

## Paganism and Catholicism

The Catholic Church makes tradition above or equal to Scripture, but in actuality many of its traditions actually stem from pagan sun worship. Its teachings, beliefs and practices come from Mithraism—a form of paganism that existed in Babylonian times.

In the Antichrist Identified section, we discussed how the four beasts of Daniel 7, representing the four successive world powers, took the religious rites and ceremonies from each preceding kingdom as it fell, so that Babylonian traditions continued through the ages. Rome, the final kingdom, still clings to these pagan traditions today.

The Papacy claims that its system of worship has been handed down through tradition. They are absolutely correct. But these are not the teachings of Jesus, but rather the traditions of Babylon.

Doctrine	Date
Sunday Sabbath	321-364 AD Council of Laodicea
Relic Worship	337 AD
Rosary	366 AD
Mass	394 AD
Eternal Torment	590 AD
Indulgences	799 AD
Mary Worship	850 AD
Confessional	1198 AD
Bible Forbidden	1299 AD
Infant Baptism	1311 AD
Tradition above Scripture	1563 AD

Roman Catholic doctrines such as infant baptism, sprinkling during baptism, teachings on death and immortality, tonsured and celibate priests with power over the dead, prayers to the dead and to relics, repetitive prayers with the use of beads, doctrines on forgiveness of sins, teachings on hell, the mass, and Sunday worship are doctrines actually derived directly from ancient Babylon, not the Bible.

When Constantine married paganism and Christianity, the door was opened for false doctrines to creep into the early Christian Church, and they were gradually introduced into the system.

The Church became divided into the Catholic Church who accepted the pagan doctrines, and the true Christian Church who resisted Constantine’s indoctrination.

*Like the successive strata of the earth covering one another, so layer after layer of forgeries and fabrications was piled up in the Church.<sup>i</sup>*

The church historian Philip Schaff says, "No church or sect in Christendom ever sank so low as the Latin church in the tenth century."<sup>ii</sup>

Many of Rome's documents used to validate its authority and origin have been

established as fakes. These unusable sources include *The Donation of Constantine*, which claim to establish the papal domain and jurisdiction, and *The Decretals of Isidore*, which were touted as establishing pontifical supremacy.

According to J. A. Wylie's book *The History of Protestantism*, the Greeks reproachfully named the fledgling Roman Church as "the native home of inventions and falsifications of documents."<sup>iii</sup> These forgeries, nevertheless, succeeded in establishing Catholic doctrines.

## Sun Worship

The Babylonian system of worship has essentially been maintained to this day. The ancient Chaldeans worshiped a pantheon of male and female gods representing the sun god.

Sun worship is often seen as primitive, but is in fact a sophisticated awe-inspiring system of worship that appeals to the senses and captivates the mind with its grandiose ceremonies.

This system of worship has been perpetuated throughout generations, and in our time forms the basis of Earth religions, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Catholicism. In the mysteries of Catholicism, sun worship reaches its highest form. The names of the gods have changed, but the system of worship is the same.

Here are some of the doctrines of sun worship:

As the sun god ([Nimrod](#)) plunged into the waters of the Euphrates River, so the reincarnated son plunged into the waters of the womb to be worshipped as the saviour.

The cycle of the sun represents the sun rising (Brahma), the sun at the meridian (Siva) and the sun setting (Vishnu). At night, the sun rests in the womb of the ocean in the darkness of the underworld, representing the death and suffering of the sun god.

As god of the ocean (Poseidon, Neptune), he was also worshiped as the fish god Dagon, who had plunged into the waters of the womb to be reborn. The most prominent form of worship in Babylon was dedicated to Dagon, later known as Ichthys, or the fish.

There are many links between ancient sun worship and Catholicism. In Chaldean (or Babylonian) times, the head of the church was the representative of the god Dagon. He was considered to be infallible, and was addressed as "Your Holiness." Nations subdued by Babylon had to kiss the ring and slipper of the Babylonian god-king.

Both the Dalai Lama and the Pope claim these same powers and the same titles to

this day. Moreover, the vestments of paganism—the fish mitre and robes of the priests of Dagon—are worn by the Catholic bishops and cardinals, and by the Pope.

### Sun Worship Symbols

Virtually all symbols of sun worship exist in present-day Roman Catholic cathedrals.

St. Peter's in Rome has one of the greatest collection of pagan symbols in the world. The main altar at St. Peter's, Bernini's Canopy, has the symbols of the serpent, sun and moon worship, and male and female forms of sun rays. The altar has Pope Joane (the only female pope in history) depicted in pains of childbirth representing the birth of the sun god.

Other symbols of sun worship found in Catholicism include the solar wheel dating back to the time of the Chaldeans. It is found on virtually all cathedrals today. The square of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome consists of the largest solar wheel in the world. The square is circular and the wheel has eight spokes.

Moreover, in St. Peter's Square, there is a wheel within a wheel, which is a counterfeit of the mobile throne of God, as described by the prophet Ezekiel. As a counterfeit, it represents the throne of the Dragon who gives the Beast his seat and great authority. In the center of the square is an obelisk, a phallic symbol dedicated to the worship of the sun.

The Vatican is built on the hill where the temple of Janus the sun god stood. Alongside St. John's Lateran, which is the church where the Pope is crowned and where he speaks infallibly, is the obelisk of Tutmoses III, which was dedicated to Reharakti, the sun god.

Many other symbols of sun worship are used in Catholicism, such as halos, pagan crosses, lightning bolts, hand-signals from sun worship cults, tridents, the fleur-de-lis, and sexagesimal triangles with the eye of Horus.

Coptic shells, which in paganism served as a symbol of the cosmos, were also used, along with astrological signs. Globes serve as symbols of rulership of the universe, and pagan gods carried the globe. The largest globe in the world is on top of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

The Catholic Church also uses sacred heart symbols, sacred animal symbols, and fertility symbols such as pine cones. Pagan deities wore the pine cone on their crosier just as the popes do today. Catholics also use prayer beads for repetitive prayers, even though the Bible admonishes, "But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking" (Matthew 6:7).

## The Mother-Sun Sun Worship System

The pagan system of sun worship had three main aspects: the father, mother, and the son. In ancient Chaldean times, these were the god Bel or Merodach, Ninus the son who was also worshiped as Tammuz, and the female goddess Rhea who was also worshiped as Ishtar, Astarte, or Beltis. She was also referred to as the “queen of heaven,” and the “wrath subduer.” Mary has received these same names in Catholicism.

Mother and child worship was the basis of the ancient religions. In the various religions of the world, the same system of worship was perpetuated under different names. In Egypt, the mother and child were worshiped as Isis and Osiris or Horus, in India as Isi and Iswara, in China and Japan as the mother goddess Shing-moo with child, in Greece as Ceres or Irene and Plutus, in Rome as Fortuna and Jupiter-puer, or Venus and Adurnis, and in Scandinavia as Frigga and Balder.

The mother and child were worshiped in Babylon as Ishtar and Tammuz, and in Phoenicia, as Ashtoreth and Baal. Moreover, the child was worshiped as both husband and son of the mother goddess.

The male component is a counterfeit of Jesus Christ. The Biblical names used for Jesus were also used for the child in ancient religions. Zoroaster was referred to as the seed, Mithra the Persian sun god was referred to as the Saviour, Dionysus as the sin-bearer, Bacchus as the branch, Vishna as the victim-man, and Osiris as the king of kings.

### The Legend of Nimrod

This system of worship has its origin in the legend of Nimrod and his wife Semiramus. Nimrod (the great-grandson of Noah) rebelled against God, like his father Cush. Eventually Nimrod was put to death for his evil deeds, and according to the ancient patriarchal system, parts of his body were sent to various cities as a warning.

His wife Semiramus fled, but spread the rumor that he had ascended to heaven, where he had become one with the sun. When Semiramus later gave birth to a son, she claimed that it was the reincarnation of her deified husband, and that he had returned to save the human race.

She was later deified as the mother of the sun god, and it was supposed she had ascended into heaven as the queen of heaven. In the various cultures throughout history and around the world, the same basic deities have been worshiped under different names.

## Paganism and Mary

Catholic customs stem from ancient pagan practices and beliefs. Pagan priests were celibate, tonsured, and received the power of sacrificing for the living and the dead. The same power is given to Roman Catholic priests. Pagan celibate priests are dedicated to the mother goddess, and Catholic priests to Mary the mediatrix.

## Elevating Mary

In 1854, the Papacy declared Mary sinless, and in 1951, they declared that she had ascended unto heaven, where she was crowned as the "Queen of heaven." This was called the Assumption of Mary. Since then, the complete system of Babylonian worship, with Mary taking the role of the mediatrix, has thus been established within Catholicism.

The goddess in ancient religions was worshiped as the life giver and nurturer and, as such, this religion was full of sexual undertones. Phallic symbols, as well as symbols of femininity and divine intercourse, were common in ancient temples, as they are in modern temples, particularly in India. These symbols are equally common in Roman Catholic cathedrals.

The breasts of the goddess formed a prominent part of the goddess cult, goddesses often being depicted with many breasts to nurture the world. Even the sun god was depicted nurturing at the goddess' breast.

Catholicism carries the same mythology. Take for example the *Magharet Sitti Mariam*, or "Milk Grotto" as it is commonly known, where Catholic tradition has it that Mary spilt milk from her breast while feeding Jesus. This milk supposedly squirted onto the walls of the cave and formed white markings. The grotto has become a shrine, revered today as a place of pilgrimage for healing and fertility.

*The sinner that ventures directly to Christ may come with dread and apprehension of his wrath; but let him only employ the mediation of the Virgin with her Son and she has only to show that Son the breasts that gave him suck and his wrath will immediately be appeased.<sup>iv</sup>*

Pope John Paul II believed that Mary intercedes for the faithful who honor her during mass:

*As they listen to the word proclaimed in the Sunday assembly, the faithful look to the Virgin Mary...From Sunday to Sunday, the pilgrim people follow in the footsteps of Mary, and her maternal intercession gives special power and fervour to the prayer which rises from the Church to the Most Holy Trinity.<sup>v</sup>*

## The Worship of Mary

Mary takes the place of Jesus in Catholic teaching. Instead of the faithful looking to Jesus as the Author and Finisher of their faith, they look to Mary. In Mary they find

access to God. In her the Church is all holy and can learn obedience to God.

*“The Church’s devotion to the Blessed Virgin is intrinsic to Christian worship.” The Church rightly honors “the Blessed Virgin with special devotion. From the most ancient times the Blessed Virgin has been honored with the title of ‘Mother of God,’ to whose protection the faithful fly in all their dangers and needs.”<sup>vi</sup>*

*The way to salvation is open to none otherwise than through Mary. The salvation of all depends on their being favoured and protected by Mary. He who is protected by Mary will be saved: he who is not will be lost. Our salvation depends on thee. God will not save us without the intercession of Mary.<sup>vii</sup>*

Mary takes the place of God and she herself is treated like a goddess, a teaching to which the Catholic Church is not averse if we study even her modern statements on this issue:

*But while in the most Blessed Virgin the Church has already reached that perfection whereby she exists without spot or wrinkle, the faithful still strive to conquer sin and increase in holiness. And so they turn their eyes to Mary: in her, the Church is already the “all-holy.”<sup>viii</sup>*

Here are some of the names Mary is given, from the book *Thunder of Justice: Prophetess Of These Last Times, The Immaculate Conception, Mother Of The Church, Mary As The New Eve, Queen Of Heaven and Earth/Queen of Peace, The Assumption, Queen of the Holy Rosary, Queen and Mother of Families, Mary as Co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate, Our Lady of all Nations, Ark of the New Covenant, Mother of the Second Advent.*<sup>ix</sup>

The titles Co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix, and Advocate in particular raise serious concerns, as they contradict the plainest teachings of Scripture. The Bible clearly teaches that there is but one Redeemer, Mediator, and Advocate, and that is Christ Jesus:

*For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5).*

*Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people (Luke 1:68).*

*My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous (1 John 2:1).*

In spite of these words, the Catholic Church is willing to accept Mary in the place of Jesus Christ, depriving Him of His mediatory role. Even more surprising is the willingness of the Catholic Church to acknowledge Mary as goddess and part of the Godhead. This teaching is already covertly in place and is, in effect, nothing other than pagan goddess worship.

## The Pagan Origins of Mass

In the Roman Catholic mass, the Eucharist or “host” (the round wafer) is a symbol of the sun. It is normally placed during ceremonial masses on a monstrance with a crescent moon, symbolizing the plunging of the sun into the womb of the goddess.

Some monstrances bear the letters “SFS,” which represents 666, as S was the sixth letter in the ancient Greek alphabet and F is the sixth letter in our alphabet.

The round disc in the crescent moon was a symbol of ancient Babylon, and is found in all the ancient religions. In Catholic cathedrals, these symbols are very prominent, often depicting a round form **of mother and child** within the crescent moon.

The rebirth of the sun god was celebrated by the eating of round bread in Babylonian times, and was common in Mithraism and Osiris worship. Historian Alexander Hislop says this:

*And here, in a so-called Christian Church, a brilliant plate of silver, “in the form of the SUN,” is so placed on the altar, that everyone who adores at the altar must bow in lowly reverence before that image of the “SUN.” Whence, I ask, could that have come, than from the ancient SUN-worship, or the worship of Baal?*

*And when the wafer is placed so that the silver “SUN” is fronting the “round” wafer, whose “roundness” is so important an element in the Romish Mystery, is only another symbol of Baal, or the sun, what can be the meaning of it, but to show to those who have eyes to see that the “Wafer” itself is only another symbol of Baal.<sup>x</sup>*

Pope John Paul wrote in 1998 that mass also includes an element of Mary veneration, which, as we have seen, is also a pagan practice:

*Significantly, the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that “the Sunday celebration of the Lord's Day and his Eucharist is at the heart of the Church's life” ...As they listen to the word proclaimed in the Sunday assembly, the faithful look to the Virgin Mary, learning from her to keep it and ponder it in their hearts (cf. Lk 2:19). With Mary, they learn to stand at the foot of the Cross, offering to the Father the sacrifice of Christ and joining to it the offering of their own lives.*

*With Mary, they experience the joy of the Resurrection, making their own the words of the Magnificat which extol the inexhaustible gift of divine mercy in the inexorable flow of time: “His mercy is from age to age upon those who fear him” (Lk 1:50). From Sunday to Sunday, the pilgrim people follow in the footsteps of Mary, and her maternal intercession gives special power and fervour to the prayer which rises from the Church to the Most Holy Trinity.<sup>xi</sup>*

## Pagan-Catholic Religious Festivals

Special Catholic feasts coincide with pagan holy days, and are celebrated in one form or another by most cultures.

For example, Lady Day is a Catholic feast celebrated on March 25. This is also the feast held in honor of the goddess of Cybele in ancient times.

### Christmas

The 25th of December, which we celebrate as Christmas, was the commemorative day of the birth of the sun god.

#### The Christmas Tree

When Nimrod was destroyed, he was symbolized as the tree that was cut off. To this day, his rebirth is celebrated as the new branch (Christmas tree) that sprouts from the sawn-off stump through the life-giving power of the serpent. The ancient practice of celebrating the birth of the sun god through the fir tree is found in most ancient religions, even those of the ancient Indian cultures of South America.

In England, Christmas is celebrated by throwing the Yule log into the fire, representing the destruction of Nimrod. The Christmas tree was then decorated, symbolizing the rebirth of the sun god.

### Animals

The sacrificial animals on this day were the unclean animals such as the pig and the goose. Both these animals are the main Christmas meal in European countries.

### Santa Claus

Santa Claus has virtually replaced Jesus Christ as the main feature of Christmas. Santa rides across the skies in his reindeer-drawn chariot. He is made acceptable by his friendly appearance, but he has the same characteristics as the ancient sun deities:

- The birth of Osiris, the Egyptian sun god, coincided with the day of solstice, and on this day he would ride through the heavens in his chariot.
- The Greek sun god Helios would ride through the sky in his sun chariot drawn by horses as depicted in the great fountain of Versailles.
- In the Hindu culture, the Sûrya and his charioteer Aruna rides across the sky in a horse-drawn sun chariot. In other cultures, animals such as the goat (Zeus) or the reindeer pull the chariot.

*Origin of Santa Claus: 4th century: Historical evidence shows that St. Nicholas never existed as a human. He was rather a Christianized version of various Pagan sea gods —the Greek god Poseidon, the Roman god Neptune, and the Teutonic god Hold Nickar.*



*In the early centuries of the Christian church, many Pagan gods and goddesses were humanized and converted to Christian saints. When the church created the persona of St. Nicholas, they adopted Poseidon's title "the Sailor." They picked up his last name from Nickar. Various temples of Poseidon became shrines of St. Nicholas.<sup>xii</sup>*

Santa, as taught to most children, has the attributes of God:

1. He is virtually omnipresent. He can visit hundreds of millions of homes in one night
2. He is omniscient. He monitors each child, he is all-seeing and all-knowing, and he knows when they are bad and good. He can manufacture gifts for hundreds of millions of children, and deliver them in one night—each to the correct child.
3. He is all-good and all-just. He judges which children have shown good behavior and rewards them appropriately. Bad children are bypassed or receive a lump of coal.
4. He is eternal.

## Easter

Easter is known for its bunny rabbits, colored eggs, hot cross buns, and the return of springtime. But where did Easter come from?

Few people realize that Easter is not about the resurrection of Christ.

The only time the word "Easter" is found in the Bible (Acts 12:4), it is there by mistranslation. The word in the original Greek is "Passover." Jesus died at the time of the Passover feast, but the Passover is not Easter and Jesus did not die at Easter time. Easter is an ancient spring festival.

Long before the time of Christ, the pagan goddess Ishtar, or sometimes known as Astarte or Ashtoreth, was worshiped in different countries. Our modern practice of sunrise worship originates from the pagan festival honoring Ishtar. The story of Easter also helps explain how Sunday became sacred and the origin of virgin worship.

## The Scheme of Imitation

Centuries before the birth of Christ, Satan encouraged people to have religious beliefs and practices that would imitate the coming Saviour's resurrection.

This was a brilliant strategy that kept people from recognizing and appreciating the plan of salvation. Because pagans had similar beliefs of a "resurrection" before Christ, it is much easier to say that Christ's resurrection was just another version of the same old pagan story from long ago that has nothing to do with reality or a plan of salvation of any kind. Many scoffers use this type of reasoning to explain away the Bible's truths.

The sacrificial system was also imitated by pagans, but perverted to be all about appeasing a wrathful God instead of a loving God that became flesh and died willingly in our place. Satan has always counterfeited and perverted the truth because he knows that if he does so, many will be led to disbelieve the Bible and not choose Christ.

The early pagan practices and beliefs about Ishtar and the resurrection prepared the world for the religious apostasy, which would occur after the time of Christ. The pagans believed in a god that was resurrected each spring on Easter—a day which dedicated to Ishtar, the mother goddess.

She was also called the queen of heaven and supposedly interceded with the gods on behalf of humankind. This precise belief has been applied to Mary by the Roman Catholic Church, but it is as pagan as it gets, and has no basis in the Bible whatsoever.

The mother goddess has had many names throughout the various pagan religions in history. She has been known as Astarte, Ishtar, Ashtoreth, Cybele, Rhea, Demeter, Ceres, Aphrodite, Venus, Diana, and Freya.

Easter did not originate for the purpose of celebrating Christ, but rather for the purpose of worshiping the mother goddess Ishtar. Because worshipers of Ishtar presented her with two fertility symbols—eggs and rabbits—these became part of the Christian Easter celebration. Because sunrise at the beginning of spring was the holiest day in the Mithraic calendar (next to December 25), the practice of Easter sunrise services continued on into Christianity.

Because the Ishtar celebration was held each spring on a Sunday, close to the vernal equinox, the ascension of Christ was changed from 40 days after the time of Passover (as told us in the Bible) to the annual Easter celebration. All this began in paganism, with the Ishtar and Tammuz legend.

Many Christians celebrate Easter as the day celebrating the resurrection of Christ, but the truth is that the celebration of Easter actually comes from paganism.

## **The Title Pontifex Maximus**

The papal title *Pontifex Maximus* can be traced back in different forms to the ancient Chaldean times. When Medo-Persia conquered Babylon, the Babylonian religion was maintained, but after a revolt of the priesthood, the priests of Babylon were driven out of Medo-Persia, and established themselves at Pergamum, taking with them their titles and vestures.

The last pontiff king of Pergamum was Attalus III, who bequeathed his title to the emperor of Rome in 133 BC. In the fourth century AD, Christian emperor Gratian refused the title, and in the year 431 AD, the title was taken over by Damascus,

bishop of Rome.

The present-day college of cardinals with the Pope at the head is identical to the college of pontiffs with the Pontifex Maximus at the head.

The keys that the Pope wears around his neck are not the keys of Peter. Rather, they date back from Babylonian times, when it was supposed that this representative of God had the power to unlock heaven or hell. A statement about the Pope's position is found in William Barry's *The Papal Monarchy*:

*The Pax Romana (Roman peace) has ceased, it is universal confusion, but wherever a bishop holds court, religion protects all that is left of the ancient order. The emperor is no more, but the pontifex maximus abides. He is the vicar of Christ, offering the old civilization to the tribes of the north. He converts them to his creed, and they serve him as father and judge supreme.<sup>xiii</sup>*

## Paganism in Our Culture

All the ancient feasts pertaining to sun worship have been introduced into Christendom by the Papacy. Even the ancient symbols and modes of worship are subtly introduced and disguised as Christian practices.

Not only do we see ancient pagan rites and ceremonies in Catholicism and some Protestant Christian denominations, but many aspects of western culture also came from traditions dedicated to the sun god.

### Days of the Week

Paganism is evident even in the very organizational system our culture is based on. As we can see from the chart, the seven days of the week are dedicated to solar deities.

The number seven was associated with the eye of the Egyptian sun god Osiris, and the seven rays of the Iranian sun god Mithra. Mithra's rays can be seen in depictions of many pagan gods and goddesses.

For example, the Statue of Liberty represents the female form of the sun deity, as she has the seven rays of Mithra on her head and carries the torch, a symbol of the light-bearer or Lucifer.<sup>xiv</sup> The seven sun rays emanating from Mithra's halo symbolize his triumph over the forces of darkness.

### Card Games

The card games we play are based on the cosmic rituals of sun worship, there are fifty two cards in a pack (52 weeks in a year), four suits (four seasons or corners of the earth), twelve picture cards (twelve houses of the sun), 36 numbered cards (36 rooms in the cosmic houses of the sun's path) and the A (alpha) or ace is the highest card but also counts as one (which is the lowest card thus designating the Alpha and

the Omega).<sup>xv</sup>

*Cards were the invention of the Spanish Moors, and represented the seasons. Two colours re- present the two equinoxes, and the four suits the four seasons. Spring was designated by a rose (now a diamond); summer by a trefoil (a club); autumn by an acorn (a spade); and winter by a cup (now a heart).<sup>xvi</sup>*

## Sports

*Scoring a goal with the sun ball was equated with the triumph of light over darkness, good over evil...The ball is a sun symbol in all such sports as football, hockey, basketball, and cricket. Baseball is related to the sun in the sundial shape and pattern of the field, as well as its rules of play and scoring. Like all sports, baseball also embodies the sun's seasonal cycles in much the same way as ancient ceremonial contests were held as part of fertility rites.<sup>xvii</sup>*

*As in sport, the sun is omnipresent on practically all aspects of life, whether it be art, architecture, philosophy, religion, festivals, folklore, dance, or music. Every morning a "pagan" god of the day wakes us up, for the Romans in the early centuries of the Christian era named each day after the seven planets - Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, and Saturn.<sup>xviii</sup>*

## The Olympics

Revived from ancient origins, modern Olympics are haunted by the ideals of that primitive and violent time. The original Olympics began in Olympia in 776 BC. They celebrated the many gods by staging violent athletic competitions (deaths were common). Opportunities abounded for trade and commerce, while onlookers watched naked athletes' physiques. Greek city-states "united" under these festivals to the gods Zeus and Poseidon. Lasting over a millennium, the games were finally abolished by Emperor Theodosius (393 AD) because they were too pagan.<sup>xix</sup>

For example, the carrying of the torch in the Olympic games is a symbol of the sun. Sport from ancient times was associated with sun worship and the symbolism employed at the modern games reenacts the victories of the solar deities.

The sun, moon, and planets floating overhead at the 1992 Barcelona Olympic games reminded us that the sun's association with sports predates the deities Hercules and Apollo, as is evident from the epic tale of the Sumerian hero Gilgamesh:

*The Sumerian Gilgamesh story inscribed in cuneiform tablets narrates how the sporting equipment—a stick and a ring or ball—which Gilgamesh had carved out of an uprooted tree, had fallen into the netherworld as he began oppressing his people by repeated athletic competitions, and how eventually it was the sun god who opened a hole in the ground in order to recover them. The Olympic torch, which the runner carries to mark the sun's cyclic movement throughout the "Olympiad", the four-year period until the next games, is also related to the sun's cyclic rhythm. First celebrated in Greece, the games were ceremonial contests in honor of Zeus.<sup>xx</sup>*

Here are some other examples of how the Olympics still carry their pagan history:

### Violence

Ancient Olympic violence echoes in modern games. Historian Maryann Abbs reports the following:

- 1936 Olympics promoted the Nazi regime, while concentration camps operated not far away.
- Olympic Brigade, a special forces unit, massacred hundreds in Mexico City (1968).
- Olympics introduce oppressive security measures. Sydney Olympics had four policemen for each athlete — “...35,000 police and security guards, 4000 troops and elite commando units, and BlackHawk helicopters.”
- Mass ‘inspections’ of Islamic communities during Athens Olympics (2004) prompted Amnesty International’s warning: “security...is used...as a pretext to systematically break international treaties on the rights of refugees.”<sup>xxi</sup>

### Commercialism

Ancient Olympics promoted trade and commerce; modern Olympics follow. Not just a showcase for “amateur” athletes, Olympics are profit-motivated enterprises.

*China Today* reported on November 5, 2004 that Los Angeles made \$250 million, Seoul Olympics \$300 million, and Sydney Olympics generated \$1.756 billion. During the Beijing Olympics “...NBC alone had raked in profits of \$1.7 billion dollars for its television advertising, and China’s main TV network ...\$400 million.”

### Obsession with athletic physical “perfection”

Richard Rodriguez, essayist for PBS’s “News Hour with Jim Lehrer” observes, “In a society that cares little about the notion of a pure inner life, a clean body must do. And there’s no higher ideal in America right now than the athletic body, muscled, toned, hard. The Olympics are...a pagan celebration of the body, as close to the original Greek nude version as possible.”<sup>xxii</sup>

### Worship of Many Gods

In Atlanta’s opening ceremonies (a \$15 million musical spectacular) NBC commentator Dick Enberg described “...Olympic spirits that...call the tribes of the world to Atlanta.” These occult spirits are “Stewards of Heaven” governing “196 Olympic Provinces into which the universe is divided...”<sup>xxiii</sup> This resembles Nebuchadnezzar causing all to worship his golden image when all kinds of music played.

## Paganism: Comparing Catholicism with Hinduism

Roman Catholicism has many traditions and beliefs that are rooted in paganism. Here are points of similarity between Catholicism and Hinduism:

1. Hindus worship many gods and Catholics worship many saints, both with the burning of candles and incense before statues. Both use images, icons, music, and ritual prayers as means to create an atmosphere of worship. While Hindus chant ritual “mantras,” Catholics chant rosary prayers.
2. Both have extravagantly wealthy temples filled with statues and golden artifacts.
3. Both have a priesthood that acts as a intermediary between the people and God. Both look upon their respective priests as a separate caste, different from the laity. The concept of a “priesthood of all believers” is foreign to the practices of either religion.
4. Both believe that justification cannot be by faith alone—good deeds being absolutely necessary. Both believe that merit can be accumulated, and life deeds can cause advancement or demotion in the “next life.”
5. Both have a physical center for worshipers’ pilgrimages. For Catholics it is St. Peter’s in Rome, while Hindus travel many miles to the Ganges River. Both religions believe that pilgrimages to these holy places will result in merit for the worshiper.
6. Both believe in the effectiveness of “holy water” in various cleansing rites.
7. Both believe everyone needs “perfecting” before going to the ultimate reward. Catholics see time in purgatory as necessary to perfection of character, while Hindus believe that reincarnation will give the necessary steps towards perfection.
8. Both believe in the effectiveness of repeated offerings and sacrifices. Catholics believe the mass will effectively offer Christ again and again as a sacrifice for sins, while Hindus will present their gods with sacrifices and offerings of flowers.
9. Both religions have a strong belief that spiritual exercises will lift the worshiper out of the usual round of daily living, and will promote a mystic and superior understanding of existence. St. Ignatius is not really very different in his outlook on “spiritual exercises” than the Hindu mystic in his concentration on escaping this physical world and entering nirvana.
10. Both religions worship a mother goddess. Hindus worship the Goddess Durga as the Supreme Mother, while Catholics see Mary as the Supreme Mother.

Of course it can be pointed out that Hinduism is polytheistic (worshipping many gods) while Catholicism is monotheistic (worshipping only one God). In practice, Catholicism encourages worshipers to see Mary and the saints as intermediaries between God and humanity.

However, according to 1 Timothy 2:5 there is only one mediator between God and us (Jesus Christ), so when Catholics defer to saints as mediators they are putting those saints in the place of Jesus Christ, and in effect worshiping many gods.

Fortunately, Catholicism still has Jesus Christ and the basic Gospel as a foundation, so the sincere seeker can find salvation through Christ. But by adding so many traditions not grounded in God's Word, the Roman Catholic institution buries the truth under many levels of false belief.

This article is adapted from the book *Truth Matters* by Professor Walter Veith, except for the Easter article, which is adapted by Wendy Goubej from Vance Ferrell, *Christmas, Easter and Halloween—Where Do They Come From?* (Altamont, TN: Harvestime Books, 2003).

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xxii All quotes are taken from Clete Hux, "Pagan Invasion in Atlanta: Summoning the Olympic Spirits."