

Problems with Lent

-truth about the forty day fast-

A recent article in the USA Today showed the popularity of the Lenten holiday to be on the rise in many Christian churches. The paper stated that many believers would be celebrating the season of Lent by fasting certain physical pleasures. During the forty day Lenten season, Christians throughout the world give up specific sins or bad habits to prepare themselves for Easter. Such a practice seems noble, yet history reveals that Lent can actually lead to sin.

Lent begins directly after the great debauchery of Mardi Gras. The French term "Mardi Gras" literally means "Fat Tuesday." This day commemorates the last day to get "fat" and eat before the fast begins. The first day of Lent is called "Ash Wednesday." On Ash Wednesday believers mark their foreheads with ash to symbolize the start of a solemn fast. Many suggest that Lent is kept to either remember the Savior's forty day fast or to prepare for the celebration of Easter. History proves that Lent is like other pagan practices that are not found in the Scriptures yet were adopted into the Church from the surrounding culture and ancient history.

"The forty days' abstinence of the Lent was directly borrowed from the worshippers of the Babylonian goddess. Such a Lent of forty days, 'in the spring of the year,' is still observed by the Yezidis or pagan Devil worshippers of Koordistan, who have inherited it from their early masters, the Babylonians. Such a Lent was held by the pagan Mexicans, in honor of the sun and was observed in Egypt as well. This Egyptian Lent of forty days was held expressly in commemoration of Adonis or Osiris, the great mediatorial god. Among the Pagans this Lent seems to have been an indispensable preliminary to the great annual festival in commemoration of the death and resurrection of Tammuz," wrote Alexander Hislop in the Two Babylons, pages 104 and 105.

A pagan connection between Tammuz and Lent is apparent. Tradition shows that the wife of Nimrod, the King of Babylon, claimed she had been supernaturally impregnated by the Sun god and gave birth to Tammuz. One day while hunting, Tammuz was killed by a wild boar. His mother and her family mourned for 40 days, at the end of which Tammuz was brought back from the dead. The Wycliffe Bible Commentary states, "Mourning for the god

was followed by a celebration of resurrection." The Bible condemns such ancient practices that are actually cloaked by Christianity as Lent. "And He said to me, 'Turn again, and you will see greater abominations that they are doing.' So He brought me to the door of the north gate of the LORD's house; and to my dismay, women were sitting there weeping for Tammuz,'" Ezekiel 8:13-14.

Popular Bible commentator John MacArthur agrees, "The celebration of Lent has no basis in Scripture, but rather developed from the pagan celebration of Semiramis's mourning for 40 days over the death of Tammuz before his alleged resurrection-another of Satan's mythical counterfeits," (The MacArthur New Testament Commentary; 1 Corinthians: Moody, 1984).

Lent officially became a "Christian" celebration at the Council of Laodicea in A.D. 360. Yet even the famed Catholic Saint Abbot John Cassian, monk of Marseilles, admitted in the fifth century, "Howbeit you should know that as long as the primitive church retained its perfection unbroken, this observance of Lent did not exist." Today Lent is observed by most Catholics, Episcopalians, Lutherans, and some Presbyterians who desire to be closer to the Almighty. Many observe Lent without knowing its history or acknowledging its pagan past. Exodus 23:2 addresses the celebration of Lent by stating, "you shall not follow a crowd to do evil."

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