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Dear Friends in the Faith:

It has been said: “The windshield is always *larger* than the rear view mirror”! Having now entered a new year (2022), it is a good time to leave behind any discouragements and hurts of the past, and look *forward*. Where we are *going* is more important than where we have been.

We are admonished to “forget those things which are behind, and reach forth to those things which are before” as we “press toward the mark for the prize of the *high* calling of God” (Phil. 3:13, 14).

Some may remember C. M. Ward, who for many years was the speaker on the “Revivaltime” radio program. I once heard him say that if he were to put a hymn book together, he would include the theme song from “The Jeffersons”: **MOVING ON UP!** In the television series “moving on up” was apparently a move to a high-rise building and success. As followers of Jesus, we should be moving on up *spiritually*—**up** above the discouragements and hurts of the past, **up** above the chaos and confusion of this world, **up** to “the utmost height to catch a gleam of glory bright.”

Love and best wishes to all of you for 2022! In the words of John to his friend Gaius: “Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers” (3 John 2).

As many of you on the ministry mailing list know, when I was in my twenties, I wrote a book called **BABYLON MYSTERY RELIGION**, which became very popular, was translated into a number of languages, and went through numerous printings. In time I took the book out of print and replaced it with a different book: **THE BABYLON CONNECTION?** Because misinformation about this decision still persists on the Internet, and in other ways, I would like to set the record straight.

According to one rumor, “the Catholics” put so much pressure on me, I had a heart attack and almost died! Consequently, I “recanted” and wrote the other book. There is no truth to this!

Another rumor is that my motives were *financial*—my desire was to be popular and make money. To the contrary, **BABYLON MYSTERY RELIGION** was extremely popular and provided more income to our ministry than all other books and offerings put together! We faced much financial loss because of the decision to pull the book out of print.

Some letters have been very warm, commending me for honesty and integrity, expressing appreciation for the thorough research and clarification provided by the replacement book **THE BABYLON CONNECTION?** But other letters have been mean-spirited—that I am “stupid,” “scum,” “scared of the truth,” a “low down coward,” a “traitor to Christ,” following “a false god,” and am an “undercover Jesuit”! One even left a recording on the phone, “I hope you die soon, I want you dead!”

It puzzles me how some can be so fanatical against one set of errors—or (in some cases) what *they* perceive to be errors—only to develop greater errors: becoming judgmental, hateful, and dishonest. When I refused permission to a preacher who said he was going to print copies of the original (copyrighted) book, he said: “If you don’t like it, *sue me*.”

My original book had some valuable information in it. But it also contained certain teachings that were made popular in a book written many years ago, **THE TWO BABYLONS**, by Alexander Hislop. This book claims that the very religion of ancient Babylon, under the leadership of Nimrod and his wife, was later disguised with Christian-sounding names, becoming the Roman Catholic Church. Proof for this is sought by citing numerous similarities in paganism. The problem with this method is this: in many cases there is *no connection*.

By this method, one could take virtually anything and do the same—even the “golden arches” at McDonald’s! *The Encyclopedia Americana* (article: “Arch”) says the use of arches was known in Babylon as early as 2020 B.C. Since Babylon was called “the golden city” (Isa. 14:4), can there be any doubt about the origin of the golden arches? As silly as this is, this is the type of proof that has been offered over and over about pagan origins.



Fountain at Palm Springs International Airport.

In Scripture “water” is often used as a symbol of life. Jesus said: “I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts....a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life” (Rev. 21:6; John 4:14).

By this method, atheists have long sought to discredit the Bible and Christianity altogether—not just the Roman Catholic Church. By this method, one could condemn Protestant and evangelical denominations like the Assemblies of God, Baptist, Church of Christ, Lutheran, Methodist, Nazarene, etc.

Basic things like prayer, and kneeling in prayer, would have to be rejected, because pagans knelt and prayed to their gods. Water baptism would have to be rejected, for pagans had numerous rites involving water, etc.

By this method, the BIBLE itself would need to be rejected as pagan. All of the following practices or beliefs mentioned in the Bible, were also known among pagans—raising hands in worship, taking off shoes on holy ground, a holy mountain, a holy place in a temple, offering sacrifices without blemish, a sacred ark, city of refuge, bringing forth water from a rock, laws written on stone, fire appearing on a person’s head, horses of fire, the offering of first fruits, tithes, etc.

By this method, the LORD himself would be pagan. The woman called Mystery Babylon had a cup in her hand; the Lord has a cup in his hand (Psa. 75:8). Pagan kings sat on thrones and wore crowns; the Lord sits on a throne and wears a crown (Rev. 1:4; 14:14). Pagans worshipped the sun; the Lord is the “Sun of righteousness” (Mal. 4:2). Pagan gods were likened to stars; the Lord is called “the bright and morning star” (Rev. 22:16). Pagan gods had temples dedicated to them; the Lord has a Temple (Rev. 7:15). Pagan gods were pictured with wings; the Lord is pictured with wings (Psa. 91:4).

Here is a list of the some of the unsubstantiated claims that are sometimes made about the religion of ancient Babylon:

The Babylonians went to a confessional and confessed sins to priests who wore black clergy garments.

Their king, Nimrod, was born on December 25. Round decorations on Christmas trees and round communion wafers honored him as the Sun-god.

Sun-worshippers went to their temples weekly, on Sunday, to worship the Sun-god.

Nimrod’s wife was Semiramis, who claimed to be the Virgin Queen of Heaven, and was the mother of Tammuz.

Tammuz was killed by a wild boar when he was age 40; so 40 days of Lent were set aside to honor his death.

The Babylonians wept for him on “Good Friday.” They worshipped a cross—the initial letter of his name.

It is amazing how unsubstantiated teachings like these circulate—and are believed! One can go to any library, check any history book about ancient Babylon, none of these things will be found. They are not historically accurate, but are based on an *arbitrary* piecing together of bits and pieces of *mythology*.

Hislop, for example, taught that mythological persons like Adonis, Apollo, Bacchus, Cupid, Dagon, Hercules, Janus, Mars,

Mithra, Moloch, Orion, Osiris, Pluto, Saturn, Vulcan, Zoraster, and many more, were all Nimrod! He then formed his own “history” of Nimrod!

Accordingly, Nimrod was a big, ugly, deformed black man. His wife, Semiramis—also known as *Easter*; he says—was a most beautiful white woman with blond hair and blue eyes, a backslider, inventor of soprano singing, the originator of priestly celibacy, the first to whom the unbloody mass was offered! This is not factual history—it is more in the category of tabloid sensationalism.

Some claim that *round* objects, such as round communion wafers, are symbols of the Sun-god. But they fail to mention that the very manna given by God was *round!* (Exod. 16:14). Some are ready to condemn all *pillars* and historical monuments as pagan. But they fail to take into account that the Lord himself appeared as a pillar of fire; and, in front of his Temple, there were two large pillars (Exod. 13:21,22; 2 Chron. 3:17).

Because Babylon had a tower (Gen. 11:4), some claim this is why some church buildings have towers or steeples: *they are copying Babylon!* Let me say it quite clearly: No church *ever* included a steeple or tower on a house of worship to copy the tower of Babel! Why discredit thousands of born-again Christians by promoting ideas that have no connection? If a tower is pagan, God would be pagan, for David described him as “my high *tower*” (2 Sam. 22:3; cf. Prov. 18:10).

No Christian who puts a bumper sticker with a fish symbol on the back of his car has *ever* done so to honor the fish-god Dagon. No congregation has *ever* put a cross on a church building for the purpose of honoring Tammuz. No Christian has *ever* gone to an Easter sunrise service to worship Baal. No Christian has *ever* worshipped a Christmas tree as an idol. Claims that imply “all these things started in Babylon,” are not only divisive and fruitless, they are *untrue*.

Bits and pieces of information that may seem to show evidence of pagan origins, fail to do so if there is not *connection*.

Let’s suppose that on May 10th a man was stabbed to death in Seattle. There were strong reasons for believing a certain person did it. He had motive. He was physically strong. He owned a large knife. He had a criminal record. He was known to have a violent temper and had threatened the victim in the past. All of these things would point to him as the murderer, except for *one* thing: on May 10th he was not in Seattle—he was in Florida!

Many customs, words, concepts, and styles of one civilization pass on down and influence another. If some of these had pagan or idolatrous significance at some other time or place, one would need to ask: Do they have that meaning *now*?

It is well-known that some of the names we use for days of the week and months have come from pagan times. But they are now *common* terms and no longer have any pagan significance.

If one became too strict about such things he might not want to own a Mercury or Saturn automobile, nor would he ride on a train with the name Zephyr, since Mercury, Saturn, and Zephyr are names of pagan deities!

If we quit using words that once had some “pagan” linkage, many sentences would be incomplete. There are *hundreds* of common words we use like “cereal” (from Ceres, goddess of grains); “janitor” (from Janus, god of doors); “museum” (from the Muses, the daughters of Zeus who presided over learning and the arts); “panic” (from the god Pan who went about scaring people); and *many* more examples that could be given.

When we hear that a word is not found in the Bible—“Christmas,” for example—as Bible believers we take note. But an omission like this does not, in itself, made something wrong. Years ago I heard about a group that believed they should not eat tomatoes because the word tomato is not in the Bible! Those who suppose they need “chapter and verse” from the Bible for *everything* they do, may be surprised to learn that the words “chapter,” “verse,” and the word “Bible” itself, are not in the Bible!

According to *Harper’s Bible Dictionary*, the word “Bible” is derived from Byblos, a Phoenician city that was for centuries a center of Adonis worship similar to that of Tammuz. So, what are we to do? Waste time preaching against the word “Bible”?

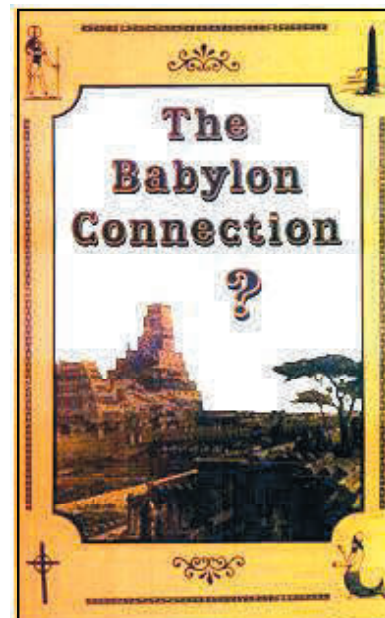
Please understand, it is not our intent to make light of anyone’s sincere beliefs. Our policy is “malice toward none, and charity for all.” But years in the ministry have taught some valuable lessons. When too much emphasis is placed on side issues that really prove nothing—issues that are fruitless and divisive—it is time to reconsider. Making things out to be “pagan” that are no longer pagan—or may have never been pagan—distracts from the true message of the gospel.

A concern about not wanting anything pagan in our lives can be likened to a ship crossing a vast ocean. This concern has taken us in the right direction, but as we come to a better understanding as to what is *actually* pagan and what is *not*, a correction of the course is necessary in our journey. This is not a going back, but a correction of the course as we follow “the shining light, that shines more and more unto the perfect day” (Prov. 4:18).

So now, having summarized some of the issues about pagan connections, for those who would like to pursue things further, I am pleased to offer a FREE copy of my 120-page book on the subject, **THE BABYLON CONNECTION?** You can make your request by mail, email, or phone. It is a gift made possible by those who freely choose to support this ministry. God bless.

Yours in HIM,

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