



# **The Sinaitic Light**

## **Paganism and Christendom**

### **Study Article No. III**

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This article uses the English terms for Elohim (God), Yah (Father) Yahoshua (Christ).

## **Objective and Learning Outcome**

### **Objective:**

The objective of this article is to understand paganism and how its worldly elements were introduced into biblical Christianity. Thereby, changing Christianity's divine construct from apostolic to paganistic.

### **Learning Outcome:**

Upon completion of this study, the reader will:

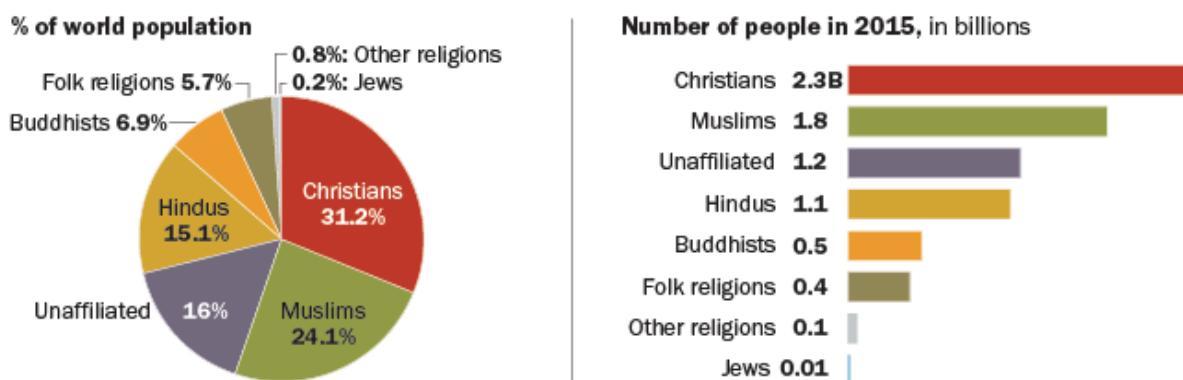
1. Understand why modern Christianity is not biblical Christianity;
2. Understand why the church fathers (patristics) and their progeny, the evangelicals incorporated pagan elements and ideals into biblical Christianity;
3. Understand why many Christians are no longer attending church or remaining a Christian;
4. Understand the true origin of modern Christianity's holidays and;
5. Understand what true Christianity and worship look like from a biblical perspective.

## Introduction

Christianity is the world's largest religion, with about 2.3 billion adherents. Followed by the second-largest religion, Islam, which numbers about 1.8 billion Muslims.

Christianity makes up "nearly a third (31%) of Earth's 7.3 billion people, according to a new Pew Research Center demographic analysis" (Hackett 2017). By 2050 the world population is expected to rise to about 9.3 billion people, and Christianity is projected to have as many as 2.9 billion adherents by this period, and Islam, 2.7 billion adherents, demonstrating that it is the fastest growing religion in the earth (Hackett 2015, 7).<sup>12</sup>

### Christians are the largest religious group in 2015



Source: Pew Research Center demographic projections. See Methodology for details.  
"The Changing Global Religious Landscape"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Why is Islam growing so fast? One reason that Christians are leaving Christendom to seek alternative spiritual enlightenment. Data suggests that approximately 66 million Christians will leave Christianity to embrace other theologies, which the Pew Research Center calls, "religious switching" (Hackett 2015, 41) But why?<sup>3</sup>

One reason for the *attrition* is because modern Christianity is not the same form of Christianity that existed in the first century. It is not the same form of Christianity that the apostles and disciples practiced and taught. Through independent studies and research, many astute Christians have come to realize that modern or neo-Christianity is *averse* to the cultural tenets and beliefs of the Jewish faith that were observed by Christ and the apostles. Consequently, they have left Christian orthodoxy, or Christian Evangelism (Protestantism) to enter Restoration denominations (Jehovah's Witness, Seventh Day Baptist, Seventh Day Adventists, etc.), which have sought to reclaim the Christianity of the first century with no progress. These alternative Christian sects still retain many pagan and unbiblical practices that

1. Approximately how many Christians are there in the world?
2. What is the fastest growing religion in the earth?
3. What is religious switching?

were observed by the second and fourth-century church.<sup>456</sup> Dr. Abram Herbert Lewis (1832-1908), Late Professor of Church History at the Theological Department at Alfred University writes in his book titled, *Paganism Surviving in Christianity*,

A preliminary survey is the more necessary lest the general reader fails to grant the facts of history a competent hearing and a just consideration. Unconsciously men think of the earliest Christianity as being like that which they profess. They measure the early centuries by their own. Their Church, its doctrines, forms, creeds, and customs, stands as the representative of all Christianity. It seems like a ‘rude awakening’ to ask men to believe that there is a ‘pagan residuum’ in their faith, or in the customs of their fathers. The average Christian must pass through a broadening process, before he can justly consider such a question. Unhappily, there are too many who are unwilling to undergo such an enlargement of their religious and historical horizon as will make them competent to consider those facts which every earnest student of history must face. But the Christian who believes in the immortality of truth, and in the certainty of its triumph, will welcome all facts, even though they may modify the creed he has hitherto accepted (Lewis 1892, 1-2).<sup>7</sup>

Lewis states that a Christian must investigate or at least be open to entertaining the genesis of their Christian faith to identify its foundational components. Once the layers have been pulled back, one will discover that the functional components of modern Christendom are nothing more than pagan practices adopted by the church with man-made traditions, philosophies, and ideologies that have nothing to do with Christ or the apostles ratified by canons and creeds. These practices, therefore, introduce a different Christianity and Christ, different from what was presented in the first-century gospel. This article will ratify this statement forthwith.

First, let's understand what paganism means. The term pagan is of Latin origin deriving from the Latin word *pagus*, meaning “villager” or “country dweller.” Rome had always been a polytheistic community worshiping a pantheon of gods in various cults. In the second through the fourth centuries, as Rome moved towards converting their respective communities to Christianity under the auspices of the patristics and the Nicene church, they found resistance amongst the villagers in rural areas who wanted to continue to practice the religion that had been handed down to them for thousands of years. They did not want to have anything to do with Christ or this teaching called Christianity. Later, the word *pagan* took on a different distinction and range of meaning. It became a term synonymous with people who still held to the old ways of *polytheistic worship in a cultic manner* based upon traditions passed to them generationally. The term is used today by Christians to denote anyone who practices a faith outside the confines

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4. What religion is averse to the cultural tenets and beliefs of the Jewish faith that were observed by Christ and the apostles?
  5. What does Christian restoration mean?
  6. Name two groups that have emerged to reintroduce the cultural tenets of the Jewish faith back into modern Christianity?
  7. True or False. Lewis believes that a Christian must reject data pertaining to his religion if it does not accord with his Christian creed or doctrine.

of the three main religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. It represents any faith that has a belief structure apart from the Bible, specifically the Old Testament and New Testament gospel. So, organically, to be a pagan is to practice a religion that is averse to the teachings of the Bible.<sup>89</sup>

The aforestated supposition is confirmed by Christ who says, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matt. 11:29-30, NIV). Yoke is a metaphor for teaching or doctrine; Christ made this statement in contrast to the teachings of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes, three major sects in Judaism in the first century. After so many years of false doctrines emanating from the traditions of men, Christ was sent by God to demonstrate by deed, and teaching, what true religion is and what true theology looked like. Christ quotes God from Isaiah 29:13 when he said: “Their worship is a farce, for they teach man-made ideas as commands from God” (Matt. 15:9, NLT). Man-made ideas in this sense refers to man-made *theologies* and *doctrines*. Christ stated that the only doctrine one was to practice was the doctrine proclaimed by him. This doctrine was predicated upon the Law, revealed in the first five books of the Bible and practiced in the faith of Christ’s intercession for remission of sins and his advocacy (1 John 2:1-2).<sup>1011</sup>

The apostles continued to proclaim this teaching under the direction of Christ, and everyone who adopted this teaching was called, “followers of Christ,” hence Christians (Acts 11:26) or Nazarenes, since Christ emerged from Nazareth (Acts 24:5). In the promotion of Christianity, the apostles admonished the disciples never to add any other element or teaching (doctrine) to the faith Christ revealed to them from the Father, Yah (2 Thess. 2:15). What this implies and can be verified in the New Testament; the apostles continued to observe the seventh day of the week as the Holy Sabbath and convocation for communal worship because this is what Christ did (Luke 4:16; Acts 17:2). Paul recognized that former members of the Christian sect had begun to pervert the teachings of Christ by introducing a new teaching, thus a new Christ. Paul warned disciples against following their teachings because it was not the teaching derived from the founder of the Christian faith (Gal. 1:6-9; Col. 2:8).<sup>121314</sup>

The following provides just a small sample of how Christianity shifted from its cultural roots to ultimately develop a theology that resembled many pagan theologies and doctrines by design. This is to say, as *patristical Christians* (church Fathers who modified biblical Christianity) evangelized the gospel to pagans, they adjusted the gospel to accord with pagan passions and belief, thereby, perverting the purity of the gospel. The following topics represent a

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8. What is the etymology of the word pagan?

9. True or False. In the *purist* sense of the word, paganism represents any religious or cultural practice that is foreign to the edict and mandates of the Bible, referred to as the gospel.

10. How does Christ use the term yoke?

11. What was Christ’s doctrine predicated upon?

12. What are the two names given to people who observed Christ’s teachings?

13. Where can we find the admonition of not adding anything to the gospel?

14. What biblical passage(s) demonstrates to us that people had begun to introduce a new teaching within the gospel different from what the apostles received from Christ and taught?

few reasons why so many Christians have left mainstream Christianity (Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Evangelism) to pursue other alternatives.

## **Jesus Is God**

In the second century, Gentile converts to the Christian faith began to pervert the doctrine of Christ by introducing teachings that did not emanate from Christ or the apostle. First, they began to worship Christ as God, a violation of the first and second commandments. Pliny the Younger (61-113) wrote a letter to the Emperor Trajan stating that Christians had sung “responsively a hymn to Christ as to a god” (Pliny, Letters 10.96-97). Christ is referred to as god in the Gospel of John 20:28 as a term recognizing his authority, as one who rose from the dead, and had been given all authority on earth (Matt. 28:18; Rom. 1:4). Prior to this, Christ always referred to himself as the son of God, and this is how the apostles referred to him (Matt. 16:16). The Gentile church fathers (patristics) began viewing Christ as god and worshiped him as such with no texts to support this designation other than misinterpreted Pauline texts. Therefore, to assert that Christ is God, in the same sense of the Father (Yah) is a violation of the Decalogue and the tenets Christ taught.<sup>15</sup>

## **Sunday Praise and Worship**

The patristics then moved Saturday convocation, the commanded day on which to hold ones’ religious meeting, if one is worshiping God, to Sunday. Justin Martyr writes:

“But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead. For He was crucified on the day before that of Saturn (Saturday); and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the Sun, having appeared to His apostles and disciples, He taught them these things, which we have submitted to you also for your consideration” (Justin Martyr, The First Apology, LXVII).<sup>16</sup>

Holding one’s convocation on Sunday because God began creation on the first day of the week, and because Christ rose on the first day is noble and honorable. However, it is unbiblical and not what God or Christ commanded. Hence it is a deviation from Judeo Christianity, which scholars have referred to as primitive Christianity. Because of the notable changes the patristics have made in it, there is today what is referred to as modern Christianity. The Bible tells us to

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15. Why would a disciple refer to Christ as god?

16. What reasons does Justin Martyr (a patristic) gives for holding God’s Sabbath on a Sunday, (first day of the week), rather than Saturday, seventh day of the week as Yah commanded (Ex. 20:8-11)?

remember *the* Sabbath, not a Sabbath of our choosing, as a memorial of God's creation and as a sign between Him and those who worship Him (Ex. 20:8-11; 31:12-17; Is. 56:1-8).<sup>17</sup>

## Merry Christmas

As time progressed the patristics introduced the concept of Christmas which was an adoption of *a pagan tradition*. Dr. Trausti Ólafsson, Professor of Dramatic Literature and Theatre at the University of Iceland and Psychodrama Psychotherapist writes,

It was therefore almost a matter of course that when Christianity overcame paganism and heathendom to become the official religion in the Roman Empire, the old pagan festivities to celebrate the natural turn from darkness to light were transformed into a celebration of the birth of the Christian Saviour. Like the setting of light celebrations at winter solstice, tree worship as a ritual of regeneration is ancient in Europe. *The powers of the symbolic tree lit with candles at Christmas are inherited from those pagan festivities*, and together the tree and the lit candles can be associated with what Jung called, 'the antique symbolism of the dying god, and its relation to the cult of the Great Mother and her symbol, the tree... Essentially tree worship signified belief in a cyclical process of death and rebirth: the god dies in order to be restored to life by the mother or lover (Olafsson, 2008, 130) [emphasis added].<sup>1819</sup>

The apostles did not celebrate Christ's birth, his appearance, or his baptism, which was the original impetus for Christmas. Christianity's acknowledgement of Christmas day was infused with pagan rituals in order to convert and appease the pagans who were converting to this new faith. Today nearly all so-called Christians practice a day and a festival that cannot be corroborated in the Bible, and an event that retraces its origins to pagans.

## Happy Easter

Christ's death and resurrection occurred during Passover, the Greek word *pascha*, is written in the NT (Acts 12:4). However, Easter was inculcated in the Christian faith. It was applied to Christ's resurrection because he rose *on the dawn* of the first day (Mark 16:2). The name Easter is associated with the pagan goddess of sunrise *Eostre*, its etymology and ecclesiastical usage appear to articulate the rising of the sun in respect to Christ's resurrection. The clergy who adopted this name used a strategic approach to indoctrinate the pagans who were

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17. What is another name for Judeo Christianity?

18. True or False. Before the formation of Christianity. Pagans worshiped trees which would later be adopted in Christianity.

19. What did the tree symbolize in paganism?

already celebrating this event in honor of their deity. Instead of worshiping *Eostre* directly they would now worship her indirectly under the auspices of Christ's resurrection.<sup>20 21 22</sup>

Jacob Grimm (1785-1863), German philologist, jurist, and mythologist says, "We Germans to this day call April *ostermonat*, and *ōstarmánoth* is found as early as Eginhart. . . The great Christian festival, which usually falls in April or the end of March, bears in the oldest of OHG [Old High German] remains the name *ōstarâ*. . . it is mostly found in the plural because two days. . . were kept at Easter. This *Ostarâ*, like the [Anglo-Saxon] *Eástre*, must in heathen religion have denoted a higher being, whose worship was so firmly rooted, that the Christian teachers tolerated the name, and applied it to one of their own grandest anniversaries. All the nations bordering on us have retained the biblical '*pascha*'; even Ulphilas writes *paska*, not *áustro*, though he must have known the word" (Grimm 1882, 290-91).

Elements within Easter are actually "renewal and fertility rites." The Easter egg adopted within the church in the seventeenth century and the Easter bunny adopted in the church in the nineteenth century (Harper 2019) have nothing to do with Christ or his resurrection. So, concurs Elwell who writes "over the centuries many popular customs have been added reflecting pagan spring folklore (Easter egg and rabbit)" (Elwell 2001, 357). Christianity has infused these pagan rites into what was once pure and unadulterated. Due to the vastness and ease of scholarly information, Bible enthusiasts have researched modern Christianity, and have discovered that it is not the same Christianity that emerged from Christ or the same Christianity that the apostles evangelized. Thus, for many, practicing Christianity has become a subtle way of practicing ancient pagan theologies and doctrines within the framework of Christ.<sup>23</sup> Hence, Christianity is seen by many as religious subterfuge. A strategic way of retaining pagan ideals in a faith that was supposed to retain its Judaic foundation based upon the ideals of (1) the law (Torah), (2) testimony of the prophets, (3) the teachings of Yahoshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ), and (4) the evangel of the apostles. When all data points are considered, one can ascertain it is not.<sup>24</sup>

## Happy New Year

The infusion of paganism into Christianity did not cease with Christmas and Easter. The patristics and the Church added the celebration of the pagan god Janus, the Roman two-faced god. Christianity Today writes, "While the start of the liturgical calendar is the first Sunday of Advent, January 1 remains a popular global holiday for celebrating the new year. . . Many churches especially those in Wesleyan traditions, hold watchnight services on New Year's Eve. Other Christians. . . join in the traditional effort to make and keep New Year's resolutions"

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20. Where in the King James Bible does the name Easter appear?

21. What was Easter's original name and who is she?

22. Why is Easter associated with Christ (Yahoshua)?

23. What are two features in Easter that illustrates its pagan origin that Christianity observes?

24. What are the four data points one can analyze to determine that Christianity is not the doctrine Christ left with his followers?

(Christianity Today 2020). Dr. Jerry Winfield, Vice President of Development and Communications at Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes writes,

With a little creative thinking and a fuller understanding of its biblical precedent, your church's New Year celebration can become an anticipated time of outreach, fellowship, and worship. Many churches usher in the New Year with what is called a Watch-Night service. These services typically include fellowship activities, food, singing, prayer, and a message or devotional thought by the pastor or another church leader. Usually, this New Year's Eve service climaxes at midnight with a time of prayer. The idea is to 'pray in' the New Year (Winfield 2014).

The Christian authors reveal two important features of New Year's Eve or New Year's Day. *Watch Night* and *New Year's resolution*. Watch night is said to have begun with John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Church. In 1740, Wesley instituted this event in order to curtail the drunken revelry that took place on New Year's Eve by reprobates, apostates and Christians. Thus, instead of drinking, feasting and every type of debauchery one could image on New Year's Eve, Wesley invited people into the church to read Scriptures and sing hymns as well as make their New Year's resolution. Wesley called these observances Covenant Renewal Services. But what Wesley was doing was taking an event that had been celebrated since Babylon and incorporating it into the Christian faith as his predecessors had done with Christmas, Easter, and Halloween.

The Babylonians (BC 4000) celebrated *rēš šattim*, the "beginning of the year" as the Akitu Festival. This holiday was "celebrated on two locations in Babylon: in the temple of the supreme god Marduk, the Esagila, and the 'house of the New year' which was situated north of the city. The two gods who were in the center of the festival were Nabû and his father, the supreme god Marduk, who was in the first millennium BCE usually called 'Bêl', Lord, because his real name was considered too holy to be pronounced" (Livius 2019). The Babylonians "also made promises to the gods to pay their debts and return any objects they had borrowed. These promises could be considered the forerunners of our New Year's resolutions. If the Babylonians kept to their word, their (pagan) gods would bestow favor on them for the coming year. If not, they would fall out of the gods' favor—a place no one wanted to be" (Pruitt 2020).

The Romans would adopt this Babylonian practice. Thus, January 1, New Year's Day would become one of the most sacred days on the Roman calendar. Roman poet Publius Ovidius Naso, known as Ovid (BC 43), relayed to his readers that Janus was considered by the Romans to be the mediating god. "...the mediator between mankind and the gods, the *janitor* at the door, as well as the god of beginnings. Not only prayers, but all words, had their full weight on this day when the god's ears were open like the doors of their temples" (Roy 2005, 335). New Year's resolutions, are actually petitions to the pagan god Janus as they were to the Babylonian god Marduk. These gods were petitioned, supplicated and worshiped on New Year's Eve and day with vows made to them. Modern Christians or neo-Christians would never say that they are

petitioning a pagan god, yet, this is the origin of one's New Year's resolution and festivity. Birthday celebrations, Valentine's day and Halloween are all incorporated in Christian worship and fellowship, representing pagan holidays that were celebrated thousands of years prior to the emergence of Christianity.<sup>25</sup>

## Closing

Christianity in the first century was a form of Judaism that simply believed that Christ was the promised Messiah (Acts 21:20). Nothing changed within the Jewish framework besides accepting Christ as the prophesied Messiah, the son of God and that he nullified sacrificial ordinances (Heb. 9:11-14), and man-made traditions (Matt. 15:9; Col. 2:8). Neo-Christendom (modern Christianity) emerged to separate itself from its Judaic roots as a matter of rebelling against Judaism, this is to say against what Judaism encompasses namely the laws and holydays. Thus, the church began to form its own set of laws through canons, creeds and ecclesiastical tenets to show a distinction between Judeo-Christianity (the Christianity of Christ and the apostles), patristical-Christianity, then later, modern-Christianity. To establish fellowship and communal socialization within this reformed faith, the church architects incorporated pagan practices, and glossed it over with the name of Christ.

Raising the question about pagan practices in Christianity to Christians is no easy task. Christians of all denominations have been led to believe that they are practicing the faith of the apostles. These discussions are typically rejected or mildly entreated. Lewis writes,

Protestants in the United States are poorly prepared to consider so great a question as that which this book passes under review, because they have not carefully considered the facts touching their relations to Roman Catholicism. The Anglo-Romish controversy, in England, in the earlier part of the present century made the question of paganism in Christianity prominent for a time. But the discussion was so strongly partisan and controversial that it could not produce the best results. Truth was much obscured by the determined effort of Protestant writers to show that the pagan residuum was all in the Catholic Church; whereas the facts show that there could have been no Roman Catholic Church had not paganism first prepared the way for its development by corrupting the earliest Christianity. The facts show, with equal vividness, that Protestantism has retained much of paganism, by inheritance. Protestantism, theoretically, means the entire elimination of the pagan residuum; practically, that work is but fairly begun. It must be pushed, or the inevitable backward drift, the historical 'undertow' will re-Romanize the Protestant movement. The expectations and purposes of Roman Catholicism all point towards such a result (Lewis 1892, 3-4).<sup>26</sup>

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25. True or False. Watch Night and Covenant Renewal Services is a Christianized version of the Akitu Festival and vows to pagan gods.

26. Who says that "Protestantism has retained much of paganism, by inheritance."?

Christianity is the only religion in the world that claims to emanate from the Bible in a pure and unadulterated state. Yet, when one examines the teachings, the examiner will identify a different brand of Christianity than the one the Messiah proclaimed, and the apostles evangelized. The Christianity of the world as many scholars have concluded is a pagan Christendom, not a Christ Christendom. It is a Christianity that dresses Christ in a pagan costume that the imperceptive are unable to recognize. The Italian humanist and historian, Polydore Vergil (1470-1555) states that “The Church has borrowed many customs from the religion of the Romans and other pagans, but it has meliorated [to make better] them and applied them to a better use” (Vergil 1490).

Vergil argues that the church has merely incorporated pagan rituals and practices within Christianity, which can be highlighted in its creedal formulas and holidays. The late Dr. John Lord (1810-1894), American historian and lecturer at Dartmouth College writes, “But the church was not only impregnated with the errors of pagan philosophy, but it adopted many of the ceremonials of Oriental worship, which were both minute and magnificent” (Lord 1868, 327). No religion should propagate a doctrine as an original or an orthodox teaching, then subtly incorporate doctrines that are averse to its founder(s). Yet this is what Christianity is and has become, a pagan theology propagated by men who are ascribed as being holy and anointed. True Christianity is Judeo Christianity. It is the Christianity that observes the Torah (law) because Yah commanded it. It is the faith Yahoshua gave to the apostles, and it is the faith called the evangel that was given to the disciples of the apostles. There is no other form of Christianity other than biblical Christianity which has been called Primitive (Primitive Christianity). Biblicalists and Sinaiticists accepts the designation, “primitive” because it is what Yah ordained.

There is much more to discuss on this subject. If you have questions about this study and others, feel free to join us in fellowship, prayer, praise, and study every Saturday at 11:30 am, or call us for consultation pertaining to this subject or any other you might find intriguing. We are a Messianic Judaic assembly teaching the doctrine of Sinaiticism, which means keeping God’s word in the faith of Christ (Rev. 12:17; 14:12-13), proclaiming his gospel to the world and to those who are seeking God’s truth without interpretation or church tradition. May the blessings of the Most High be with you and thank you for reading our article.

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