

Ezekiel 8
The Counterfeit Authenticates the Genuine
J.D. Farag

KAPONO: You are holy, Lord. Thank You so much for this time of worship. We thank You for what worship does, Lord, what a blessing it is. Lord, would You bring us in? We'll listen, Lord. We thank You for this time that we can receive Your word, Lord. And I pray that we would do so. Would You help us to receive Your word this evening, Lord? We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

PASTOR JD: Amen and amen! Good evening! How you guys doing tonight? Good? Blessed? All right. Well, if you haven't already come up to get your elements for communion, you might want to do that at this time. And also, for those of you joining us online, we're so glad that you are. And you may, if you plan on partaking with us, want to get the elements ready at this time. At the conclusion of the Bible study tonight, we'll partake together. Actually, it's going to be very interesting because only God could do this. It's just going to be so interesting as we get to the end. It's going to just tie in beautifully to the Communion celebration, which I'm very much looking forward to, so glad you're here tonight. Trust that you'll be blessed that you've come.

We're making our way through the Bible book-by-book, chapter-by-chapter. We are currently in Ezekiel. I'm only going to take one chapter tonight, Chapter 8. We completed 6 and 7 last week, and I'm going to approach it a little bit differently. And I'm hoping that you'll understand why shortly.

So God is showing now, Ezekiel four visions. These visions encompass Chapters 8 through Chapter 11. And these visions are about the unspeakable abominations that were committed at the temple in Jerusalem. So what we're going to see, basically, is in these visions, an explanation of the origins of the counterfeit pagan religions that are alive and well today. I'm hoping that maybe a lot of dots are going to get connected tonight. And I'll try to do my best, with the help of the Holy Spirit, as we go through this. We are going to go verse-by-verse through the chapter, but there's a couple of things I want to point out that I think are going to be very important as we go through the chapter.

But at the conclusion of the chapter, I do want to kind of turn a corner. And this is why I want to talk about how it is and why it is that the counterfeit is that which authenticates the genuine, right? And this is why it is, by the way, that you will never see a counterfeit \$70 bill. Are we good so far? We're off to a good start, right? So why will you never see a counterfeit \$70 bill? Because there's no such thing as a genuine \$70 bill. However, you will find many counterfeits of a \$100 bill because that's the genuine article. And this is also why, if I could take it a step further, this is why it is, very interesting, think about this. You will never hear about a false Muhammad or false Buddhas. You only hear about false Christs. Why? Because Christ is God, the Son of God and God the Son. He's the genuine, and as such, the counterfeits authenticate the genuine.

So that's what we're going to see tonight in a rather dramatic way. And specifically, as we do, we're going to sort of reach this crescendo at the end of the chapter. And in so doing, we're going to see the counterfeit pagan religions specific to Christmas and Easter. Now, I did touch on this last week, and I thought, you know, no, I don't want to do it, and then this

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last week, the Lord said, No, you're going to do it. I said, Okay, okay, Lord, I'll do it. Yeah, but it's communion Thursday. These are the kind of conversations, I should say, I have with the Lord, not He has with me. He has the final word, but it's kind of like, You know, it's communion, you know, and I don't want to rush through it. No, you'll see; you want to do it tonight, and you are going to do it tonight. So okay, we're going to do it tonight. And besides, we're past Resurrection Sunday, and it's quite a while until, you know, Christmas. So Merry Christmas in May.

All right, how about we pray? If you would, please join with me before we jump in. Father in heaven, thank You so much. Lord, we cannot even begin to thank You enough for Your word and for this chapter that we have before us tonight here in Your word. There's a reason we have a chapter like this in our Bibles, and we're going to see that. So Lord, we would just ask that You as only You can and are always so faithful to, would You just help us to focus and help us to give You our undivided attention so our minds don't wander as so often they're prone to do?

We don't want the enemy, who certainly doesn't want us to hear what You have for us tonight, to, in any way, get our minds distracted on something, or just the stress of our very busy lives. So Lord, we just want to, this is our time with You in Your word, with each other in fellowship and worship, and we're very protective of it, Lord, and we know even more so You're protective of it. So will You grant us the grace, Lord, during this time that we have together, in Your word? We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

All right, let's jump in verse 1. **“And it came to pass [Pardon me] in the sixth year, in the sixth month, on the fifth day of the month”**... This is another one of those times stamps that gives us an indication of how much time has gone by. There's been several months now between Chapter 7 and Chapter 8. And he says, **“as I sat in my house.”** So apparently Ezekiel had a house there in Tel Abib by the River Chebar in Babylon, and God gave him a house, and apparently, we're told, he was sitting in his house **“with the elders of Judah sitting before me, that the hand of the Lord God fell upon me there. Then [Verse 2] I looked, and there was a likeness, like the appearance of fire, from the appearance of His waist and downward, fire; and from His waist and upward, like the appearance of brightness, like the color of amber.”** Notice the repeated use of the word like. This is as close as you're going to get to be able to describe the glory, the majesty of this vision now that God is giving him.

Verse 3, **“He stretched out the form of a hand, and took me (Chuckling) [I'm sorry for chuckling] by a lock of my hair.”** See, He couldn't do that with me. But He's taking him by his hair and lifting him up. And he says, **“The Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven, and brought me in visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the north gate of the inner court, where the seat of the image of jealousy was, which provokes to jealousy.”** Now this touches on, I don't want to get too far into this, but there is a distinction, and it's important to delineate between God being a jealous God, He's not jealous of us, He's jealous for us, and you need to make that distinction and delineate between the two. So he's seeing now in this vision; he's basically being transported in the spiritual realm to Jerusalem from Babylon

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as he receives this vision, and the first thing he sees are these images. You'll forgive me, but these were pornographic images that were there in the inner court at the door of the north gate.

“And [Verse 4] behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, like the vision that I saw in the plain.” He's referencing what's recorded in Chapter 1. Now, I want to point something out here, and I think it's going to be very important, and this might be a word for someone, more than one, here tonight or watching online. So just hear me out and bear with me for a moment. Now Ezekiel is probably at this point somewhere in his mid-twenties. And we talked about this in Chapter 1 that at age 20, he was already being prepared for priestly service in the temple in Jerusalem. And then all of a sudden, he's taken captive to Babylon, and everything changes. And at age 30, he would have began his priestly service in the temple.

So let's just say for purposes of discussion that he's probably around 25, a very young man at this point. But he was being prepared for that which was prepared for him in the priestly service in the temple. Why is that important? Because as we talked about in Chapter 1, God transplanted him and took him out of Jerusalem, captive into Babylon, and now here we are in Chapter 8, and God is taking him back to Jerusalem in the realm of the Spirit for a reason. And we're about to see that. Now here's Ezekiel seeing the very temple that he would have served the priestly service and duties in. And he's seeing all of these abominable images, images there that are an abomination in the eyes of the Lord, provoking Him to jealousy. Now you got to know that Ezekiel is like, whoa, I was going to serve as a priest in the temple, and look what's in the temple now.

Well, verse 5, **“Then He said to me, “Son of man, lift your eyes now toward the north.’ So I lifted my eyes toward the north, and there, north of the altar gate, was this image of jealousy in the entrance. Furthermore [Verse 6] He said to me, “Son of man, do you see what they are doing, the great abominations that the house of Israel commits here, to make Me go far away from My sanctuary? Now turn again, you will see greater abominations”** All right, here's where I'm going with this. Do you think that Ezekiel is thinking and thanking God for removing him from Jerusalem, knowing that this is what would happen in Jerusalem? What's your point, Pastor? Here's my point. Oftentimes, God inexplicably relocates us. And here we are kicking, fighting, biting, scratching, questioning, wondering: Why God? I was all prepared for, excited to, and wanting this priestly service that I was being prepared for.

And You uproot me to bloom where I'm planted in, of all places, Babylon, where I've been taken captive. What's up with that? God, I think you've pulled the wrong file. Oh, no, I didn't, Ezekiel. You'll see. You'll see when we get the Chapter 8, Ezekiel. Of course, that was before Chapter 8. But we have the benefit, of course, of knowing, you know, what's going to happen before Ezekiel knows what's going to happen. But this is one of those things where, oh, let me see if I can say it like this, where you don't know at the time why God is doing what God is doing. We don't know the ways of God, the whys of God, and we question God, there's, you know, even doubt. But then there comes that time, and this is that time for

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Ezekiel, where he's like, oh, oh, now I see, Lord. Oh, thank You, Lord. Have you ever thanked God for a prayer that He didn't answer? You know what I'm talking about? Because, and here's God, thank God, we prayed this prayer this certain way, and it's like God going, You don't want Me to answer that prayer. If you only knew what I knew, you wouldn't even pray that prayer. I know the end from the beginning. And Ezekiel, you have to trust Me. You don't want to remain in Jerusalem. And I'm going to show you why in Chapter 8. I'm going to take you back there in the Spirit, in the realm of the Spirit, and I'm going to show you what's happening there in the temple that you would have served in. Oh, Ezekiel's like, Okay, I'm good. I'll stay right where I'm at right here in Tel Abib. [Accent included] [That's not how they talked]

Verse 7, so it gets worse, spoiler alert. **“So [Verse 7,] So He brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, there was a hole in the wall. Then He said to me, “Son of man, dig into the wall”; and when I dug into the wall, there was a door. And He said to me, [Verse 9] “Go in, and see the wicked abominations which they are doing there.” So I went in [Verse 10] and saw, and there every sort of creeping thing, abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel portrayed all around on the walls.”** These were images that were on the walls there in the temple. And this was abominable.

And they were so graphic, these images, so pornographic, these images and these idols. **“And [Verse 11] there stood before them seventy men of the elders of the house of Israel, and in their midst stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan. Each man had a censer in his hand, and a thick cloud of incense went up. Then He said to me, “Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the room of his idols? For they say, ‘The Lord does not see us, the Lord has forsaken the land.’” And He said to me [Verse 13] “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.** [Hang on to that; we're going to come back to that] **Then He said to me [Verse 15] “Have you seen this, O son of man? Turn again, you will see greater abominations than these.”** [Are you kidding me?] It gets worse than this? Yeah.

Again, turn again. I'm going to show you even greater abominations than these. **“So [Verse 16] He brought me into the inner court of the Lord’s house, and there, at the door of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men [Listen] with their backs toward the temple of the Lord and their faces toward the east, and they were worshiping the sun toward the east.”** Man if I'm Ezekiel, I'm like, thank You, God so much for this one-way ticket and trip to Babylon. Thank You so much. This is to my dismay. You got to know this was heartbreaking for Ezekiel. **“And He said to me, [Verse 17] “Have you seen this, O son of man? Is it a trivial thing to the house of Judah to commit the abominations which they commit here? For they have filled the land with violence; then they have returned to provoke Me to anger. Indeed they put the branch to their nose.”**

That's an idiom that is just akin to what we would say in our day of just in your face. **“Therefore, [Verse 18] I also will act in fury. My eye will not spare nor will I have pity; and**

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though they cry in My ears with a loud voice, I will not hear them.” That's the end of the chapter; it's not the end of the Bible study, by any means, but that's how it ends. Just like dat.

Now, this is why I wanted to do what the Lord would have me to do tonight. And for the remainder of our time, I want to expound on the importance of this chapter before we partake of communion. And again, I'm hoping that with the help of the Holy Spirit, there's going to be a whole lot of dots connected and a whole lot of things are going to make sense.

So what follows is the back story, which will be germane to our understanding of why it is that we even have a chapter like this in our Bibles. Because if I think we're honest with ourselves, at first read we're like, okay, really? And again, if we're honest with ourselves, we're all prone, I'm just as prone as the next guy to do it, you just kind of read through Chapter 8 and you get to Chapter 9, and you don't really see any necessarily any application personally.

And nothing could be further from the truth. If there's any takeaway from this chapter, it's that God will protect us and redirect us knowing, foreknowing, had He not done that, what would happen to us. And again, I just want to reiterate this, and I'm thinking maybe it's for someone or more than one. God may have done this in your life, and it is baffling. It's inexplicable. It doesn't make any sense. But that's why they call it faith, the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not yet seen. You trust the Lord. He knows what He's doing. You don't know what He's doing. He knows what He's doing. He's protecting you from something. He's protecting you from something that would ultimately and potentially destroy you, devastate you, hurt you beyond belief. So you trust the Lord. He knows what, and He loves you so much.

And He might deem it necessary to relocate you from a place where your heart is. And it makes absolutely no sense at all. You trust what the Lord's doing. He might have a Chapter 8 for you in your life. You just haven't got to 8 yet. You're still stuck in Chapter 1. What? Lord, what are You doing? Oh, you wait. You just wait. You have no idea. I'm going to blow your mind. You watch Me now, and just be patient because Chapter 8's a coming. And I'm going to open your eyes, and I'm going to let you see why I did this the way I did it and when I did it. And you're going to thank Me for it. Right now you don't understand it, but you're going to thank Me for it.

Now let's get to the matter at hand. It begins in the Book of Genesis after the flood with Noah's grandson. His name? Nimrod. This is in Genesis Chapter 10:6-10 Nimrod: He's the guy that built the Tower of Babel. And this was in the Plains of Shinar and would come to be known as Babylon, which is in modern-day Iraq, about 50 miles from the capital city of Baghdad. This word *babel* is where we get, because that's where the languages were confused. That's where we get our modern-day word that we often use, sometimes in the context of *what are you babbling about?* That's where it comes from. So this was the Tower of Babel there in Babylon. Nimrod: Very evil, rebelled greatly against God, and it's evidenced by the historic records, and of course, the biblical record which documents Nimrod as not

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only this political leader, but he was also the lead priest in a form of satanic pagan worship. So according to the legend, Nimrod dies, and his wife, Queen Semiramis, gives birth to an illegitimate son. And she names this son Tammuz.

This is the only time in all of Scripture where the name Tammuz is mentioned right here in Ezekiel 8. Now she gives birth to this son [Son] names him Tammuz, and claims that he is Nimrod, reborn and immaculately conceived. You see where this is going? So both child and mother were worshiped, and Semiramis would come to be known as the moon goddess of fertility. So I have pictured here an image that is probably familiar, doubtless it's familiar of the mother and son. They were worshiped, the mother and son, for Tammuz' immaculate conception and subsequent resurrection. So as a hunter, Tammuz was killed by a wild boar then went into the underworld.

But he rose again [Rose again] like spring vegetation from the ground on the third day. Oh come on! How original; get your own material. A festival for the worship of Tammuz was initiated to celebrate his miraculous conception and subsequent resurrection. And preceding this Tammuz festival, the pagans celebrated a fast of 40 days. Now, I probably , this is as good of a time as any to say this. So this is going to jam some gears, crash hard drives, whatever metaphor you want to use, depending on your age, but this is where that comes from, the 40 days of fasting. It's not biblical.

It was a time of lamenting and weeping. And this is one of many parallels to what we know today as Lent. It is absolutely not biblical. This was along with the idolatrous, abominable worship of mother and child. And sadly, it has been adopted and practiced by the false religion of Roman Catholicism, and yes, I said that. Catholicism is a false religion. Wow, Pastor, that's pretty strong. Well, it needs to be because you see, Roman Catholicism has Mary the mother of Jesus as sinless and Co-Redemptrix. Do you know what that means? That's why they pray to her, by the way. She can forgive sins. Where's that in my , can you show me where that is? You won't find it because it's not there.

You know what's very interesting? I'll never forget this. Early on as a young believer, I heard this amazing teaching concerning this. Did you know that the very last words recorded of Mary in the pages of Holy writ were at this wedding, ironically enough, where Jesus performed His first miracle, turning the water into wine, and Mary says , the last words recorded of Mary speaking in Scripture, This is my son. Do what He says. Where's that verse in the Catholic Bible? Mary , and this is the other thing. Oh, I shouldn't have opened up this can. I just did. It's that proverbial: You can't put the toothpaste back in the tube, so here we go; I got toothpaste all over the place. You don't confess your sins to a man. Mary is , was a sinner in need of a Savior.

Mary and Joseph had children after Jesus, by the way. Catholics deny that, and they twist Scriptures into pretzels to try to get around that. But Roman Catholicism , I'm going to take it a step further, and I just say this in love, and the Lord knows my heart. Catholicism is an abomination, and it's satanic, and it's pagan. Have you seen what the Pope has on his head? If you want to , I don't recommend it for the faint of heart , it will absolutely , well, like in

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Ezekiel, you will be dismayed. You will be dismayed. You know, interesting: The pope is the Vicar of Christ. (Chuckling) Infallible, antichrist. I didn't say he's the Antichrist, though some believe he could potentially be the false prophet. I'm not going to stick around to find out. [Laughter] But antichrist does not just mean against Christ. It could be argued that it actually more so means in the place of Christ. Who's that? The Pope is in the place of Christ, antichrist. And I know what you're thinking because I can read your minds. In fact, right now, something's coming in. Just give me a second here. Oh, that's not very nice. I know what you're thinking.

Can you be a Catholic and be born-again? Absolutely. Absolutely. In fact, there are born-again Christians that remain in the Catholic Church to evangelize. So yes, that's the answer to that question. Now, can you call Catholicism Christianity? Absolutely not. It is not Christianity. The Jesus of Catholicism is not the Jesus of the Bible. They have denigrated Jesus and venerated Mary. And this mother-son image that you're looking at right here, what's the first association that you have? Isn't that Mother Mary and Baby Jesus? It is not. This is a pagan image of the mother-son worship of Semiramis and Tammuz. Listen; again, if you're interested, you can do your own research. And what you'll find is just going to be mind boggling.

But these pagan religions have the mother-son figure. And by the way, one last thing on this, and we'll try to move on. You know that Catholicism image of Jesus with the Sacred Heart? And it's this ,you'll forgive me , creepy, I mean, creepy , you know, figure of a long-haired , I'm sorry, but Jesus does not look like that. By the way, Jesus , I'm sorry , but He probably looked more like me. You could have probably gone the rest of your life without that image. But he was , I know this is shocking , He was a Jew. He was from the Middle East. And, you know, this blue eyed, you know, Americanized, Catholicized Jesus, He did not look like that. And I'm sorry, but these wimpy images of Jesus? He was a man.

He was the God-man. When He was brought before Pilate after He was whipped beyond recognition , you could not recognize Him as even being human. And what does Pilate say? Behold the man. I've never seen anything like this before. I've never seen a man like this before. These wimpy Jesuses? (Frustrated sigh) I'm going to get my blood pressure up on this one. Okay, Let me try to bring it back in here. This is a pagan image and pagan worship. And this worship would give way to the worship of the father, Nimrod; mother, Semiramis; and son, Tammuz, almost an unholy trinity, if you will. Enter the aforementioned Tower of Babel, which is believed to have actually been a pyramid known as a Ziggurat. And these Ziggurat structures were pyramids that were really towers or even temples to worship the sun, moon, and stars, which we know today as the occultic practice of astrology.

I hope you know that. And please, again, delineate between astronomy and astrology. God is the God of the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that in them is, the creator of the universe, of these stars. He created those stars. He flung them into space, and He named them. And get this, He remembers every single name. I wish I could remember just a few names. And so many are these stars that they are as numerous as the sand on the sea shores. Just think about the sand on Kailua Beach alone, of the entire world. And this has

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actually been researched, not Christian research, secular research. They've found that these stars in the sky, in the universe are as numerous as the sands on the seashore. I just wish they would read the Bible. They can save a lot of money on research. It's right there; you could have just , God said it, and that settled it. Why do you got to do research on it? So these were actually pyramids. These were temples to worship. Pictured here is the most well known of these pyramids which are in Giza, Egypt.

I actually have been to and in these pyramids. I have an aunt that lives in Giza. We stayed with her, my wife and I, when we visited. It was many years ago now. And I can testify that these are not tombs as they are presented to be. They are temples of worship, pagan worship. And today you can find remnants of these pyramids throughout the world. This is one pictured here actually in Babylon, modern-day Iraq. It's called the Ziggurat of Ur, Ur of the Chaldeans. Chaldean is the Babylonian language and culture and name. the Chaldees, Chaldeans. And these Ziggurats or temples were for the purpose of worshiping their gods and goddesses, chief of whom was Mother Semiramis. And Mother Semiramis, was actually known by other names like Mother Nature, Mother Earth.

She was also known as Mother Goddess. How about this one? Queen of Heaven. Hmm. That sounds familiar. Wife of Baal. You know who Baal is. Another name? Wait for it. Ashtaroth, the sex goddess, a.k.a. Ishtar, a.k.a. Easter. You okay? All right. It gets worse. I'm just telling you now, full disclosure. She was the sex goddess, goddess of fertility, goddess of spring, goddess of love. And this worship in ancient cultures from around the world was , again, you'll forgive me, but very sexually perverse in nature. We touched on this last week. The high places , they would build these , I'm not going to go there. Just very sexually perverse in every way, an abomination, an abominable way. So the worship was the same, but the names were not the same.

Biblical Phoenician was Tammuz and Ashtaroth. Greek mythology was Eros and Aphrodite. Eros should sound familiar because that's the Greek word Eros where we get our English word for erotic. It's a sexual, erotic. And Aphrodite is a sex goddess. Egyptology , man, if you only knew the Egyptology and the Eye of Horus and Iris that is pronounced in the United States of America, by the way. Again, just do your research. Don't ever take my word for it. You be Bereans and you search the Scriptures yourself and see if what I'm telling and teaching you tonight is true. So Horace and Iris in Egypt. Roman gods: might as well ruin Valentine's Day, too.

We just had that, right? So we're good for another, whatever, year. Cupid and Venus. These were pagan gods and goddesses. Now, this is how the Easter Bunny came about. Bear with me. Bunnies are fertile and sexual, right? The bunny is well known as a sexual symbol of fertility, and they have represented fertility in many cultures because they breed quickly. And this is why we'll never have a rabbit in my home. This is , anyway... Now in traditional Christian art, the bunny represents lust. And this is why the Playboy bunny is symbolic of this sexual worship. That's not , that's the root origin of it. What about the Easter egg? Oh, this is... (Stumbling over words) Anyway... It was a sacred symbol among the ancient Babylonians. So they believed an old fable about an egg of wondrous size, which was

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supposed to have fallen from heaven into the Euphrates River. You know in Iraq, then Babylon, you had the Tigris and Euphrates? Well, this was what they believed. And from this egg, the goddess Astarte, again, a.k.a Ishtar, a.k.a. Semiramis, etcetera, was hatched and came to symbolize the goddess of Easter. So you think about that the next time you color an egg. The idea of a mystic egg spread from Babylon to many parts of the world. It was actually in northern Europe, China, and Japan that they colored the eggs for their sacred festivals. That's where that came from. So the egg was also a symbol of fertility, as Semiramis was the goddess of fertility. That's just a brief history. It's more involved than that. But at the very least, it is a historic account of the origins of the pagan celebration of what's become Easter.

And this is why it is, by the way, that your pastor will never refer to it as Easter. This is why I always , and I'll expound on this in a moment , but this is why I will never use that word. It is Resurrection Sunday. It is Resurrection Sunday. Now let's fast-forward to the year 313 A.D., where we have a compromising Constantine for which the capital city Constantinople in modern-day Turkey was named. Well, you understand the first four centuries it was illegal to be a Christian until Constantine came on the scene, and he united the pagan counterfeit religion with Christian worship. And so what happened was then they would have the December 25th pagan worship called Saturnalia united with the December 25th celebration of Christmas.

That's how Christmas came about. I hope you know that Jesus was not born on December 25th. You know that, right? Okay. If I ruined your Christmas, it's not my fault. Ezekiel: It's his fault. On December 25th, Christians celebrate Christ's birth, and pagans would celebrate Tammuz' resurrection. Now, watch this. It's backwards. Evil: E-V-I-L is live: L-I-V-E backwards; it's reversed. Then on Ishtar [Easter] Christians celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ as the pagans would celebrate the birth, immaculate conception of Tammuz. It's reversed And this thanks to Constantine. And by the way, let me parenthetically say to those who are SDA Constantine did not change the day of worship from the Jewish Sabbath to Sunday, as they claim. That was actually in the Book of Acts. They gathered on the first day of the week, and that's when they worshiped. And that was the Resurrection Day.

I probably shouldn't open that can either, but oh, well. So you see how this is all , now watch this. This is wow! This is just wow! So in this pagan celebration and worship of Tammuz on December 25th, they would place a Yule log. You know what yule is? It's the Chaldean word for boy child. Yule. And they would put it on the fire and burn it. And then once burned, a tree would replace the Yule log, and they would take that tree, they would deck it with silver and gold. This kind of sound like a Christmas song right now? It's probably because it is. But this tree was to celebrate the resurrection, coming up out of the earth, the resurrection of Tammuz.

Can I draw your attention to Jeremiah Chapter 10:3-4? We, of course, completed the book of Jeremiah, but back in Chapter 10, and we did talk just briefly about it, but in verses 3-4, listen to what Jeremiah writes **“For the customs of the peoples are futile. For one cuts a tree from the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the ax. They decorate it with silver and gold. They fasten it with nails and hammers so that it will not topple.”**

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That's the tree that Jeremiah is referring to, and that's the tree that we come to know as the Christmas tree. One last thing, and it has to do with verse 16 where Ezekiel is shown the sun worship with the backs toward the temple. Now I want you to kind of picture this. Use your God-given imagination. I want you to picture this now because it's eerily, eerily similar to what the Muslims do on the very Temple Mount today. They are bowed down with their backs, their backsides to the Dome of the Rock. I'm not going to get into the symbolism of that, but it is just abominable. And that's what they were doing? When God shows Ezekiel this vision of what they were doing, and he sees these men, their backs to the temple, and they're bowed down. What are they doing? Oh, they're facing the east. What are they doing that for? Oh, they're worshipping the sunrise that rises in the east. You know where that led to? Sunrise services.

I'm sorry. I'll tell you; we've , I'm saying I'm sorry a lot tonight because I really am sorry. I'm very sorry. But, you know, let me , just indulge me for just a moment, please. So 20 years now, we , well, well-nigh 20 years, I started a Bible study in 2004. Our first official service was 2005. And here we are, 2023. And as God is my witness, every year I have to deal with this. Pastor, are we going to have a sunrise service? Nope. Why not? The other churches are. That's fine. I'm sorry; this is going to sound mean. Just go there then. But yeah, we're not having one. And this is why. Wait a minute, Pastor, are you saying that these other , your fellow pastors are worshipping the sun? Not at all. Not at all. I mean, if they want to have sunrise services and get up that early, that's fine. You're all bus-up by noon, you know, on Resurrection Sunday.

But this is why we've never had nor will we ever have a sunrise service; it originated from this worshipping of the sun. And of course, again, let me just qualify it. The churches that do this are not worshipping the sun, S-U-N; they're worshipping the son, S-O-N, no problem. Now, this is going to bring up the question of, okay, well, then why do you still celebrate Christmas on December 25th and the Resurrection on , during Passover? I'm glad you asked. You asked, right? Okay. Because I'm going to answer. Let's start with Christmas specifically as it relates to the tree. The tree represents the cross, Cursed is every man who hangs on a tree. The lights represent Jesus as the light of the world. The star on the top? Well, that represents the star that the Magi, the wise men were led by from the East. But this one is perhaps, more importantly, the best representation because the gifts under the tree represent the gift of eternal life that Jesus purchased when He was crucified on that tree.

That's what the tree represents. So let's talk about Resurrection Sunday. Like with Christmas, and think this through with me, okay? They are two days out of the year that the entire world remembers the Savior of the world, Jesus the Christ. So I'm going to answer the question with a question. Here's the question. Why wouldn't we want to participate and celebrate a day that is in remembrance of what Jesus did for us in that He died for us? Why would we not want to do that? Oh, it's pagan! I know, but two days out of the year and especially Christmas , I get a kick out of this. I love it. God's got such a great sense of humor. You know, they started, and it gained traction, and now it's almost even antiquated: Xmas. (Grrr) Xmas. Well, not so fast. X in Greek is Christos. (Chuckling) Nice try.

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You can't get away. It's still Christ. You can put the X there if you want. If you're Greek it's no problem. It means Christos. But it's the one day of the year on December 25th where there's some remembrance of the Savior of the world. And Resurrection Sunday: It is that one day of the year where there is a remembrance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. And isn't it interesting that this is what the counterfeit would be, which again, let's come full circle, authenticates the genuine? Wow, this is pretty elaborate. And you're going to go to all this trouble to come up with an immaculate conception of a boy that dies and raises from the dead, the son three days later? And why don't you come up with something like that for Buddha or Muhammad or I'm struggling to think of , you can fill in some more blanks.

Aren't there some other false gods out there? Well, Allah's a false God; Muhammad, the false prophet; and Islam, a false religion. But I'm just curious, why don't you have a counterfeit for that? Why are all the counterfeits this? Because it's the genuine, it's the genuine. And by the way, back to , and I'll try to finish up, and we'll partake together of communion. And this is where it just beautifully, as only the Lord can, just, ah, ties into the Communion celebration. What is the Communion celebration? What did Jesus say? As often you do this, do this in remembrance of Me. Oh, and by the way, what is the Communion celebration? The Passover. What's the Passover? Well, it was a prophecy from the Exodus in Egypt with the 10th plague , if the blood of the lamb was on the doorpost of the house in the shape of a cross, the angel of death would pass over it, and you would be saved by the blood of the lamb. That's the cup that we're going to partake of. I want you to do this to remember.

Well, I'm going to celebrate Christmas in remembrance of the birth of the Savior of the world. And I'm going to celebrate the Resurrection because it's a remembrance of the resurrection of the Savior of the world. And Jesus said, Do this in remembrance of Me. It's a celebration, a commemoration. And that's what we're going to do tonight. We're going to do this in remembrance of Jesus Christ dying on the cross, being buried, and rising again on the third day. How about that? Yeah. So you can you can have Christmas after the rapture, but you can't have it until , same thing with Resurrection Sunday.

You can try all you want, but we're going to celebrate it in remembrance of what Jesus did. Luke's Gospel Chapter 22, aww... Beginning in verse 14, Luke, by the Holy Spirit, writes, **“When the hour had come, He sat down and the 12 apostles with Him. Then He said to them, 'With fervent desire, I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God.' Then He took the cup and gave thanks and said, 'Take this and divide it among yourselves, for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of God comes.' And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is My body which is given for you. [And here it is] Do this in remembrance of Me.”**

So for those of you that are here, if you'll take and peel back the packaging on the top and just hold on to the bread for just a moment. You know, the symbolism, a lot of symbols in our celebrations, what they represent, and such is the case with the communion elements. This that we hold in our hands is a symbol of the body of Jesus Christ that was broken, not

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His bones , that would disqualify Jesus as the fulfillment of the Passover prophecy. The lamb could not be , have any of its bones broken, had to be without blemish, without spot, without wrinkle. But His skin was broken in seven places, by the way, for His blood to be shed. Seven: the number of completion. So His body was broken and His blood was shed. And this is what this is a symbol of. And it is a symbol to remind us, remind us, a remembrance that Jesus died for us. He purchased and paid in full for us. And He offers us this gift that He paid for, the gift of eternal life. We didn't pay for it. He did. What did it cost Him? Everything. And He gives us this gift for the receiving. And it's the gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ. That's the gift. And that's what this is a symbol of. Would you partake with me? Thank You, Lord. Lord, thank You. It just, it's going to have to suffice this side of glory because, again, it's impossible to thank You. But thank You, Lord, for Your body that was broken for us instead of us to pay the price as the sacrifice once-and-for-all, for all of our sins, as we're going to see Sunday morning in 1 John, so powerful. And there's power in the blood that we're going to partake of symbolically next. So Lord, thank You so much for Your body broken for us and Your blood shed for us. Luke goes on to write, Likewise, He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the New Covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.

So if you'll take and peel back the rest of the packaging and again, just hold on to it for a moment. So the Scripture makes it very clear that there is no remission of sin without the shedding of blood. When Jesus says that this cup , again, just a symbol , I am sorry, just can I just do one more Catholic thing? I'm sorry. This is your lot in life. They teach what's known as transubstantiation. That's a big word; makes me sound pretty intelligent, doesn't it? What's that? Well, it's mystical in that when they, Catholics, partake of communion, they believe that the bread literally translates into the literal body of Christ, and the cup that they drink from is literally transformed into the blood of Christ. Okay? And interesting, and maybe this is apropos, you can be refused communion in the Catholic Church, right?

You have to be deemed worthy. And so because this is a supernatural, mystical, unbiblical, you know, thing that they do, infant baptism and child's first communion, it means nothing. It means nothing. This means everything. This is a symbol only of the blood of Jesus Christ, as was the bread that we just partook of a symbol only of the body of Jesus Christ broken for us. Now, why do I point that out? Because think about it. You're going to tell people you can't partake of communion. You know what you just told me? I can't do something that reminds me of Jesus. And isn't that just what Catholics do? They keep you from Jesus. You know in the , I forget what era it was , The Dark Ages , the Catholics would chain the Latin Bible to the pulpit. It was forbidden for people to read it. Did you know that?

They keep you out of the word , no, you have to have the priest, the Father..., (Chanting) Come on. No, just give me Jesus. Just give me Jesus. I don't know what that's about , all your, it's demonic, man. Demonic. I don't know why I went off on that, but oh, well. I didn't want to spoil the... But thank You, Jesus, for Your blood shed in my stead. Cleanses me from all of my sin. Purifies me from all of my unrighteousness, the cup of the New Covenant in His blood. Would you partake with me? Oh, thank You, Jesus, so much. Why don't you go ahead and stand, and when you do, Kaponono, if you'll come on up. Lord Jesus, Jesus, Jesus its' just

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You, Jesus. Who's like unto You, O Lord? There is none like You. Lord, thank You for the simplicity. Thank You, Jesus, that we have unfettered access to You. We don't have to go through anything or anyone to get to You. Thank You that that veil has been torn and that we have access to Your throne, to the Holy of Holies. Lord, thank You for this Communion celebration. Lord, what we just did tonight, we did in remembrance of You. And I pray as we leave this place and go our separate ways tonight, that it would just be a powerful presence of Your Holy Spirit, even that still, small voice of the Holy Spirit, just the loving, tender kindness and gentleness from You, Lord, as You speak into our hearts how much You love us, how much You've forgiven us. And like we just read in Luke, how much You long for that day when what we just did here tonight will find its ultimate fulfillment in Your kingdom.

We can't wait either, Lord! It's just too high for our understanding to even imagine, comprehend what we did here tonight we're going to do with You, partake with You. Oh, what a glorious day that will be! So Lord, thank You for this, at least for now, to recalibrate us and point us back in the right direction as we just come back to You, Jesus. Thank You, Jesus. We love You so much, Jesus! We give You all the glory, Jesus! You are worthy, all the glory due Your Holy Name Jesus! Thank You, Jesus! In Jesus' name. Amen.