Easter, although it has nothing to do with the resurrection of Christ. According to some ancient heathen legends, an egg of tremendous size fell from heaven into the Euphrates River, and certain fish nosed it up on the bank. Egg rolling symbolized this event. Doves settled on the egg, and Venus was hatched. She is known in eastern religions as Ishtar, the virgin mother, the goddess of love and fertility, also called the "queen of heaven."

According to some scholars, according to the legend, Ishtar gave birth to a son, Tammuz, without a father – a counterfeit in heathen mythology of the virgin birth centuries before Christ! Tammuz, the legend says, was killed by a wild boar. His worshipers set aside a month every year for fasting and mourning. This 40-day period of lent was adopted by the early church.

The Bible warns against the worship of Tammuz and the trappings of pagan worship connected with the sun, moon, and stars. Since Christians didn't know the exact date of Christ's birth, they borrowed the birthday of the sun. In Babylon the resurrection of their god was celebrated at the vernal equinox in spring. The church eventually adopted the first day of the week after the first full moon following the spring equinox – a pagan date – for Easter. Eventually Easter Sunday became a weekly celebration of resurrection.

In pagan nations surrounding Israel, sun worshipers went up to their housetops to burn incense to their sun god. On special days they climbed the highest hill early in the morning to watch the sun rise and to worship it. The Easter sunrise service is in imitation of these ceremonies. Easter sunrise services probably were more closely related to Roman or later Norse religions and sun worship particularly prominent in Egypt.

These particular holdovers from paganism are non-essentials. There is nothing *morally wrong* with eating chocolate eggs or putting bunny rabbits in baskets for children or climbing to the top of a hill to watch the sun rise – so long as you don't worship it. Giving gifts at Christmas can be done to honor Christ, not the sun. These are fringe issues.

But if Christianity has been so riddled with the trappings of sun worship and pagan practices (in areas that do not matter morally), is it possible that Christianity *has also been affected in areas that DO matter morally*? Could something that *does* matter morally have been tampered with, too? YES!

God's last call to men and women, found in Revelation 14, is a message calling men to choose between true and false worship – a moral issue. A persistent remnant of sun worship is the key point of contention in earth's final clash between right and wrong. This is the reason God calls His last message to the world the "Elijah Message."

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