

# THE FIRST OPEN CHURCH, FOLLOWERS OF “THE WAY”

Part Nine, By: Jeffrey Crosby

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We will continue with our story of the first church that was built after our Messiah Christ Yahshua was crucified and resurrected. It was because of Joseph of Arimathea, leading a band of Apostles of Christ, that this came to pass. They were a humble body, dedicated and passionate to the cause of bringing the promise of the Word, the resurrection, to the scattered “lost flock” of Israel that were in the British Isles. These Apostles were simply following Christ’s command from the beginning of His ministry in Galilee, where He began to preach, “Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand ... Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matt. 4:17-17). And as commanded, Joseph went only to the lost flock of the House of Israel, as later would Paul and others who established the church body across Asia Minor and Europe.

We were looking at George F. Jowett’s book *The Drama of the Lost Disciples* (TDLD), from Covenant Publishing Company Limited. Before we go any further with the small wattle chapel that was built, or the Apostles that would dedicate their lives (for they are the church), we must come to an understanding of where we have arrived at today concerning this church body.

We left off in our story with the Sacred Thorn bush and its blooming at Christmas time. We see that not only did Jowett find reference to Christmas as being some kind of miraculous, divine time of the year, but he also puts much weight in his comparisons between the “Holy Roman See” and the “Church of England.” Let’s face it, the whole world has been deceived. If possible, the very elect (as Jowett is) shall be deceived (Matt. 24:24). So let’s first remove some lies so the Truth can shine forth.

The purpose of telling the story is to reflect on our kindred forefathers and Christ’s message to His people. When we speak to our loved ones, we want the scales of deception to fall away. It is sad when we point certain things out to those we know are of the Covenant promise, whether it be Sabbath, commanded Feasts and Festivals, the Laws, etc., compared to the worldly rituals that seem so prevalent among Christian doctrines of a divided ‘church’ whose doctrines or practices are anything but Biblical. It is no more or less found within Catholicism, the Church of England, or any worldly denomination which are universalist, one-size-fits-all theologies that have adopted social programs for the masses. I will share some facts of history before we come back

to the first church in the Isles. This will allow us to take a proper perspective of the view of the Saints of Christendom and compare them to our own faith. What possesses so many millions of those of the Sacred Covenant today to follow pagan ways, or go their own path without Him or His Word, His LAW?

For those that seek diligently “to make themselves well approved”, there are books which cover the facts of heathenism, their roots. However, many of those teachings, such as *Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop, written over a century ago, are just not necessarily affirmed as true. Others have continued to pass on as sound doctrine things which are untruthful. One falsehood is the story of Semiramus, the alleged wife/mother of the Biblical Nimrod. The fact is that the Noahdic flood occurred in 3245 B.C. (by the Septuagint text). Yet here is an analysis (in part) from the *World Scope Encyclopedia*, vol. 10 (no pagination): “**Semiramis** (se- mir’ a-mis), a legendary queen of Assyria and Babylonia, reputed one of the most powerful rulers of Asia. Tradition makes her a daughter of Derceto, the fish goddess of Ascalon, and of a Syrian youth. Onnes, governor of Nineveh, was attracted by her beauty and made her his wife, but she won the love of King Ninus by a heroic exploit ... She was proclaimed Queen of Assyria, ruling over that mighty empire for 42 years. She travelled in all parts of her dominion, founded Babylon, and made it the most powerful city in the world ... [L]arge regions were added to the empire, particularly Libya, Persia, and Ethiopia. The Hanging Gardens of Babylon are attributed to her time, and there are other antiquities that give evidence of her long and successful reign. She was succeeded by her son, Ninyas. According to tradition, she disappeared after assuming the form of a dove and was long worshiped as a deity. If there is any historical basis for the figure of this princess, she might have lived in the first millenium B.C.” So here we find more than a 2,000 year lapse between Nimrod and Semiramis. There is a very important reason this should be noted, and that is to dispel false myths. Across the board, it has been falsely taught that Semarimis was Nimrod’s wife, then his mother after his resurrection. The main point here is to recognize that the religions under the name of Christianity have adopted false myths, sabbaths and holidays, and that mother-godess worship has played a large part in paganism within those religions, including the present Church of England under ‘Universal Catholicism’.

It was right after the Noahdic flood, which was localized throughout the Adamic world East of Eden, that Nimrod rebelled against Yahweh. Following the ways of Satan (Cain) and a large host of fallen angels, he chose to practice humanism. He became mighty in the world, building the Tower of Babel so that he and his priests could worship the heavenly bodies. Nimrod would become recognized as the celestial constellation Sagitarius, the mighty hunter (of men).

Nimrod believed that he should be deified. Wealth, power and humanistic egotism resulted in his subjects to worship him. This was the beginning of false pagan worship and practice that has prevailed throughout history. This was cause for Elohim to bring an end to Nimrod’s empire (but not his influence), causing confusion of tongues (which was Akkadian until that time), and scatter the decendants of Ham, Shem and Japheth. This we find in the eleventh chapter of Genesis.

In Babylonian history, Nimrod, called Kronos, Bel, or Baal, became a god. Later, in the Persian tongue, he was called Zoroaster, which means “woman’s promised seed.” This takes us back to the Garden of Eden, Genesis 3:15, when Satan was cursed by the Creator Yahweh for defiling Eve and bringing the wicked progeny of Cain into the world. So from his very title, it was believed and taught that Nimrod was the god-man savior who would sacrifice his life, as a sin offering, for all humanity, which is where ‘universalism’ is born from. He would crush the adversary Satan’s head. This false god was the root of anti-Christ.

Mythology claims that Nimrod was killed by a wild boar at the age of 40. The Shemites cut him to pieces and scattered his body parts over the realm. Some claim that it was Shem and his followers who killed him. But no matter how he met his demise, the fact is that his subjects who worshipped him wept bitterly, worshipping him as “the son of the sun god.”

It has been declared throughout history that Tammuz is the resurrected Nimrod as the sun god. He was born on the day of the celebrating of the winter solstice, when the year began its visible progression into longer days, or ‘birth’ of the new year which brings growth, December 25th, called Saturnalia to the Romans. The resurrected Tammuz was worshipped as a deity. In his worship, one would weep for forty days, a day for each year of his life. They would grieve and deny themselves of one worldly pleasure during this time, believing it pleased him in the afterlife. So in cult worship, Tammuz became the focus, even to the women of Israel thousands of years later. In a vision from Yahweh, Ezekiel declares: “He said also unto me, Turn thee yet again, and thou shall see greater abominations that they do. Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the Lord’s house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz”, (Ezek. 8:13-14, KJV).

In pagan beliefs, there has always been a female deity who has represented the “Queen of Heaven”, or the feminine aspect of creation. In the Babylonian, Assyrian and Persian languages she was worshipped as Rhea and Ashtarte, the name meaning “woman that made towers”, or Ishtar. Well, Nimrod built “the tower.” This self-created religious system transcended languages and cultures since. In Assyria they were known as Cybele-Ishtar-Ninus. In Egypt, Osiris-Isis-Horus. In India, Iswara-Isi-Vishnu. In Greece, Bacchus-Irene or Diana-Plutus. In pagan Rome, Juniper-Fortuna-Bacchus. The mother-godess was also known, in the Greco-Roman cultures, as Venus, Athena, and Aphrodite. In each of these false systems, man-made rituals, customs, initiations and traditions were designed to atone the sins of the individual who accepts the beliefs.

In Persia, the male deity was Mithra, the “Lord of the Covenant”, the mediator between man and the supreme creator of the universe. His title was Adonis (Hebrew Adonai), or “Lord.” This false religion, Mithraism, was the universal State religion of the Roman empire during the lifetime of Yahshua and for over 300 years after His death and resurrection. This pagan belief was centered on worship of the sun. Throughout the empire, the day to cease from work and worship the sun was the first day of the week, Sunday. As shown at the beginning of this history, it was Satan’s agenda, through Nimrod, to worship him as the sun, on that particular sun-day.

Thousands of years after Nimrod, when Christ Yahshua lived, Satan's false belief system of worshipping the sun highly influenced the pagan society of the Roman Empire who were, in great part, scattered Israel.

Easter is the Anglicized version for the worship of Ashtarte or Ishtar, etc. (or the 'feminine'). Some mythological teachings being touted claim that the wife of Nimrod, after she died, was reborn in the spring as Ishtar, goddess of fertility, always depicted as the barebreasted, voluptuous goddess of sexual desire. Although the impregnated feminine deity dates back in archaeological findings long before Adam, in myth she was alleged to have emerged from an egg which fell from the heavens into the Euphrates River at sunrise on the Sunday of worship that followed the spring equinox. She changed a bird into an egg-laying rabbit, proliferating the fertility season. Temples were built to Ishtar, where priests wearing black robes (the color of Satan/Baal/Nimrod worship) initiated the practice of impregnating young virgins on their altars on that particular Sunday morning. Citizens would participate in fornication rituals as an offering to Ishtar for a fertile season. One year later those three month old infants would be sacrificed to Ishtar on an adjoining altar. Eggs would be rolled in the blood, coloring them red, to honor the goddess. This continued annually each spring.

The orgies and sacrifice of children may have eventually ceased, but the Assyrians and Philistines worshipped the half-man, half-fish god Dagon. Pagans would worship him on Friday, being "good" Friday, celebrated with a feast of fish. But every practice of heathen paganism, which goes on and on, whether it be the taking of "Eucharist" (which represents the sun disc, with 'IHS' [Isis/Horus/Set] stamped into each wafer), finds its roots in this false, Satanic belief system.

It is easily conceivable to see how the pagan, self-worshipped Romans, at the time of our story, were not pleased with anything contrary to their liberal lifestyle, finding all else offensive. They served Satan, as millions unknowingly do today.

We will return to Joseph and Glastonbury momentarily. First we must establish the influence that the "scarletcolored beast, full of names of blasphemy" who is "drunken with the blood of the saints and martyrs," spoken of in Revelation chapter 17, has had upon Jacob's descendants, Anglo-Israel. She is the "woman arrayed in purple and scarlet," referred to as Christ's bride, who has played the whore and drunk the wine of her fornication. One thing had to come to pass, as Paul wrote in Second Thesalonians, 2:3-4: **"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day [of Christ's return] shall not come, [until] that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."**

Springing ahead some 300 years after the time of our story, it was the "illustrious descendant" (as Jowett puts it in TDLD, p. 86) of the Silurian King Arviragus, the Roman Emperor Constantine "the Great", who himself worshiped Mithra, the sun, unwittingly brought one of the most traumatic impacts upon mankind. Jowett seems to elevate Constantine's stature simply because of his British royal lineage, and does neglect to point out almost all of his moral character flaws in his book. It was because of

him that Catholicism eventually usurped true Christ worship, morphing it into universalism.

The spread of Christendom presented a problem in the empire. Because of its number of followers, Constantine could not continue to execute them all, as his predecessors had done. The sport deaths of the coliseum, using Christians as fodder, had again waxed during the reign of his predecessor Diocletian. Numbers of subjects within the realm were vital for the tax and military base of the eastern empire in Rome and the western empire in Constantinople, Turkey. In A.D. 312, He was about to go to war against Maxentius, on the banks of the Tiber River in Germania, when it was said that he had a vision of the cross, which was identified with Christ, embedded within the sun, with the words *In Hoc Signo Vinces*, "In This Sign Conquer." Therefore he placed the sign of the cross on his standard and shields of his soldiers and was victorious in the battle. From this, Constantine decided to merge what he thought he knew about these Christians with Mithraism, creating a 'universal' State religion called Roman 'Catholicism,' which he made the official religion of the empire in A.D. 313. He initiated the most powerful, wealthy, influential leaders to councils to give State organization and authority to set policy and establish doctrines for this newly founded pagan religion under the premise of "Christianity." It was at the Council of Nicea, in 325, that the bishops of Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch, who previously opposed the teachings of Christ, were now appointed as the supreme leaders. This council proposed the official day of worship would be Sunday, as for centuries the majority of the people of the empire had already been worshipping the sun god on this day. It was this Council who officially made the date of the sun god, December 25th, or Saturnalia, as law to celebrate and recognize a mass in the name of Christ, familiar to us as Christmas, proclaiming this date as His birthday.

But revealing his true character at that time of his life, Constantine soon after had his wife and child beheaded. He had coins minted which inscribed *Sol Invictus Mithras*; "Invincible God of the Sun." Like previous Caesars, Constantine himself was revered as a god and nobody questioned the chain of events that transpired.

In A.D. 336, The Council of Laodicea made Sunday the official day of worship across the empire, making it law that Christians could not refrain from work on Saturday – the seventh day Sabbath. In 341, the Council of Antioch passed a law prohibiting anybody throughout the empire from celebrating the Feast of Passover. In fact, every 'Holy Day' Feast which was observed by followers of the Word, commanded by Yahweh for His descendants of Israel to follow forever, were henceforth done away with, supplanted by conjectured pagan 'holidays'. It does not take a genius to see that forty days of "weeping for Tammuz" is what is known as 'Lent', followed by the worship of Ishtar (Easter, with its sunrise service); to worship Mary, mother of Christ as "Queen of Heaven", and to construct idols of her holding a child in arms is pagan worship of the feminine deity and Tammuz; that worship on the first day of the week, the 'sun day', as opposed to the commanded Seventh Day Sabbath, and so on, is exactly contrary to our Father's ways and intentions for His chosen ones. This is "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATION OF THE EARTH". (Rev. 17:4-5). The blasphemy is from the "beast" (Cain's political-monetary-religious system), not the "woman" (true Israel).

With this said, I will quote Jowett on pages 84-85 of his book: “[I]t is a mistake to name all Christian denominations separate from the Roman Catholic Church Protestants ... Up to [the time of] Queen Elizabeth, there was only one religion in Britain ... known as the British Church ... also known as the Holy Catholic Church and never Roman Catholic ... [Since Elizabeth denounced the Papal See and Roman Catholic hierarchy in Rome] ... the British Church and State determined on a reformation ... to exclude anything and everything that bore any comparison with the Roman Catholic Church in Liturgy and in ritual ... [which] Roman innovations had crept into the British Church ... [I]t was not a protest ... [but] a cleansing reformation ... The British Church [becoming the national Churches of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland] was still the national religion of the Isles ... all holding the same communion, all designating themselves as Holy Catholics as separate from Roman Catholics. The word ‘Catholic’ means ‘universal’; thus Holy Catholic means a universal, holy, Christian Church, with Christ alone being the sole Head of the Church (end quote, emphasis mine). They would also become known as the Episcopal Church.

It goes on to say that they, who Jowett refers to as the Mother British Church, never accepted the Roman Pop as the Roman Catholics did, and that they have “maintained an unbroken apostolic succession of Bishops from the beginning ...” (p.85). But this same discussion is founded in the roots of the Roman Catholic Church, who claim Saint Peter (who they erroneously find as the churches foundation) is the “rock” Christ spoke of, and from whence came their succession of bishops. How about Christ being that Rock? And not to judge any of the lost flock by any means, but these semantics are irrelevant when pagan rites of universalism, which were simply adopted one from the other, rule the day. How does it say? “Take heed to yourselves, that your heart is not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them ...”, (Deut. 11:16). If we, in these latter days, are claiming our identity with Christ and the early Patriarchs and Saints, we must return to the roots, and leave Sunday, “Mother Churches” and appointed bishops (as we are an elect), Christmas and the like alone, for what it’s worth; separation from the Truth. However, the zealous pride for the Church of the “Covenant” people, the British Church of England, is easily seen in Jowett’s genuineness as he tells the traditional story of the Lost Disciples, this being the hub of Christendom, who would effect the whole world. Now, back to our story.

Christianity was founded in Britain in A.D. 36, the first above ground Christian Church (the very same of our story) erected in A.D. 38-39, and the Roman Catholic hierarchy more than three centuries later. There was no title of Pope until A.D. 607.

In A.D. 600, Augustine, a Roman Catholic Church official who had been chastised by his own church, wrote a letter to Pope Gregory which states: “In the western confines of Britain, there is a certain royal island of large extent, surrounded by water, abounding in all the beauties of nature and necessities of life. In it, the first neophytes of Catholic law, God beforehand acquainting them, found a church constructed by no human art, but by the hands of Christ himself, for the salvation of His people.” (Epistolae ad Gregorium Papam)

The English historian and theologian, Bede (672-735), giving an account of the faith of the British Church when Augustine arrived, stated in his *Ecclesiastical History of*

*the English Nation*: “For they did not keep Easter Sunday at the proper time, but from the fourteenth to the twentieth moon [fourteenth to the twentieth days of the month, or Week of Unleavened]; which computation is contained in a revolution of eighty-four years. Besides, they did several other things which were against the unity of the [Roman] Church ... They could not depart from their ancient custom without the consent of their people.” (J.M. Dent, *Everyman’s Edn.*, pp. 65-66) [brackets mine]

Obviously, unlike the (universal Catholic) Church of England today, the first converts to The Way would be taught to follow the sacred Feasts and Festivals, and would worship as Joseph and the Apostles would worship, on the commanded Seventh Day Sabbath.