

Repentance Leads To Christ-like Character

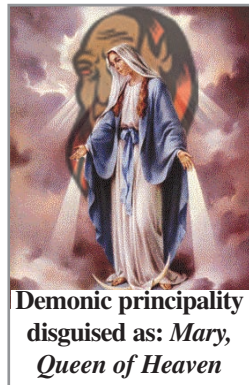
The Sin of Belonging to Jesus While Also Serving the Queen of Heaven

Introduction

For centuries multitudes throughout Christendom have been duped into serving the *Queen of Heaven* principality. This ancient demonic deity influenced the establishment of faith practices contrary to God and His Word. It also led the way in denying the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice by *adding to the Bible* religious observances needed for salvation.

We're exposing this demonic principality because of its profound influence on billions whose hearts are blinded to the blasphemy of their religious practices. While we'll be focusing extensively on Roman Catholicism and the control this spirit has on that religious system, our intent isn't to come down on the individuals who have given way to this entity. Rather, we will reveal to followers of Jesus the **demonic and pagan origin** of many of the faith practices manifested by the Queen of Heaven spirit. We also want to make known to nonCatholic believers how they too may have given way to some of these unbiblical practices.

When we refer to the *Queen of Heaven*, we're speaking of a demonic principality *masquerading as Mary*, the mother of Jesus (see 2Corinthians 11:14). The influence of this principality goes back thousands of years as it enticed tribal peoples to seek a "mother" image for their well-being. Whether trying to seduce Israel away from her one true God



or diluting the authentic Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, this demon purposes to take captive the souls of humanity.

As a minion of Satan, this principality undermines the sufficiency and sovereignty of our Lord Jesus as **KING of kings and LORD of lords**. The intimacy of the indwelling Spirit through the all-sufficiency of Christ to reconcile mankind with His Father is replaced by human striving based on **religious observances, practices, rituals and regulations** adapted from paganism. The ultimate goal of this demonic spirit is to *draw people away* from an intimate relationship with the Father through Christ by inserting "herself" as the intermediary between people and God. Like Satan, this entity seeks to be worshiped, even to exalting herself as the *mother of God*.

The Reformation is Not Yet Complete!

In our Hebraic Article, *God's Clergy-less Kingdom*, we note that the Protestant Reformers restored key foundational truths of authentic Christianity which had been torn away by the religious institution of Roman Catholicism: ***sola scriptura***—Scripture as the *sole and final authority* for Christians; ***sola fides***—acceptance by and reconciliation with God *through faith alone*; ***sola gratia***—deliverance from sin *only by God's grace*; ***sola Christos***—salvation *through Christ, in Christ alone*; ***solī deo gloria***—glory to God alone.

Each of these biblical principles is Hebraic to the core, permeating the Newer Testament as well as the Hebrew Scriptures from which they were drawn. The Reformation would have been a fitting point in history to restore ALL the Hebraic foundations. But they didn't. The Reformers adapted several primary Catholic faith practices, including the

pagan-based clergy system and observance of certain religious feasts without discerning if they were of God and in His Word. It was through adapting these unbiblical customs and practices which issued from Roman Catholicism that the Queen of Heaven's influence gained entry into Protestantism.

We purpose through this article to help followers of Jesus discern if they are inadvertently serving the Queen of Heaven entity out of ignorance through their own faith practices. It's also our hope that each reader will regard Roman Catholics *mercifully* and *redemptively* as people held captive to a demonic principality which relies on a counterfeit representation of the mother of Jesus. A more accurate title for those who adhere to the policies and decrees of Rome would be "**Marianist**" rather than Christian, as the biblical interpretation of Christ's followers lifts up *Jesus alone* as the fully sufficient means of salvation.

If you're following Jesus as your Lord and Savior we encourage you to not argue with Catholics about religious matters. Remember *Who you're for* as a servant and ambassador of our Lord Jesus, rather than *what you're against*. Criticizing pagan-based practices will only cause arguments and harden the hearts of those who need to see and hear testimony of the living and active Spirit of Christ and realize their need for Him alone (2Timothy 2:23-26).

The demonic Queen of Heaven spirit is powerful in its generational grip on the hearts of Roman Catholics. It will take much prayer and probably fasting before you'll find an open door through which the truth of the Gospel will be *heard*.

We encourage you to first make sure *you* aren't serving the Queen of Heaven in ignorance through your own faith practices. You

and your way of life must reveal the all-sufficiency of our Lord Jesus, and all of your faith practices must be based on His Word. As Jesus admonishes, "*How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a **plank in your own eye?***" (Matthew 7:4).

"But ever since we stopped burning incense to the Queen of Heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have had nothing and have been perishing by sword and famine"
(Jeremiah 44:18).

In chapters 7 and 44 of the Book of Jeremiah God warns the Israelites against worshipping other gods and the consequences they would suffer for elevating any other entity *alongside* their claim to Him. The women in particular were strident about their allegiance to the Queen of Heaven. They'd been deceived by this female principality into believing that the desperate situation they found themselves in came about because they'd neglected their religious duties toward her.

But the reality which they didn't want to hear from the prophet was that *God* was chastising them for their sin, casting them from the land to exile in Egypt (Jeremiah 44:21-26). Because they had incorporated into their lives the worship of satanic deities such as Molech, Tammuz, Baal, Asherah, Chemosh, and the Queen of Heaven, they had committed *spiritual adultery* against Him. No longer would they invoke His holy Name.

Please, take the time to read Jeremiah, chapters 7 and 44. A decade ago we wrote extensively about the Queen of Heaven in our May, 2001 Newsletter, ***Jesus versus the Queen of Heaven***; and Teaching E-mail 49, ***Jesus Christ, Our Passover Lamb***. Also, for further reading on feminine domination, we

suggest our Hebraic Article, *Changing Woman*. Please explore this information, available free on our website.

“These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall!”
(1Corinthians 10:11,12).

Paul is reminding the followers of Jesus in Corinth that they needed to learn from Israel’s history how God dealt with them when they sinned, especially when they worshiped demonic entities. The Corinthians were blending paganism with their faith practices, not seeing any problem with that kind of syncretism. Yet the apostle was adamant that *nothing* be added to what Jesus had accomplished through His death and resurrection. HE had *called them out* of all other religious customs, which to Him is spiritual adultery and blasphemy:

“The sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord’s table and the table of demons. Are we trying to arouse the Lord’s jealousy? Are we stronger than He?” (1Corinthians 10:20-22).

Paul clearly connects *pagan practices* and *demonic participation* as he’s confronting Christians in this epistle. Have you ever considered that certain religious practices and observances within *Christendom today* are in demonic origin? And isn’t it possible that your participation in them, even out of ignorance, doesn’t make you any more innocent in God’s sight than the adulterous Israelites?

The particular pagan/demonic religious practices and observances we’ll be addressing have been a part of organized Christianity for multiple centuries. Both Christmas and Easter, for example, are almost universally embraced and practiced throughout Christendom. Yet both are laden with pagan, heretical trappings originating from worship of the Queen of Heaven principality going by a variety of other names. Whatever has subtly insinuated itself into the pure truth of God’s Word is *a lie*, authored by the father of lies to compromise the Person of Jesus and the Kingdom of God.

You might say that the Queen of Heaven entity as a bitter enemy of God is bent on undermining the Lordship and Kingship of Jesus by mixing paganism into Christianity. Armed with a deceitful affinity for the vulnerable female mind (1Timothy 2:14), this demon desires to rule over men. It’s no coincidence that in cultures where men ignore God’s commands and fail to fulfill their biblical responsibilities, the Queen of Heaven is worshiped and adored.

This principality is so insidious in its influence and control because it infuses itself into a religious system much like a virus does in a human body. A virus enters the body and works to convince healthy cells that it is *just like them*. Normally the body recognizes the new pathogen as a virus and produces antibodies to kill it. But if the body is weak and the immune system ineffectual, the virus begins to replace healthy cells and produce its damaging effects.

This is how the Queen of Heaven operates whenever people fail to establish faith practices based on *God’s Word alone*. Over time “pathogenic faith practices” based on ritual, regulation and tradition replace the spiritual health and vigor of relying on the indwelling Spirit of Christ and God’s Word. And,

like a virus, the “unhealthy” practices and traditions overtake the truth, watering it down so that the body becomes spiritually ineffective.

- **Syncretism: The Roman Catholic Method of Evangelism**
- **Revisionism: The Hierarchy’s Way of Keeping Power**

We realize that people today have difficulty picturing the ruthless power the papacy historically exercised to intimidate the populace and subjugate them into compliance. Yet even a cursory examination of the centuries-long Inquisition with its hideous torture and burnings will reveal how truly *antiChrist* the Roman Catholic hierarchy is in its wielding of worldly power under the guise of religion. It’ll frighten you! In essence, Roman Catholicism is a religious system built on **syncretism** and **revisionism**.

Syncretism is the adaptation of different and sometimes contradictory beliefs and customs into one religious system. As the political/religious entity of Catholicism made contact with various pagan cultures, it adapted the people’s pagan practices and observances to make them “Christian.” That way Christianity became more palatable to pagans since the practices were *like* those they were used to. (Remember the virus analogy?)

For example, from *pagan religions* came: •the priesthood of clergy; •the Sacrifice of the Mass; •the celebration of Christmas adapted from the Roman Saturnalia; •Easter emulating the worship of Ishtar, a fertility goddess symbolizing the Earth Mother; •infant baptism in place of immersion of the repentant; •purgatory as a means of purging from sins; •indulgences to reduce time in purgatory.

In God’s sight syncretism is **spiritual prostitution** at its worst. Adulterous spiritual intercourse with pagan deities accompanied by their detestable practices defiled the land and led to Israel’s banishment (Exodus 34:15; Ezekiel 23:7).

Syncretism became Catholicism’s mode of evangelism through the profound influence of Hellenism on the Roman culture. Eager to consider and adopt any deity they encountered, Hellenists erected altars of all kinds. It was this syncretistic array of idolatry that Paul was trying to call the Athenians *out of*:

“While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols... Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: ‘Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you’” (Acts 17:16,22, 23).

Both Greeks and Romans had a “god” for every occasion. The Romans even added mandatory worship of whichever Caesar was in power. Therefore it was convenient for the Catholic hierarchy to syncretize worship of a myriad of pagan deities with prayer to a myriad of saints, especially the Virgin Mary.

Revisionism within Roman Catholicism alters history to suit the needs and purposes of the current religious hierarchy. As we’ll discuss, through *revisionism* the Queen of Heaven entity used the Vatican with its religious dominance and political leverage to countermand the biblical Lordship of Jesus. But first this principality had to ensure its own position of absolute power. In order to sup-

port ecclesiastical claims as “the one true Church”, the hierarchy upholding the institution *revised* history.

An example of *revisionist* doctrine proclaims an “unbroken line of succession” of popes going back to Peter. In reality, until the accession of Emperor Constantine to political and religious power in the early 4th century, there was no single ecclesiastical authority. During his reign at least *four* centers of religious oversight were in existence. For centuries the Bishop of Rome had jurisdiction *only over Rome*. And, the Bishop of Rome wasn’t even considered to be “pope” of the Church universal until about AD1000.

The various lists of supposed “popes” fabricated by the Vatican over the years are in conflict with one another, and certainly their selection had nothing to do with the Holy Spirit gifting someone with spiritual leadership. Many popes were in fact installed by imperial armies of feuding claimants from powerful families, or the position was purchased.

At this point you may be thinking, “I’m Protestant. What’s this got to do with me?” Plenty. When the Reformers broke away from Roman Catholicism they failed to question some of the key faith practices they continued to perpetuate. Neglecting to examine and apply the Hebraic faith practices and observances of the first followers of Jesus, they allowed to continue such practices as clergy systems, pagan holiday celebrations, and infant baptism.

Your participation in any of these practices which emanate from pagan sources doesn’t make you innocent in our Father’s sight. That’s why the Spirit of Christ wants us to bring this warning to you: so that you might repent.

It can be desperately difficult to break away from pagan practices which syn-

cretism has adapted into Christendom and entrenched as “tradition” for a long period of time. That which in the early Church—the *called-out ones*—was considered pagan in origin now is so highly regarded that you seem *unChristian* if you refuse to participate.

“Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing His plan to His servants the prophets”
(Amos 3:7).

About 20 years ago a noted and respected prophet declared that God was **breaking out of the religious box Christians had placed Him in**. The Hebraic Restoration is a move of our Father because He will no longer entertain the sins of Christians participating with demons in spiritual adultery. The Hebraic Restoration focuses on the understanding and faith practices of the first followers of Jesus.

Paul concluded his speech at the Areopagus with this: *“In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now He commands **all people everywhere to repent**”* (Acts 17:30). He’s commanding the same of those who today claim to belong to Him! Please consider these questions and discuss them with people close to you:

- Who has determined your faith practices and religious observances for you?
- Is much of what you consider the ritual and activity of your faith been instilled in you by what others have taught and by traditions you’ve embraced?
- Or, have you gone into God’s Word for yourself and asked His Spirit to show you what faith practices and observances are acceptable to our Father?

“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace”
(Ephesians 4:3).

Until the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) Protestants were branded “heretics” by the Roman Catholic Church. Now they are considered “estranged brethren,” though the Vatican still claims it is the “one true Church.” In the decades since the Council, several attempts have been made between Roman Catholic hierarchy and Evangelical leaders to have ecumenical dialogue. In each gathering the *centrality of Jesus Christ as the only means to salvation* had to be set aside or minimally discussed.

Roman Catholic tradition holds that the shed blood of Jesus is insufficient for salvation, a perspective fostered by the Queen of Heaven entity. For centuries the institution actually *curse*d people who would believe Jesus’ atonement sufficed as Scripture declares. As a result, Evangelicals and Catholics have no common understanding about salvation. As we will demonstrate, the real issue in ecumenism is that there can be *no alliance* between the Queen of Heaven spirit which rules Catholicism, and Jesus Christ Who is Lord of all who trust in Him (2Corinthians 6:14,15).

To give you a better picture of the impossibility of allegiance to both, let’s look at what’s involved in the Catholic understanding of salvation.

For the Catholic, salvation does not come through repentance and personally receiving Christ as Lord and Savior for the forgiveness of sins. Rather, it is a lengthy process that begins with baptism (usually as an infant) and thereafter depends upon a continued relationship to and membership in the Catholic Church. “Salvation comes through participation in the seven sacraments, penance, good

works, suffering for one’s sins and the sins of others here and/or in purgatory, indulgences to reduce time in purgatory, and almost endless masses and rosaries said on one’s behalf even after one’s death. Catholic ‘evangelism’ is by works, the very antithesis of ‘the gospel of the grace of God’” (Acts 20:24).”

In 1990, well-known priest Tom Forrest addressed a group of Catholic charismatics in Indianapolis at an evangelistic training session. His words are revealing: “You don’t just invite someone to become a Christian, you invite them to *become Catholics*... As Catholics *we have Mary*, and that Mom of ours, *Queen of Paradise*, is praying for us till *she* sees us in glory... As Catholics—now I love this one—we *have purgatory*. Thank God! I’m one of those people who would never get to the Beatific Vision without it. It’s the only way to go.” (emphasis added)

Quotes from *A Woman Rides the Beast* by Dave Hunt (Harvest House Publishers, 1994)

Since this may be new ground for you, let’s examine the framework of Roman Catholic thought and religious practice. Keep in mind that some Protestant denominations and sects are more “Catholic” than they’d like to believe.

The Authority of the Bible Plus Catholic “Tradition”

Claiming to Be “Christian” But Without the Lordship of Jesus

Within Roman Catholicism the institution became known as the *Holy Mother Church*. The individual follower of Jesus was reduced to dependent spiritual childhood. The institution itself was Mother, directed by another “Mother” figure, Mary. Again, the Queen of Heaven mentality of *matriarchal predominance* prevailed. Tradition *superseded* Biblical truth.

Sacred tradition and **sacred Scripture** are uniquely interwoven within Roman Catholicism. Church doctrine teaches that the Bible is insufficient in that it doesn't contain all the truth that's needed for salvation. Therefore God's Word must be supplemented by *traditions*. And because the Bible is such a "sophisticated and intricate work," it must be interpreted only by the Magisterium, the Church hierarchy.

Most Protestant denominations maintain that the Bible alone is intended by God as the source of doctrinal truth. The dogma held by Catholic hierarchy, however, places church *tradition* as equal to or even greater than God's Word. Obviously this presents a real tension for meaningful ecumenical dialogue with Evangelical Protestants.

- **Tradition** is the transmission of customs or beliefs from generation to generation.
- **Religious tradition** is a creed or religious practice believed to have divine authority even though it is not found in the Scriptures.

Layers of *ecclesiastical hierarchy* abound within Catholicism. These range from the Pope and Cardinals to the Monsignors and the priests who conduct daily Mass—yet none of these positions is cited as a role among the called-out ones of Christ's body according to Scripture. Rather, these functions were adapted from *offices within the Roman Empire*, with the Sacrifice of the Mass itself adapted from pagan ritual. (**syncretism**)

Almost every key faith practice of the Catholic Church was adapted from demonic paganism and then declared "Church tradition." And, as we stated earlier, some of these practices were absorbed within Protestantism by the Reformers who neglected to question any Biblical basis for them.

Like the Pharisees who constructed rules and regulations as fences that went beyond the word of God, Roman Catholicism followed their footsteps in establishing droves of man-made religious rituals and regulations as part of church tradition. Jesus, however, had strong words about religious leaders who imprison people with unbiblical tradition:

*"You have a fine way of **setting aside the commands of God** in order to observe your own traditions!"* (Mark 7:9).

*"**Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!** You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him **twice as much a son of hell** as you are"* (Matthew 23:15).

The Catholic hierarchy claims to act in place of God as an intermediary between the individual and Him. Only a specially trained, elite clergy person can understand the Bible; therefore the church demands submission to their interpretation. The hierarchy *alone* is responsible to interpret God's Word, and *alone* can dispense the sacraments, and *alone* provides the means of salvation—a salvation which comes only by membership with good standing within the Roman church.

Based on this regulation, when the priest reads the preselected Scripture portions for that day's Mass, *he* tells the people what the text means and what to believe from these verses. Sadly, this practice disregards essential Biblical doctrine: the intimate relationship between the believer and the indwelling Spirit Who gives wisdom to interpret Scripture and empowers the believer to obey.

Let's see how the scheming of Satan uses the demonic Queen of Heaven spirit to keep people enslaved in their sin.

**The Queen of Heaven's Scheme:
Replace Reliance on the Holy Spirit
With Traditions**

“You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, IF the Spirit of God lives in you. And IF anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ” (Romans 8:9);

The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, differentiates a person who belongs to Jesus and follows Him as Lord from someone who calls himself a “Christian” but lives with *self* as their idolatrous lord. This one distinction, the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, determines the eternal destination of heaven or hell for every person on this planet.

Wake up! There's a spiritual battle being waged for the souls of mankind (Philippians 1:19; 2Timothy 2:25,26; James 4:7; 1Peter 1:11; 5:8; Ephesians 6:12). The Queen of Heaven principality, subordinate to Satan, exerts powerful influence to tip the scales in favor of the enemy of our souls. To succeed, this demon operates with this battle plan:

- **keep those still in spiritual darkness from being born of the Spirit (John 3:5,6), or,**
- **undermine reliance on the Spirit in those who have experienced spiritual rebirth.**

Many among Christendom's religious hierarchy have disregarded Scripture's call to rely on the guidance and empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Instead, their faith walk is grounded on external religious forms and regulations. Eliminating their need for the indwelling presence of God, the Holy Spirit, is no light matter. By denying His essential role to seal those called out by God as His own, they are denying HIM. No wonder Jesus warns,

“But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin” (Mark 3:29).

The principality of the Queen of Heaven most prominently has revealed herself as a *counterfeit apparition of Mary*. This entity supplants the Holy Spirit by claiming His unique role as her own, thereby focusing dependence and adoration on herself. This purpose is revealed clearly in an article in *Soul Magazine*, the official publication of The Blue Army of Our Lady of Fatima (22 million followers in 1984). It declares:

“Mary is so perfectly united with the Holy Spirit that He acts only through [Her] His spouse...all our life, every thought, word, and deed is in Her hands...at every moment, She Herself must instruct, guide, and transform each one of us into Herself, so that not we but She lives in us, as Jesus lives in Her, and the Father in the Son.” (emphasis added; capitalized references to Mary are in the original article, implying deity)

We realize you're aware that not everyone who claims to be “Christian” belongs to Jesus. The authentic Jesus follower is born from above as evidenced by His indwelling Spirit. However, neither the Roman Catholic hierarchy nor the Protestant Reformers emphasized how crucial the presence of the indwelling Spirit is. *He alone* not only verifies that we belong to our Lord but also guides and empowers us to live a life pleasing to our Father in accordance with His Word.

These verses leave no doubt that intimate union with the Spirit is our Father's intent:

*“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, **with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption**”* (Ephesians 4:30).

*“Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will **worship the Father in Spirit and truth**, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks” (John 4:23).*

*“In the same way, the **Spirit helps us in our weakness**. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the **Spirit Himself intercedes for us** with groans that words cannot express” (Romans 8:26).*

To counteract this inner reliance on the Holy Spirit, the Queen of Heaven demon convinces religious leaders to develop *external* forms of spiritual expression such as liturgy, prescribed prayers, special mandatory “holy days” to observe, and religious icons, statues and paintings to keep people *externally* focused. As these expressions turned into requirements, they became religious traditions within a variety of denominations and sects. That which was not prescribed for the body of Christ became even more hallowed than what He does command.

Religious traditions inspired by a dominion-seeking Queen of Heaven demon can offer great appeal to the soul—the mind, will and emotions. But the real issue far surpasses the momentary gratification supplied by soulish satisfaction.

When traditions, whether rituals, feasts or regulations, are established by man but have no basis in God or His Word, there exists a demonic purpose in inciting the creation of these. *Religious traditions* are a demonic inroad by which men create external forms that displace the spirit-to-Spirit connection a follower of Jesus so acutely needs. Traditions may please the soulish desires of man, but they grieve the Holy Spirit Who brings us together with our Father and our Lord Jesus through intimate worship and trusting prayer.

Even in times of great trial Lord Jesus instructed His disciples to turn to the Spirit and rely on His response within them: *“Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is **not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit**” (Mark 13:11).*

How tragic that the Roman Catholic Church has created a host of “saints” to pray to during times of stress, or calls for the lighting of candles and/or adoration of Mary. All of these activities are diversions to the command to *call upon God alone* through His indwelling Spirit as the only One worthy of trust and veneration.

Please note that the word *saint* means holy, set apart for God’s use. A “saint” in the Older Testament was a person who loved God and obeyed His commands. The Newer Testament “saint” is *any* Spirit-indwelled follower of Jesus, not a separate category of beatified, ecclesiastically-approved individuals.

Religious leaders throughout the ages have sought to control others, sometimes under the guise of protecting them from sin. The Pharisees of Jesus’ day downplayed the intimate relationship the God of Israel had offered His people. Instead, they prided themselves in being better than others in keeping the multitude of rules and regulations comprising their man-made traditions (see Luke 18:9-14).

Likewise, Roman Catholicism has established scores of regulations and rites, few of which are rooted in God’s Word. But many people feel “holy” in keeping them, hoping that God is keeping track of their observance. Paul grieved that the followers of Jesus in Colossae gave into this perversion. You can readily perceive the “heat” in his words:

“Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: ‘Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!’ These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence” (Colossians 2:20-23).

Observing man-made rules and regulations does nothing to keep you from sinning. Your resistance to temptation comes from turning to the Holy Spirit within for the will and desire to love God more than you desire to sin (Philippians 2:13). Tradition-based regulations draw you away from that dependence and focus you on your own strength. But when you trust in your own willpower, you become vulnerable to self-righteousness and legalistic perversion—feeling justified by how well you keep the rules or observances. From the perspective of Jesus, that makes you a hypocrite.

Within Roman Catholicism, does God’s grace have any place in a person’s life journey? The interpretation of being “saved by God’s grace” means for a Catholic that through baptism, original sin is wiped away. With a clean slate, the individual can now earn his or her way to heaven through good works, eating Christ’s body and blood through the Eucharist at Mass, regularly confessing sin and performing some kind of penance issued by the priest, seeking the help of Mary and other saints through prayer, and purchasing indulgences for future need to shorten purgatory purging.

Any grace given to a person, however, doesn’t come directly from Christ or

from God, but rather from the Church and its sacraments as well as through Mary, who is called “the dispenser of all grace.”

By now you may be asking yourself why religious leaders within any system would even want to create and maintain practices that have no biblical foundation or are even blatantly unscriptural—and then declare people guilty for failing to observe them.

If you mix demonic seduction and man’s desire for control, you get your answer. The goal is to take you away from the centrality of the Spirit of Jesus within you and to nullify the sufficiency of Christ’s one-time sacrifice and resurrection for salvation for all who trust in Him alone. Observing external religious ritual and rules appeals to the sin nature in your soul, but does nothing to edify your spirit. That’s why rituals and unbiblical faith practices do nothing to stop sensual indulgence. And, the Queen of Heaven entity has mastered establishing and maintaining pagan-based religious traditions!

Roman Catholicism

The Dawn of Nicolaitan Domination

“But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. Likewise you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth” (Revelation 2:6,1516).



Nicolaitanism is a system of *control and power*, a governmental system of suppression and subjugation that God hates. Yet it is a system that's broadly accepted both within Catholicism and Protestantism. By placing a *clergy class* between God and His people, the Nicolaitans promoted a doctrine that severed the personal intimacy of Covenant union our Father offers each of His children (see Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6). This domination by the religious hierarchy is evident by the very definition of the term.

The Greek word *nicolaitane* means “conquering the people” or “lording over” them. The first part of the word refers to *nikos*, to conquer or have victory over. The middle of the word is derived from *laos*, which means “the people.” The commonly used term “laity” is derived from it.

The Nicolaitan system subjugates the people through raising up others who lord their position and authority over them, coming *between* the “laity” and God. Ultimately believers learn to depend more on the position of these authorities rather than on a vibrant personal relationship with their Lord. Those in authority are viewed as “more holy” by the “laity”; therefore the sense of *personal responsibility* to trust and obey the indwelling Spirit of Jesus diminishes.

For more Nicolaitanism see our book *Pastoring By Elders*, and our Hebraic Articles, *I Hate Nicolaitanism*, and *God's Clergy-less Kingdom*. All are a free download at our website.

Emperor Constantine: *The Birth of Nicolaitan Dominion*

Emperor Constantine's Edict of Milan in 313 gave Christianity official status alongside paganism. As the *de facto* head

of the recognized religious body, he convened the Council of Nicaea in 325 in order to unify his empire. However, he remained the head of the pagan priesthood as well and officiated at pagan celebrations, designating himself their **Pontifex Maximus**.

By virtue of his role of headship the Christians referred to Constantine as *Bishop of Bishops*. He called himself **Vicarius Christi**, the Vicar of Christ. The term "vicar" comes from the Latin word *vicarius*, which means "instead of." To the emperor it meant that he was acting in *place of Christ* over Christianity by representing a union between church and state ruled by one man. Through his maneuvering Constantine set the platform for a *paganized Christianity*—a spiritually corrupt blend of biblical truth mixed with pagan beliefs, overlorded by a political/ religious hierarchy.

Christ, in contrast, made a clear distinction between Caesar and God (Mark 12:17). His Kingdom is NOT of this world. Roman Catholicism wedded God to Caesar as one, thereby making an unholy alliance with the kings of this world and opening the door for the Queen of Heaven influence and control.

So, was Rome *always* the central focus of Christianity as Catholicism claims? No! In 330 Constantine moved his capital from Rome and established Constantinople in what is now Turkey. The Bishop of Rome was left in charge in the western part of the emperor's ecclesiastical domain. A hundred years after Constantine's demise the patriarch of *Constantinople*, not the Bishop of Rome, was still considered the chief bishop of the entire (paganized) Church.

However, in 445 Emperors Valentinian III and Theodosius II declared the

supremacy of the Roman bishop over the *western* Church (but not over the eastern domain). Their goal? To bring *civil unity* through designating Rome as the center of ecclesiastical authority in the West.

Not content to exercise rule over just the West, in the Middle Ages the bishops of Rome claimed to be the sole representatives of Christ on earth. They took to themselves the three titles of Constantine: **Pontifex Maximus, Vicar of Christ, and Bishop of Bishops**, as well as the designator commonly used by the people toward many bishops: “papa” or pope. In 1073 Pope Gregory VII forbade any other bishops to use that designation, thus inaugurating the title “Pope” for sole use by the Bishop of Rome.

God-like Power:

Vicar of Christ and Papal Infallibility

Ever since Constantine’s self-promotion as sole head of Christianity, Roman Catholicism has remained a hierarchical structure. The power of the Pope is based on the doctrine that he alone is the Vicar of Christ on earth, and as such holds the position of *representative of Christ* to the individual Catholic.

However, not until the First Vatican Council of 1869-1870 was the doctrine of *papal infallibility* adopted as Church dogma. **(revisionism) Infallibility** states that the Pope is *preserved from the possibility of error* in all matters of faith and moral teaching no matter what his own personal conduct or character is like.

Infallibility belongs in a singular way to the pope as head of all Roman Catholics. It is the absolute authority he exercises by virtue of his office as the supreme shepherd and teacher of all the faithful whenever he proclaims a doctrine regarding faith or morals. His papal definitions cannot be changed or chal-

lenged by anyone—not even by others within the hierarchical chain. Hence individual Catholics have no right to deviate from any teaching presented to them through their own bishops—their link to the Vatican.

Pope Pius XII exercised his enactment of *papal infallibility* by declaring in 1950 the Dogma of the Assumption of Mary. **(revisionism)** Upon her death Mary was “assumed body and soul into heavenly glory” without ever experiencing decay. On this “Holy Day of Obligation” a Catholic must attend Mass to commemorate her as the *Queen of Heaven*.



Dominating the Minds of Catholics: Icons, Paintings, and Sacraments

How does the Roman Catholic clergy system dominate individual Catholics? It’s relatively simple. The religious hierarchy uses the powerful emotions evoked by **icons, paintings, and the seven sacraments**. Since the “Holy Mother Church” commands obedience to all decrees, doctrines and faith practices, the laity are expected to comply without question. Among these edicts to enhance prospects for salvation are veneration of statues and apparitions representing various “saints”, and strict participation in seven distinct sacraments ordained by Tradition.

According to renowned historian Will Durant in *The Story of Civilization*, ancient pagan rites and customs were transformed and adapted **(syncretized)** to the original beliefs of the followers of Christ. Such adaptations were guaranteed to appease various pagan belief systems from different lands. Some popular examples of Catholic syncretist assimila-

tion:

- Statues of the Egyptian goddess Isis and her son Horus were renamed *Mary and Jesus*.
- The Roman festival of the fertility god Lupercus and the feast of the purification of Egyptian Isis morphed into the *Feast of the Nativity*.
- Saturnalia with its jovial celebration of the rebirth of the sun at the winter solstice was transmuted into *Christmas*.
- An ancient festival of the dead was revamped into *All Souls Day* and rededicated to Christian heroes.
- The use of *incense, lights, flowers, processions, vestments* and even *hymns* from other religions in their worship of pagan deities was adapted by Catholicism.
- The *sign of the cross* on oneself was used by priests and people alike as a magical incantation to ward off demons.

Keep in mind that Jesus perfectly kept the Law and commands of the Hebrew Scriptures. The Second Commandment prohibits making *any* images for religious purposes and bowing before them (Leviticus 26:1; Deuteronomy 27:15). Until Constantine became **Vicarius Christi** images had not been used by Christians. But in order to accommodate the heathen peoples who were entering Christianity, pagan idols were given Christian names of followers of Jesus who had gone before (**syncretism**). The statues and images of these “select holy ones”—a perversion of the biblical meaning of the word *saints*—became objects of special veneration.

Spiritual adultery was being committed against God, for according to His Word *He alone* is the only One worthy of prayer and adoration.

Ezekiel chapter 16 soundly denounces Jerusalem for her unfaithfulness to God by *adding to* the worship of Him the idolatries

of pagan nations—the same syncretism practiced by Roman Catholicism. Yet even as recently as Vatican II (1962-65) images were commanded to be placed in church buildings and venerated.

The Seven Sacraments *Domination Through Guilt*

Catholic doctrine still states that the finished work of Christ on the cross and His resurrection victory are insufficient for the believer to enter heaven. The grace of God can only be dispensed through Mary and through the sacraments and teachings of the Roman Church.

According to Roman Catholic dogma, there are seven sacraments, each of which requires the participation of an ordained priest or a bishop:

- **Baptism** conducted by a priest
- **Holy Eucharist** (Communion) presided over by a priest
- **Confession** (Penance) made to a priest
- **Marriage** performed by a priest
- **Anointing of the Sick** by a priest
- **Holy Orders** presided over by a bishop (a priest higher up the chain of control)
- **Confirmation** administered by a bishop.

Ask yourself:

- Does the Bible list these as required “sacraments”?
- Does God declare in His Word that any of these activities be done only through the mediation of a clergy person/priest”?
- Do you see anywhere in the Bible that participation in these are necessary for salvation?
- Does the Bible command a prescribed ritual for baptism, communion, marriage or any of the listed activities?
- Does God’s Word command *infants* to be baptized to remove original sin?

Note: *According to Roman Catholic doctrine, infant baptism removes the stain of*

original sin and makes the infant a child of God and member of the Catholic church. It starts the process of salvation, which comes by obeying Rome's ordinances and participating in all of her sacraments.

You already realize that "NO" is the scriptural response to all of these questions. The establishment of the seven sacraments and the requirement that a clergy person preside over them has a demonic purpose:

To exalt Nicolaitan control by clergy and minimize trust in the indwelling Spirit of Jesus through replacing the Cornerstone of their faith with external, pagan-adapted religious regulations and rituals.

The by-product of this exchange is increased vulnerability to the Queen of Heaven's controlling influence.

The Mass

Reminding Catholics That the Sacrifice of Jesus is Insufficient for Salvation

Attendance at the weekly Sacrifice of the Mass as well as at certain prescribed "Holy Days of Obligation" throughout the year is mandatory. Failure to do so is a "mortal sin." The Mass is the core enactment of the Catholic faith. During this Sacrifice, Christ, through the ministry of a priest, offers Himself to His Father in an unbloody manner under the appearance of bread and wine (*Baltimore Catechism*, Lesson 27).

According to the Bible, however, the *authentic sacrifice of Jesus* to fully pay the penalty for sin that God's righteous justice demands was a *one-time, fully sufficient occurrence*. Through this Substitution Who was Himself sinless, God's wrath against sinners who trust in Jesus for forgiveness is wholly and completely turned away:

"Unlike the other high priests, [Jesus] does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when He offered Himself" (Hebrews 7:27).

Jesus Himself declared of His sacrificial atonement, *"It is finished."* Then why *re-sacrifice* our Lord at every Mass? Pope Innocent III declared in 1215 that the Mass was a "sacrifice" (**revisionism**). The repetition of this sacrifice is the individual Catholic's main hope of reducing or eliminating altogether the time of future suffering in purgatory.

The "sacrifice" of the Mass repudiates the eternal *Melchizedek Priesthood* of Jesus. (See Hebrews 5:6-10 and 7:20-28.) The Catholic priesthood represents not only the Nicolaitan resurrection of the Levitical priesthood in which the *priest* stood between God and man in offering appropriate sacrifices. The system also nullifies the Biblical designation of *all followers of Jesus* as the priesthood of believers (1Peter 2:4,5,9). Through the ever-repeated sacrifice of Jesus at the Mass, the Nicolaitan heresy vouches two lies: that Jesus' one-time sacrifice on the cross is insufficient for salvation, and that priests other than our great High Priest Jesus are needed to mediate before God.

For further understanding of the importance of the transition from the Levitical priesthood to the Melchizedek Priesthood of Jesus, see our March 2001 Newsletter: *Living as the Family of Melchizedek*.

To truly grasp the significance of the Sacrifice of the Mass for a Catholic, you need to recognize why Jesus is still hanging on a cross behind or over every altar. He is still there because **Roman Catholicism teaches that His death is insuffi-**

cient for salvation. Every time a Catholic attends Mass, he or she faces an indelible visual reminder of the insufficiency of Jesus' atonement on the cross.



The crucifix, with our Lord Jesus still hanging there, is a daily reminder at every Mass that His sacrifice is not sufficient for salvation.

Ask yourself: Would our heavenly Father have inspired anyone to revere an image in which His victorious Son is still pictured as dying? Jesus once for all time fulfilled the atonement for sin according to the will of His Father. Jesus rose from the grave as our Father's *sign and proof* to us that *He accepted this payment for sin to turn away His just wrath.* Jesus, KING of kings and LORD of lords, now sits at the right hand of the Father (1Peter 3:22). His resurrection is the confidence His followers have of resurrection themselves.

The Queen of Heaven entity, however, is a worker of Satan, deceiving through icons and images of Jesus on the cross that His payment was insufficient. Through power hungry religious leaders who were at the top of the Nicolaitan system, this principality created clergy-dependent sacraments to make up for the "insufficiency" of Jesus' atonement. The Sacrifice of the Mass is a repeated reminder to the laity that they need the clergy for their salvation.

We noted earlier the other sacraments (faith practices) a Catholic needs in order to be saved. Specific works of self-punishment are prescribed as acts of penance

Catholicism blends ancient Egyptian paganism into the ritual of the Mass. Here the Pope lifts up an ancient symbol of the sun god undergirded by a gold piece formed like a crescent moon. In Ancient Egypt, the crescent moon was a symbol of the Mother of gods, Isis.



Ask yourself: Would our heavenly Father decree that the "body" of His Son Jesus be inserted in a symbol of a pagan sun god upheld by a pagan goddess? (That Queen of Heaven influence again.) What powerful imagery when a clergyman can hold "God" in his hands and dispense "Him" to others. It elevates him above all others. Elevated in position and esteem above the "laity" whether priest or Pope, a mere human has unquestioned authority over multitudes of people.

given by the priest during confession. Indulgences are purchased for self and others already dead to reduce time in purgatory. Both practices evidence the insufficiency of Christ's blood *shed once to fully atone for sin* as well as the power of the Holy Spirit within those born from above to live according to God's Word.

During the Sacrifice of the Mass the priest transforms water and wine into the body and blood of Jesus (an act called transubstantiation). The ceremony cannot be performed without a priest's participation, so the person in the pew is dependent on *what the priest does* rather than gratefully

appreciating *what Jesus has already done* once and for all time. Again, visual images adapted from



The Eucharist host is contained within the symbol of the sun god, and is held aloft by the Queen of Heaven.

pagan rituals abound, as in this illustration of the Eucharist.

Purgatory

A Mini-hell Pre-requisite for Heaven



Purgatory

The Catholic Church requires purgatory for "purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven." It's a place of punishment where souls make satisfaction for past sins and so become fit for heaven—a practice which nullifies the need for the atonement of Jesus—pictured here as still an *infant*.

As early as the late 6th century Pope Gregory I proposed **purgatory** as a place in which spirits of the dead suffered to be *purged* from their sins and delivered from the "debt of eternal punishment." However, not until the Council of Florence in 1489 was purgatory declared to be church dogma. (**revisionism**)

While Christ's death made forgiveness of sins possible, the pardoned sinner must himself suffer some undefined pain or torment in order to be *purged* and thereby be made fit for heaven. As affirmed by Vatican II (1962-65), failure to accept the doctrine of purgatory brings automatic excommunication. Even when *guilt* is taken away by Christ, punishment or consequences may remain that require expiation or cleansing. So Catholics pay for Masses, light candles, and gain indulgences on behalf of their own future need or for already dead relatives in purgatory.

Indulgences

The "Currency" to Pay Your Way Out of Purgatory

Indulgences are defined as a *remission of temporal punishment for sin*. Derived from a pagan concept that "the infliction



Indulgences

An indulgence lessens the time of an individual's suffering in purgatory.

of pain, recitation of formulas, pilgrimages to shrines are meritorious and influence the gods in one's favor," partial or full indulgences are paid for by individuals for themselves or to apply to the dead already suffering in purgatory. (**syncretism**) (Countless rosaries, which are recitations of 53 prayers to Mary and 6 each of the Lord's Prayer and to the Trinity, are also prayed on behalf of those in purgatory to shorten their term.)

The obvious problem with indulgences is that they negate the all-sufficiency of the cross. It was *Jesus* who took our punishment in our place so that we don't have to suffer purging for our sins to be made right with God.

Indulgences became church dogma through the decree of Pope Clement VI in 1343. (**revisionism**) He stated that on behalf of the living, Christ's blood shed on the cross has its virtues "*increased* by the merits of the Blessed Virgin and the supererogatory works of the saints" (above and beyond the good works needed for their own salvation).

In 1476, Pope Sixtus IV extended this privilege to souls already in purgatory, "provided that their living relatives purchased indulgences for them." Therefore even the most vile Catholics, from Hitler to Mussolini and Mafia murderers, could

attend Mass, keep holy day obligations, and purchase sufficient indulgences in belief that the Church would somehow eventually get them to heaven.

Abuses in selling and granting indulgences were a major point of contention when Martin Luther initiated the Protestant Reformation in 1517. But the practice of indulgences isn't just ancient history to today's Catholics. Vatican II commands that "the usage of indulgences...should be kept...and it curses those who say that indulgences are useless or that the Church does not have the power to grant them...[for] the task of winning salvation."

**The Queen of Heaven
The Egyptian Deity Isis
Disguised as Jesus's Mother**



Isis with baby Horus

Mary, Queen of Heaven with baby Jesus

The authentic Mary, the mother of Jesus, appears in several scenes in the Gospel text. In each of them she participates in humility and character as a devout Jewish woman, wife and mother. She is recorded speaking on only four occasions (with the angel Gabriel, with her relative Elizabeth, with young Jesus at the Temple, and again with Him at the wedding at Cana). So how did Mary become the central focus of so much Catholic dogma and practice? Through **syncretism** and **revisionism**.

At the root of a number of religious practices Roman Catholicism has resurrected the worship of the Egyptian deity,

Isis. The popular motif of Isis suckling her infant son Horus lives on in a Christianized context as the popular image of Mary and her baby Jesus. There is powerful imagery in a mother holding her baby as his protector, nurturer, and shield. And a grateful son would do anything for his mother!

Catholic churches throughout the world are replete with statues and paintings of Mary perpetually enfolding Baby Jesus in her arms. Yet as with any baby, He grew in wisdom and stature to be a man—One Who will return as the King of kings and Lord of lords! How downplayed this reality is as so much of Roman Catholic art keeps Jesus in dependency as a child held by His mother.

Worship of the Egyptian goddess Isis is threaded throughout Catholic ritual and worship through emphasis on a counterfeit Mary that bears no resemblance to the biblical presentation. Under the arrogant influence of the demonic Queen of Heaven principality, the institution of Catholicism proclaimed Mary to be the mother of God (*Theotokos*). The vast majority of Bible-believing Christians, however, recognize the authentic Mary as the mother of Christ in His humanity (*Christotokos*). When the proclamation of Mary as the *mother of God* became broadly accepted throughout Catholicism, the Queen of Heaven demonic spirit inspired artwork to demonstrate that the Godhead acknowledged *her royal position*.



Mary being crowned Queen of Heaven by the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

If Mary is called "Mother of God", and is crowned "Queen of Heaven" by the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, where does that place her in relation to the Trinity?

People pray to someone they worship. Consider the most often repeated prayer in Catholicism, the rosary, lifted up to exalt and petition Mary:

Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with *you*. Blessed are *you* among women, and blessed is the fruit of *your* womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, **Mother of God**, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen. (emphasis added)

Again, remember that we're referring to a *demonic entity disguised as Mary* whose purpose is to rob God of the prayer due Him alone by deceiving millions into worshipping her. In the 14th century Pope John XXII stated that "Mary" had appeared to him and promised that on the Saturday after someone's death, *she would bring to heaven* anyone wearing her brown scapular (two small pieces of cloth joined by strings and worn around the neck). This scapular is still worn by many Catholics today as a "ticket to heaven."

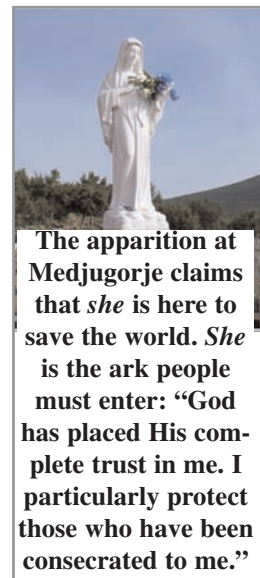


By diminishing the essential Person and work of our Lord Jesus and negating our dependency on Him alone, the demonic entity, the Queen of Heaven, is able to come alongside Him in position and power. Centuries ago this "counterfeit Mary" was declared to be "Co-

Redemptrix"—the one needed *as well as* Jesus for redemption. (**revisionism**) Referred to as "the dispenser of all grace," this entity metes out all of God's gifts to those who through devotion to her become "her children." As author Dave Hunt reports from his research on Roman Catholicism, "Grace is passed from God to Jesus, from Jesus to Mary, and from Mary to us." Thus Mary becomes the essential go-between, nullifying the intimate, indwelling Presence of the Holy Spirit in those who are born again.



In 1987 John Paul II's *Prayer for the Marian Year* calls on MARY to sustain us on our journey of faith and "obtain for us the grace of eternal salvation." (**revisionism**) Again, the Queen of Heaven entity undermines the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice for our sins. She plays the key role in salvation since *grace* comes from God *through the mediation of Mary*. Her latest apparition at Medjugorje claims that *she* is the one who will save the world.



In 1925 in Fatima, Portugal an apparition of Mary appeared with the Child Jesus by her side. The Child Jesus spoke: "Have pity on the Heart of your Most Holy Mother. It is covered with thorns with which ungrateful men pierce it at every moment, and there is none to remove them with an *act of reparation*."

In 1926 the apparition of “the Child Jesus” again appeared and urged Catholics to “spread this devotion of [and] reparation to the Immaculate Heart of His Holy Mother.” The apparition of Mary which appeared at Fatima also declared that the Lord “had confided the peace of the world to her.” She said as well that “God wishes to establish in the world the devotion to MY Immaculate Heart.”

The apparition claims for itself the authority and attributes of Christ: “I will never leave you”; “My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God.” Can any apparition, vision, or image be true which claims for itself that which the Bible attests belongs only to God?

“You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them”
(Exodus 20:4,5a).

We noted that images and art have great power to influence people. God recognized this, and it’s why He forbade their use—because people would be led astray. To assure the laity of the central importance of the Queen of Heaven, the Catholic hierarchy has commended numerous statues and artwork that exalt the Mary image. Some of these visually convey that she is more essential than our Lord Himself in the salvation of mankind. Again, the demonic principality uses a counterfeit form of the mother of Jesus to entice people away from Jesus as KING of kings, LORD of lords, and the only means of salvation.

“Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘These are My appointed feasts, the appointed feasts of the LORD, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies’ (Leviticus 23:2).

By commanding the Israelites to keep specific feasts throughout the year, with specific times to observe them, God was designating through each feast a different element of their relationship with Him. For example, in observing the *Passover* they remembered His deliverance from slavery. The *Feast of Tabernacles* reminded them that they were just sojourners on earth, looking for a permanent home with God.

At the time of Constantine’s authorization of official Christianity in the 4th century, anti-Semitism was strong. And for most of its history Roman Catholicism ferociously persecuted the Jews. Until Vatican II (1962-65) a curse against the Jews for killing Christ was read aloud every Good Friday at Mass. For centuries the religious hierarchy went to great effort rid Catholicism of anything Jewish, even the feasts God gave them, replacing these with “holy days” they syncretized from pagan celebrations.

Several of the most important feasts the Roman hierarchy adapted from pagans are dedicated to the exaltation of the Queen of Heaven. These feasts devoted to Mary are annual reminders in the Church calendar that the Queen of Heaven is not only the most important entity in the Catholic faith, but also has replaced Jesus as the means to salvation.

1. Feast of the Immaculate Conception

Proclaimed dogma in 1854, (**revisionism**) this feast commemorates the



Commemorating the immaculate conception of Mary.

moment Mary was conceived: that she was supposedly *kept free of original sin* and was *filled with sanctifying grace*. Note that this feast has nothing to do with Jesus. Rather, the Immaculate Conception refers to the conception of Mary by *her* mother. That's why Mary is often called the *Immaculata* (the

Immaculate One).

2. Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God

This celebration commemorates the part played by Mary in salvation. What had formerly been celebrated as the *feast of Jesus' circumcision* was changed by Pope Paul VI (post-Vatican II) to commemorate the *divine motherhood of Mary*. Explaining his reason for the change, the Pope said, "The purpose of the celebration is to *honor the role of Mary in the mystery of salvation* and at the same time to *sing the praises* of the unique dignity thus coming to the Holy Mother." He added that while Jesus, the *Prince of Peace*, is honored, so should be His mother, the *Queen of Peace*, "through whose intercession we pray to God."

3. Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary

Known for several centuries by the alternate title of "Our Lady of Victory," this feast day takes place in honor of a 16th century naval victory which kept Europe from Turkish invasion. Pope Pius V attributed the victory to the intercession of Mary, who was invoked on the day of the battle through European Catholics praying the Rosary.

4. The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin

In 1950 Pope Pius XII established the Feast of the Assumption (**revisionism**) to commemorate the death of Mary and her bodily assumption into Heaven before her body could begin to decay. Because it signifies her passing into eternal life, it is the most important of all Marian feasts and a Holy Day of Obligation for Catholics. This day also commemorates *Mary's coronation as Queen of Heaven*.



The Assumption of the Virgin Mary

According to Catholic theology, Mary is the pledge of the fulfillment of Christ's promise to His disciples that "[I] will receive you to Myself; that where I am, you may be there also."

The Demonic-Paganism of Christmas A Victory Feast for the Queen

Neither Christmas nor Easter are prescribed in the Bible as feast days. Easter was syncretized from worship of the divine mother, Ishtar, the Assyrian and Babylonian goddess of fertility, war, love, and sex. This deity was also known by other cultures as Asherah, Astoreth, *Eastre*, Gaia, and Venus, among other names. The meaning, however, was the same: "Earth Mother."

For extensive discussion on the demonic backdrop to Easter, see Teaching E-mails: 49. *Jesus Christ, Our Passover Lamb*; and 58. *Do You Dare Ask Yourself?*

The earliest followers of Jesus never observed either Christmas or Easter as

special holy days, and many later Christians resisted the religious hierarchy establishing these as celebrations. Despite their syncretism with pagan feasts, the Reformers accepted these “holy days” without question. Yet widespread adherence to both these paganized observances, Christmas and Easter, evidence triumph for the Queen of Heaven principality.

Emphasis on the Infancy of Jesus

As sentimental as nativity scenes are, have you ever considered the image of Jesus they perpetuate in His helpless dependence on His mother? How many adult birthdays have you attended where people focused on the person *as a baby* rather than celebrating where they’ve come to in life and what they’ve achieved thus far?



A typical nativity scene displayed at Christmas.

The Queen of Heaven principality uses Christmas to maintain the image of Jesus as a *needy infant*. That baby imagery, along with His mother tending Him, has a powerful impact on people’s perception: they don’t view Him as the adult KING of kings and LORD of lords. Scripture instead would have us anticipate the *triumphant return* of Jesus as *the KING of kings and LORD of Lords*.

Contemporary observances of Christmas typically blend a religious service sandwiched within a far larger focus on *self-indulgence*, whether through gift exchange, partying, or overeating. The character of the King is hidden behind a *swath of greed* disguised as “a time for giving.”

Syncretizing Pagan Holidays and Observances into “Christmas”

Every year between December 17-25 the wild and unruly celebration of Saturnalia took place throughout the Roman Empire. During this week long **celebration of lawlessness** Rome dictated that no one could be punished for damaging property or injuring people.

Trying to win over heathens, 4th century Roman Catholicism imported the Saturnalia festival as an approved celebration. Religious leaders succeeded in converting to Christianity large numbers of pagans by promising them that they could continue to celebrate Saturnalia as *Christians*.

The earliest Saturnalia-turned-into-Christmas holidays were marked by drinking and sexual indulgence. Later anti-Semitic practices were sanctioned by the Vatican to celebrate the holiday. One of the most depraved customs of the Saturnalia carnival was intentionally revived by the Roman Catholic Church in 1466 when Pope Paul II, for the amusement of the faithful, forced Jews to race naked through the streets of Rome.

As part of the Saturnalia festival throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, rabbis of the ghetto in Rome were forced to wear clownish outfits and march through the city streets to the jeers of the crowd, pelted by a variety of missiles. When the Jewish community of Rome sent a petition in 1836 to Pope Gregory XVI begging him to stop the annual Christmas-time abuse of the Jews, the Pontiff responded, “It is not opportune to make any innovation.”

On December 25, 1881, “Christian” leaders whipped the Polish masses into anti-Semitic frenzies that led to riots across the country. In Warsaw alone

twelve Jews were brutally murdered, huge numbers maimed, and many Jewish women raped as part of Christmas celebration by Catholic Poles.

The Pagan Origin of Christmas Trees

Just as the institution of Catholicism recruited Roman pagans by associating Christmas with the Saturnalia, so too worshippers of the Asheira cult and its offshoots were recruited by the Church through sanctioning the use of Christmas trees. Pagans had long worshiped trees in the forest, or brought them into their homes and decorated them. This practice was adopted and given a “Christian” veneer by the organized Church.

The Pagan Origin of Christmas Presents

In Caesar-ruled Rome, the emperors compelled their citizens to bring offerings and gifts during the Saturnalia celebration (in December) and Kalends celebration (in January). Later this ritual expanded to include gift-giving among the general populace to one another.

Those who today rationalize that presents are exchanged because the Magi brought gifts to honor Jesus miss the purpose and significance of these costly presents. Gold was a gift meant for a king; frankincense represented a priestly gift; and myrrh was a burial ointment. Through the exchange of these items for necessary provisions, Joseph was able to pay for his family’s escape and stay in Egypt. Far from setting a precedent, the gifts were the means of supply for a specific need, not an excuse for satiating greed.

The Origin of Santa Claus (St. Nicholas)

The real Nicholas was born in Parara, Turkey in AD 270 and later became

Bishop of Myra. His designation to sainthood by the Roman Church, however, wasn’t until the 19th century. But there’s more to his story.

In 1087, a group of sailors who idolized Nicholas transferred his bones from Turkey to a sanctuary in Bari, Italy. The “Nicholas cult” spread northward until it was adopted by German and Celtic pagans. These groups worshiped a pantheon of deities led by Woden, their chief god. Known for his long, white beard, Woden rode a horse through the heavens a particular evening each Autumn. When the “Nicholas” character merged with Woden, he mounted a flying horse, rescheduled his flight for December, and donned heavy winter clothing.

In order to “evangelize” pagan adherents in Northern Europe, the Roman Catholic Church adopted the “Nicholas” cult and caused the practice of gift distribution to take place December 25th.

Incidentally, the name of St. Nicholas changed to Santa Claus during the late Middle Ages. The Dutch phraseology of SantNi-Claus was morphed by the English into today’s pronunciation.

The Challenge For Us Today Can A Follower of Jesus Observe Pagan Feasts and Practice Pagan Rituals and Not Sin Against God?

“The sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord’s table and the table of demons. Are we trying to arouse the Lord’s jealousy? Are we stronger than He?” (1Corinthians 10:20-22).

Many of the most popular Christmas customs, including Christmas trees,

mistletoe, Christmas presents, and Santa Claus bring to life depraved pagan (demonic) rituals from the past. The Queen of Heaven entity that has inserted itself *alongside Jesus* has fanned the popularity of Christmas among believers and unbelievers alike. Yet this same principality has obscured for most the *reason Jesus came to earth* in the first place—**to be the ONLY atoning sacrifice needed for the salvation of humanity through forgiveness of sin.**

It's *His atoning purpose* for becoming man rather than celebration of His birth that is of supreme importance to every human on earth. The shed blood of our Lord Jesus, and ONLY the blood of Jesus, keeps those who repent and trust in Him from suffering their due punishment in hell.

The Queen of Heaven entity existed on earth long before the incarnation of our Lord Jesus. As we noted earlier, this demonic principality lay behind any and every attempt to keep humanity from *seeking after the One True God*. As an arm of the master deceiver, Satan, this demonic spirit will use any device or temptation to deter even those who love and serve Jesus as their Lord from the fullness of relationship with the indwelling Spirit.

Some of the schemes this entity employs:

- **She attempts to blur the biblical truth of Who Jesus really is;**
- **She will try to blind you to the salvation He alone has accomplished;**
- **She will work to keep you from a life of holy and obedient trust in fulfilling your Father's will and serving Jesus as KING of kings and LORD of lords.**
- **Trust in and responsive obedience to His Spirit and His Word are your only protection.**

Because the celebration of Christmas has been such a religious tradition for so many centuries, few people even pause to consider the celebration's pagan (demonic) origins. Even more important for the follower of Jesus is that observing this holiday is *spiritual compromise* with both the world's system and with unbiblical religious traditions.

If you're following Jesus wholeheartedly as your Lord and Savior, you need to decide for yourself, along with your family and your faith family: **Is observing Christmas (and Easter with its pagan underpinnings) a sin against God?**

Don't look "horizontally" to see what everyone else is doing around you. Rather, if it's your heart's desire to live righteously in truth out of grateful love for your Lord, seek the Spirit and God's Word as your only standard. Discover if in fact you are violating God by compromising your spiritual journey through these demonically-pagan feasts.

As Paul so unwaveringly warns, don't be participants with demons. If it's pagan in origin, it's demonic

As we conclude this lesson we strongly encourage you to closely examine *all of your faith practices*. Again, the Queen of Heaven entity is *not* Jesus' mother, Mary. It is a demonic principality masquerading as Mary to deceive any who refuse to trust in the sufficiency of Christ alone to turn aside the punishment every human being deserves. There are *no "good" people* in God's sight, for *all of us* have sinned against Him and deserve eternal separation from His holy Presence.

For the past 1700 years of Roman Catholic syncretism and revisionism, this principality has influenced and deceived religious leaders to create man-made tra-

ditions that have no basis in Scripture. The crafty deceit is twofold:

Those who *do* practice these traditions alongside Biblical truth consider themselves righteous in God's sight; and, those who *don't* compromise truth with tradition appear *unChristian*.

As we've noted, the Queen of Heaven principality isn't confined to Catholicism. Her influence is found wherever **religious hierarchy, rituals** and **regulations** come between you and the Spirit of Jesus within you. This is the principality behind Nicolaitanism! Any time you follow a faith practice *just because someone else told you to do it* rather than confirming its validity by the Spirit through God's Word, you're yielding to the Queen of Heaven influence.

If you study the declarations made by the various apparitions of "Mary", some may *seem* to be pointing to God and to Jesus. But subtly hidden within those "messages" is the need for *her* to approach God on behalf of the person praying. This entity makes herself *indispensable* in prompting God to act, thereby nullifying the promise of Jesus to those who know Him as their Lord:

"And I will do whatever you ask in My name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask Me for anything in My name, and I will do it" (John 14:13,14).

Trusting in a deceased intermediary of any sort to intercede on your behalf blasphemes the One Who died and rose again to make direct access possible! With the goal of Satan in mind, the Queen of Heaven demon undermines the unique and essential role of our Lord Jesus as KING of kings and LORD of lords. By inserting *herself* as mediator between

humanity and God, this demon minimizes Jesus as the only way to salvation.

Through masquerading as the *mother* of Jesus, this demonic entity entices *women especially* to identify with her role. According to Scripture, women have a greater propensity to be deceived: "*And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner*" (1Timothy 2:14). Adoration of the "Blessed Virgin Mother" supersedes devotion to the Son, and blasphemy results. The entity replaces Jesus as *THE ONLY NAME* by which prayers are answered by our Father.

Deception by this entity isn't limited to women, however. Men become subservient to this demonic spirit because from childhood they're taught devotion to the pure, immaculate "Mother" whose Son will do anything she asks. Adoration and veneration of the Queen of Heaven spirit is especially widespread among matriarchal cultures such as Italy, Ireland, Poland, and Spanish-speaking countries.

Wherever men fail in their biblical responsibilities to God, the Queen of Heaven principality reigns. To protect yourself and your family, remember two key truths as you scrutinize your own faith practices: **Diligently compare any teaching or any decision with God's Word to make sure it aligns; and, don't adopt any traditions or regulations in your spiritual life that *come alongside* or even *try to surpass* the pure truth of Scripture.**

• "*Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true*" (Acts 17:11).

• "***Do not go beyond what is written***" (1Corinthians 4:6).

If you base your faith walk on God's Word and trust His Spirit to guide and empower you, you will be kept free from error. Never lose sight of the fact that both the cross and the tomb are *empty*. If the Spirit of the Living Christ dwells in you as a new creation in Jesus, then your sins are *paid in full*. You can have confidence in your own resurrection.

[You may want to delve more deeply into what we've written. We recommend *A Woman Rides the Beast* by Dave Hunt, as it is well-documented using a multitude of original sources. Your public library may have it, as ours did, or you can find it low-cost at Amazon.com]