

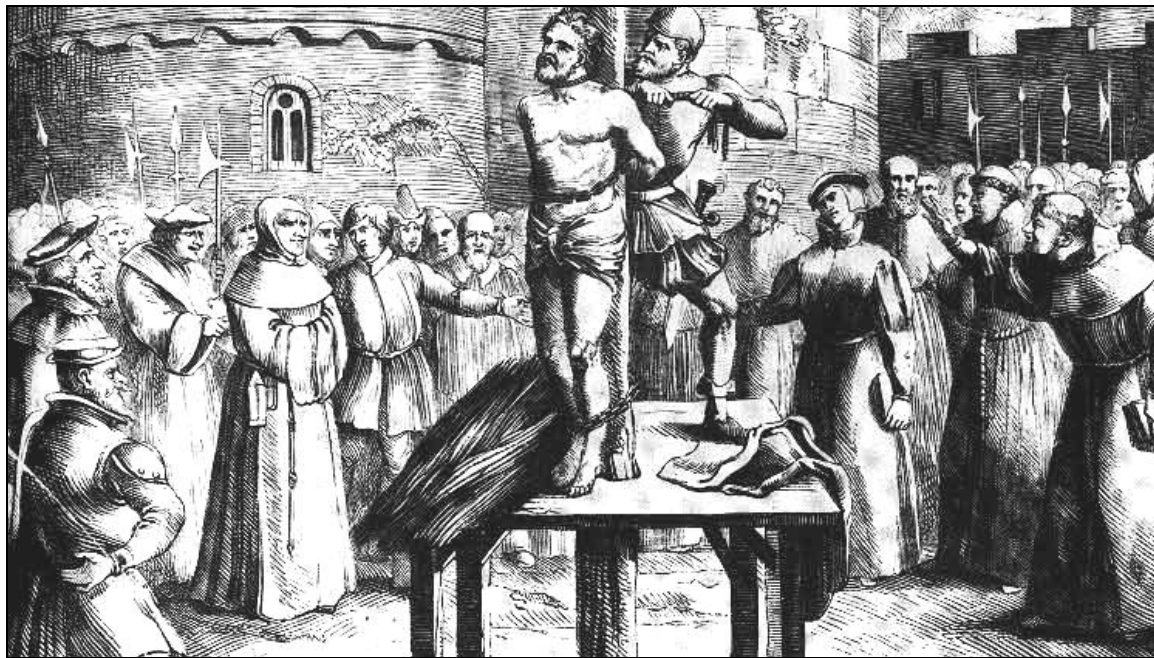
# MODERN CHRISTIANITY ASTRAY FROM THE BIBLE

## POPULAR CHURCH TRADITION EXPLORED

### A BIBLICAL INSPECTION OF POPULAR CHURCH TEACHINGS

The King James or Authorized Version has been the most widely published edition of the Bible. Contained in the forward or introductory section the translators boldly assert that its publication was issued in direct opposition to the Roman Catholic Church. The translators state that by **“writing in defence of the Truth”** they have **“given such a blow unto that man of sin, as will not be healed.”** The “man of sin” they assert is the head of the Catholic Church: the papacy. Their desire was to publish **“the Holy Scriptures into the English Tongue.”** Knowing the work would be met with bitter opposition the translators were resolved to ignore resistance from **“Popish Persons”** who would **“malign”** their labors **“to make God’s holy Truth to be yet more and more known unto the people, whom they desire to still keep in ignorance and darkness.”** Sadly, most among *Modern Christianity* have forgotten these simple details of history.

The words of the KJV translators were not slander. The persecution and bloodshed of the Roman Catholic system was a real threat. The Holy Roman Catholic church prohibited liberal distribution and personal reading of the Scriptures, with the Pope directing his clergy to vigorously suppression any representation of the Bible apart from the Catholic Church. Offenders were subject to torture and even death. Such was the fate of William Tyndale, to whom we owe gratitude for his work in giving us the Bible we possess today.



**“The first English version of the Scriptures made by direct translation from the original Hebrew and Greek, and the first to be printed, was the work of William Tyndale. He met bitter opposition. He was accused of willfully perverting the meaning of the Scriptures, and his New Testaments were ordered to be burned as ‘untrue translations.’ He was finally betrayed into the hands of his**

enemies, and in October 1536, was publicly executed and burned at the stake.” PREFACE to Revised Standard Version—Thomas Nelson & Sons Publishers

**Annals of the English Bible, Introduction, pg. 21** states the following concerning John Wycliffe, one of the first Englishmen to challenge Roman Catholic authority and translate the Bible into English: **“Master John Wycliffe has translated the Gospel out of Latin into English, which Christ has entrusted to the clergy and doctors of the Church, that they might minister it to the laity, and the weaker sort... So that by this means the Gospel is made vulgar, and laid more open to the laity, and even to women who can read, than it used to be even to the most learned and those of best understanding.”** (John Wycliffe 1320-1384) Wycliffe was an early forerunner to the Protestant reformation and a strong opponent of papal authority. It is a well-documented dark age of history when the Catholic clergy gathered up and burned Bibles written in the common tongue for every man to read.

**INDEX OF FORBIDDEN BOOKS:** A catalog published by the Roman Catholic Church listing books considered dangerous to faith and morals. Under penalty of excommunication it was “forbidden to possess or read any literature listed on the index. The index of 'Forbidden Books' included the Holy Bible. The first compilation was published in 1559 during the papacy of Pope Paul IV.

As many Catholics will affirm, there can be no “middle ground” concerning the Roman Catholic Church. With such bold assertions as papal infallibility, the exclusive right of Bible interpretation, and justified persecution of so-called heretics, we are compelled to form one of two opinions regarding the Catholic system. (1) Either the Catholic Church is everything they claim to be—the only true “mother church”—or (2) their system constitutes the most blasphemous religious body professing Christianity known to man. The self-pronounced claims of the Catholic Church make one conclusion or the other unavoidable.

Recognizing it may appear offensive to *modern Christians* to suggest the Roman Catholic Church is identified in the Bible as the ‘Antichrist system,’ we will advance historical and scriptural evidence to support this claim. Although many denominations among *modern Christianity* now propose the ‘Antichrist’ is to be some future manifestation of a *fuehrer* of sorts, *early Christians* identified the false religious system to be the Roman Catholic Church.



Although most *Christians* today are totally unaware of this fact, Protestant creeds from long ago emphasized that Christ alone, not the Pope, is head of the church!

**Westminster Confession of Faith (Chapter 26, section 6)** states: “There is no other Head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ, nor can the Pope of Rome, in any sense, be head thereof, but is

**that Antichrist, that man of sin, and Son of Perdition, that exalteth himself in the Church, against Christ and all that is called God.”**

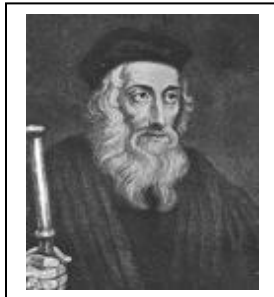
Prior to the passive spirit now prevalent throughout *modern Christianity* students of the Bible considered any man “anti-Christ” who claimed to be the head of the church in place of Christ. Christ alone is the head of the church (Eph. 4: 15, 16: 5:23: Col. 1: 18). The head of the “Roman” Catholic Church, who borrowed numerous practices and titles from pagan idolatry, makes such claims. A search of history will reveal the staggering titles bestowed by the Catholic Church upon their popes.

**THE POPE:** The supreme head of the Roman Catholic Church. The word is derived from the Medieval Latin papa ("pope," or "father"). Roman Catholics believe that the pope is the successor of St. Peter, to whom Christ entrusted the leadership of the church. The pope has many official titles, including: Bishop of Rome, Vicar of Christ, successor to the prince of the apostles. Supreme Pontiff of the universal church, patriarch of the West, primate of Italy, archbishop and metropolitan of the Roman province, sovereign of the state of Vatican City, and servant of the servants of God. Considered infallible by Catholic adherents, the pope wields the highest power in the church.

**Pope Leo XIII** said of himself in 1890: **“The supreme teacher in the Church is the Roman Pontiff. Union of minds, therefore, requires, together with a perfect accord in the one faith, complete submission and obedience of will to the Church and to the Roman Pontiff, as to God himself.”**

#### **THE REFORMERS—**

Many Protestant quotes cited here can be referenced in *Babylon Mystery Religion* by Ralph Woodrow (pages 127-140), as well as the history of papal worship traced in *The Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop.



**JOHN WYCLIFFE:** “Why is it necessary in unbelief to look for another Antichrist?” he asked. “In the Seventh Chapter of Daniel. Antichrist is forcefully described by a horn arising in the time of the fourth kingdom... wearing out the saints of the Most High.” His book, *The Mirror of Antichrist*, is filled with references to the Pope as Antichrist.

**MARTIN LUTHER (1483-1546),** while still a priest of the Roman Catholic church, disagreed with the practice of selling indulgences. At first, he sought a reform within the church. But as he grew in the knowledge of Christ, he saw that reform would be impossible and that the message was to “come out.” Being loosened from the bondage of this system, he began to wonder if the Pope was the Antichrist.



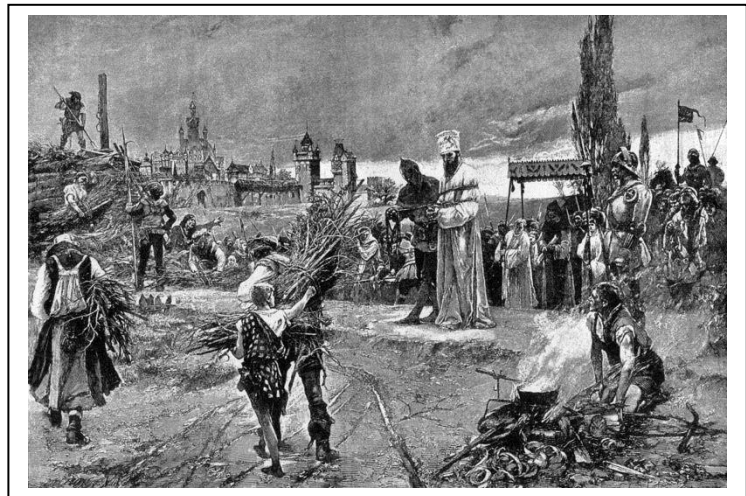
**LUTHER** wrote in August 18, 1520: “We here are of the conviction that the Papacy is the seat of the true and real Antichrist... personally I declare that I owe the Pope no other obedience than that to Antichrist.” Two months later, Luther's book, *On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church* was published. In this he spoke of the Papacy (the system, not the individual pope) as “nothing else than the kingdom of Babylon and of very Antichrist... For who is the man of sin and the son of perdition, but he who by his teaching and his ordinances increases the sin and perdition of souls in

the church, while he yet sits in the church as if he were God? All these conditions have now for many ages been fulfilled by the papal tyranny.”

In 1540, Luther wrote: “Oh, Christ, my Lord, look down upon us and bring upon us thy day of judgment, and destroy the brood of Satan in Rome. There sits the Man, of whom the apostle Paul wrote (2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4) that he will oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God—the man of sin, that son of perdition... he suppresses the law of God and exalts his commandments above the commandments of God.”

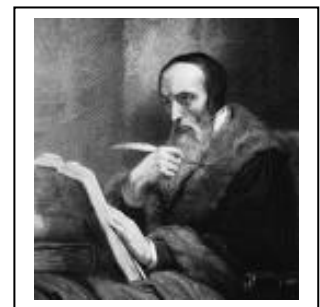
Concerning the *man of sin*, Luther pointed out that he “sitteth not in a stable of fiends, or in a swine-sty, or in a company of infidels, but in the highest and holiest place of all, namely, in the temple of God... Is not this to sit in the temple of God, to profess himself to be the Ruler in the whole church? What is the temple of God? Is it stones and wood? Did not Paul say, The temple of God is holy, which temple you are? To sit—what is it but to reign, to teach, and to judge? Who from the beginning of the church has dared to call himself master of the whole church but the Pope alone? None of the saints, none of the heretics ever uttered so horrible a word of pride.”

**JOHN HUSS** (1369-1415), born in Bohemia, wrote continually of the papacy as the “Antichrist.” Pope Martin V issued a bull in 1418 in which he ordered the punishment of men or women who held to the teachings of Wycliffe and Huss. (Right:) Huss himself was condemned as a heretic and delivered to the secular arm for execution: a chain around his neck and burned alive.

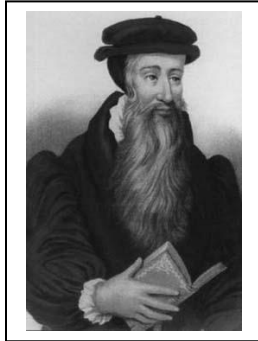


**JOHN CALVIN** (1509-1564). Originally a son of the Papal church, he embraced the Protestant faith. His published works fill some fifty volumes. Concerning the Pope, he said: “I deny him to be the vicar of Christ, who, in furiously persecuting the gospel, demonstrates by his conduct that he is Antichrist—I deny him to be the successor of Peter... I deny him to be the head of the church.”

In his classic *Institutes* he wrote: “Some persons think us too severe and censorious when we call the Roman pontiff Antichrist. But those who are of this opinion do not consider that they bring the same charge of presumption against Paul himself, after whom we speak and whose language we adopt... shall briefly show that [Paul's words in 2 Thessalonians 2] are not capable of any other interpretation than that which applies them to the Papacy.” He then pointed out that the Antichrist was to conceal himself under the character of the church, “as under a mask,” and that the Papacy had fulfilled the characteristics set forth by Paul.

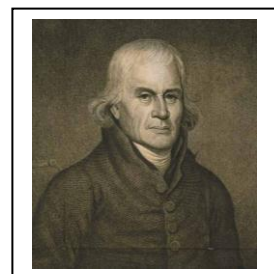


PHILIPP MELANCHTHON (1497-1560), an associate of Luther, wrote: “Since it is certain that the pontiffs and the monks have forbidden marriage [cf. I Tim. 4: 1-3], it is most manifest, and true without any doubt, that the Roman Pontiff, with his whole order and kingdom, is very Antichrist ...Likewise in 2 Thessalonians 2, Paul clearly says that the man of sin will rule in the church exalting himself above the worship of God.”



JOHN KNOX (1505-1572), known for his reformation work in Scotland, preached that Romish traditions and ceremonies should be abolished as well as “that tyranny which the Pope himself has for so many ages exercised over the church” and that he should be acknowledged as “the son of perdition, of whom Paul speaks.” In public challenge, Knox said: “As for your Roman Church, as it is now corrupted... I no more doubt but that it is the synagogue of Satan, and the head thereof, called the Pope, to be the man of sin of whom the apostle speaketh.”

HULDREICH ZWINGLI (1484-1531) was a prominent figure in the work of the reformation that broke out in Switzerland. On December 28, 1524, he wrote: “I know that in it works the might and power of the Devil, that is, of the Antichrist... the Papacy has to be abolished... But by no other means can it be more thoroughly routed than by the word of God (2 Thessalonians 2), because as soon as the world receives this in the right way, it will turn away from the Pope without compulsion.”



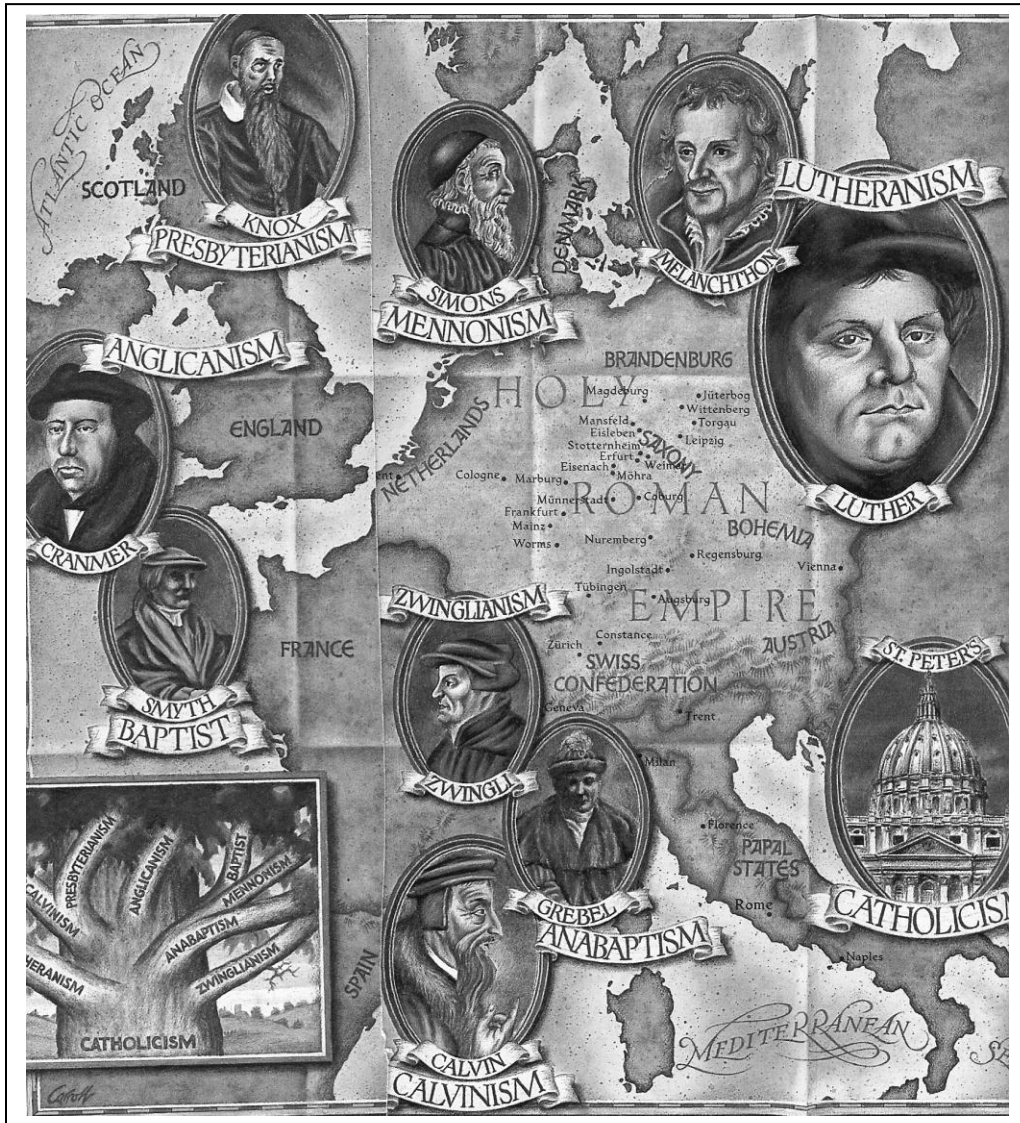
JOHN WESLEY (1703-1791) believed the prophecies regarding the man of sin had been fulfilled in the Papacy. In 1754 he wrote: “He is in an emphatical sense, the Man of Sin, as he increase's all manner of sin above measure. And he is, too, properly styled the Son of Perdition, as he has caused the death of numberless multitudes, both of his opposers and followers ... He it is... that exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped... claiming the highest power, and highest honor... claiming the prerogatives which belong to God alone.”

Because so many Protestant expositions focused on the Papacy fulfilling the prophecies identifying the false church, in 1516 the **Fifth Lateran Council** rose up forbidding anyone to write or preach on the subject of Antichrist.

**Pope Pius IV** stated: “The Bible is not for the people, whosoever will be saved must renounce it. It is a forbidden book. Bible societies are Satanic contrivances.”

In 1198 **Innocent III** issued a decree that all who read the Bible should be put to death. In 1229 the **Council of Tolouse** passed a decree forbidding either the possession or reading of the Bible, as did also the famous **Council of Trent**. **Pius VII** in 1816 denounced Bibles as “pestilences.” **Gregory XVI** in 1844 condemned Bible societies and ordered priests to tear up all they could lay their hands on.

Below: **National Geographic** illustration of the Protestant reformation that arose from those who challenged the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church and papal authority (**Vol. 164, No. 4, Oct. 1983, pg. 424-425**).



With so many “Protestant” writers convicted that the references in **2 Thessalonians**, **Daniel** and **Revelation** specifically refer to the Papacy as the “man of sin” and system of “iniquity,” let us investigate these scriptures and consider if their claims were valid.

### FALSE CHRISTIANITY PREDICTED

Readers of the Bible recognize a corruption of true Christianity is a subject upon which the Scriptures are not silent. See Study 1. Paul warned Timothy: “the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine.” According to the apostle, this time will be marked by an attitude of people turning “away their ears from the truth and shall be turned unto fables”—2Tim. 4:1-4. Paul again warned Timothy: “Now the spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith”—1Tim. 4:1-3. It was this same apostle who counseled the elders at Ephesus to “take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock... for I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them”—Acts 20:28-30. Peter drew attention

to the former days in Israel, when “there were false prophets among the people,” and continued, “even as there shall be false teachers among you”—2Pet. 2: 1-3.

The “falling away” (Greek: *apostasy*) from true religion to man-made worship is explicitly outlined in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2. This is a chapter intensely focused upon by the reformers, as it provides essential details for properly identifying the Man of Sin. “The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ,” wrote the apostle, “shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition”—2The. 2: 1-3.

While we will provide a verse-by-verse exposition of this chapter later, let the student of Scriptures take comfort in the fact that God has forewarned His servants of this time of apostasy preceding the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to the earth. Indeed, God has not abandoned mankind to his own folly, but has provided consolation in His prophetic Word for those who “have ears to hear.” Let all sincere students of the Bible, then, be aware of the signs of the times, and especially watchful of the Antichrist system, which has led so many astray from the Truth of the Scriptures.

## DANIEL 2—SKETCH OF WORLD HISTORY

To establish a proper foundation for the subject at hand, we must begin our consideration in the second chapter of the prophecy of Daniel.

Shortly after Nebuchadnezzar had besieged Jerusalem in the second year of his reign (Daniel 1: 1- 7; 2: 1), the king of Babylon saw a disturbing image expressed to him in a dream. It was a dream he did not understand. After the wise men of his realm had failed to interpret the matter, the prophet Daniel revealed to the great Babylonian king the significance of the image he had seen. As the context reveals, the king's dream represented an outline of world history from the time of Nebuchadnezzar until the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the earth.

**Daniel 2:31 Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible.**

**32 this image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass,**

**33 His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.**

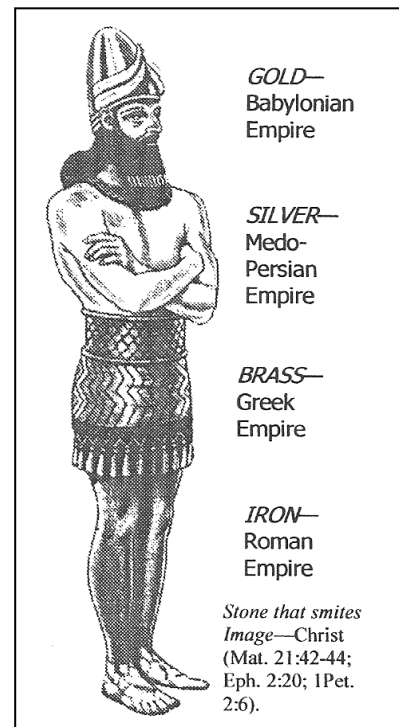
**34 Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.**

**35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.**

**36 This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.**

**37 Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.**

**38 And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand,**



and hath made thee ruler over them all. **Thou art this head of gold.**

39 **And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.**

40 **And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.**

41 **And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.**

42 **And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.**

43 **And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.**

44 **And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.**

45 **Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.**

Daniel's explanation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream is an outline of world history set forth in terms of certain metals representing kingdoms: gold, silver, brass and iron are symbols of four kingdoms.

❑ **GOLD**

"Thou," Daniel told Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar, "art this head of gold," Dan. 2:38.

❑ **SILVER**

The Bible states with clarity that it was the Medo-Persian Empire-represented by the breast and two arms of silver-that conquered the Babylonian Empire (Isa. 13: 1-22; Jer. 51:28-29; Dan. 5:25-31).

❑ **BRASS**

The Scriptures also tell us that the Greek Empire represented by the belly and thighs of brass-conquered the Medo-Persian Empire (Dan. 8:20-22).

❑ **IRON**

The Greek power later gave rise to the Roman Empire, represented by the legs of iron (John 11:48); the political power evident in the days of Christ and the apostles.

**Funk and Wagnalls Encyclopedia Vol. 3, page 885 states: "In 539 the Babylonians were defeated by Cyrus, the Persian king who had defeated Media... Babylonia was annexed by Persia, and lost its independence for all time." (1970 Edition)**

**Funk and Wagnalls Encyclopedia Vol. 19, page 6958 states: "The Persians were dominated by the Medes until the accession of the Persian throne in 558 B.C. of Cyrus, afterward known as Cyrus the Great. He overthrew the Medean rulers... and established the Persian Empire as the pre-eminent power of the world... Darius I, who ascended the throne in 521 B.C., pushed the Persian borders... earning the title 'Darius the Great.'**

**"From 499 to 493, he engaged in crushing a revolt of the Ionian Greeks living under Persian rule in Asia, and then launched a punitive campaign against the European Greeks for supporting the rebels. His forces were disastrously defeated by the Greeks in the historic battle of Marathon in 490... the final blow was struck by Alexander III, known as the Great, who added the Persian**



**Empire to his own Mediterranean realm by defeating the troops of Darius III in a series of battles between 334 and 331 B.C.”**

That the two “arms” of the silver phase of the image represents the Medo-Persian Empire is certain. Furthermore, the Greeks, who were represented by the brass phase of the image, were known as the “Brazen Greeks” for their skilled work in brass (see: **National Geographic, Vol. 153, No.2, February 1978, pages 142-185**).

**Funk and Wagnalls Encyclopedia Vol. 12, pages 4259-4260 state: “Greece passed completely into the power of Rome, which united Macedonia and Greece to form the Rome province of Macedonia.”**

**Funk and Wagnalls Encyclopedia Vol. 16, page 6046 states: “In 395 A.D. the Roman Empire was partitioned into Western and Eastern divisions.”**

This interesting note concerning the division of the Roman power into West and East shows why the iron phase of Nebuchadnezzar's image, representing the Roman Empire, has two “legs.”

**Edward Gibbon, in his highly acclaimed book entitled *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, surprisingly uses Biblical language when describing Rome's ascent to world power: “The arms of the Republic, sometimes vanquished in war, advanced with rapid steps to the Euphrates, the Danube, the Rhine and the ocean; and the images of gold, or silver, or brass, that might serve to represent the nations or their kings, were successively broken by the iron monarchy of Rome.”**

These historical and Biblical facts determine that the four kingdoms in Daniel chapter two correctly represent the successive world empires of Babylon (gold), Medo-Persia (silver), Greece (brass), and Rome (iron).

There is yet something more to this prophecy that demands our attention. The fact that the Roman Empire eventually self-destructed, which is common knowledge, brings about a necessary question: Why is iron still present as “mixed with miry clay... the seed of men” (Daniel 2:43) when the stone [Christ's second advent] smites the image? This question demands an answer.

If the Roman Empire has long vanished from the scene of world dominance, then why is the influence of Rome—*iron*—still evident at the Lord's return? What remains of the Roman Empire that has endured through the ages? We will allow the scribes of history to answer the question for us.

**Funk and Wagnalls Encyclopedia Vol. 21 page 7647 article on Rome concludes with these very significant words regarding the diminishing of the Roman Empire: “The last western Roman emperor, Romulus Augustulus (475-476 A.D.), was overthrown by the barbarian Odoacer, who was**

**GREECE'S  
BRILLIANT  
BRONZE  
AGE**

**T**HERE IS A LAND called Crete in the midst of the wine-dark sea, a fair land and a rich, begirt with water, and therein are many men innumerable, and ninety cities. . . . And among these cities is the mighty city Knossos, wherein Minos when he was nine years old began to rule, he who held converse with great Zeus. . . .

THE "ODYSSEY" OF HOMER, BOOK XIX

Sometime in the blue dark before dawn, the dawn of a Greek Easter Sunday, the first faint image of Mount Juktas, washed in pale rose, appeared beyond the harbor of Herakleion, modern Crete's largest city. I stood at the rail of a passenger ship and was amazed at how perfectly the mountain resembled a sleeping man, his head to the north, profile to the morning star, shoulders lost in shadow.

"No," said a fellow passenger, an early riser like myself, "not a sleeping man but a dead god, Zeus himself. On Crete he rises again, or so the ancient Minoans believed. For that the Greeks called them liars. I think the Minoans had a different Zeus in mind, but they would never tell."

With the island of Dia looming eastward, the breeze, from (Continued on page 146)

Article by  
**JOSEPH JUDGE**

Photographs by  
**GORDON W. GAHAN**

Paintings by  
**LLOYD K. TOWNSEND**  
ALL NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC STAFF

proclaimed king of Italy by his troops. The history of Rome then merged with that of the papacy, the Holy Roman Empire, the Papal States, and Italy.”

The above quotation leaves no room for doubt that the papacy remains from the Roman Empire as the only influence that has continued to the present time. Note particularly Daniel's words regarding the ten-toed part of the image:

**“And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay,”**  
**Daniel 2:42-43.**

The Roman Catholic Church has very effectively “mingled themselves with the seed of men.” As the largest professing Christian body, the Roman Catholic Church is an organization comprising more than one billion people. At the church's head is the pope, who exerts his influence on political leaders worldwide. The Vatican City operates much like any other vast international company, with bureaucracy, business management, newspapers, radio and all other forms of media to keep the Roman Catholic voice prominent before the public. These facts simply cannot be disputed. Even the meaning of the name “Catholic” demonstrates the very direct purpose of the church's influence, for it means “universal.”

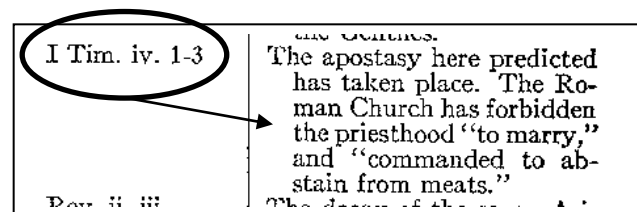
The Catholic system—the Holy Roman Church—arose during the Roman Empire, when Constantine made Christianity (in a corrupted form) the official religion of the empire.

**Funk and Wagnalls Encyclopedia Vol. 21 page 7647 states: “Christianity, which had risen during the reign of Augustus and spread during that of Tiberius and of later emperors, had triumphed over Diocletian's attempts to crush it by persecution, and the politic Constantine, adopting it as his own religion, made it also the official religion of the Roman Empire, an event of far-reaching significance.”**

As students of history and the Bible know Constantine merged pagan celebrations and customs with Christian observances. The result was a corruption of true Christianity. However, Constantine's political maneuver also resulted in the fortification of a powerful and influential “church.”

**“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth”—**  
**1Timothy 4: 1-3.**

- ***In this older Red Letter Edition of the King James Version of the Bible, printed many years ago (Books, Inc. Publishers, New York), we find this interesting study note in the back section. It relates to 1Tim 4:3 and is found under the heading: “Prophecies Literally Fulfilled.”***



The above reference notes that a departing from the faith will be accompanied by such behavior as “forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats.” It is a well-known fact that these are practices of the Roman Catholic Church. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the Apostle Paul says that those who teach such will be those whose “conscience (is) seared with a hot iron.” This IRON element again aligns with Rome, already identified as such in the prophecy of Daniel chapter two.

## DANIEL 7—THE ANTI-CHRIST SYSTEM

The seventh chapter of Daniel adds a more detailed development of Nebuchadnezzar's image. This chapter will especially help our understanding of the fourth kingdom of *iron*.

**Daniel 7: 1** In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters.

**2** Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea.

**3** And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another.

**4** The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it.

**5** And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it *raised up itself on one side*, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.

**6** After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; *the beast had also four heads*; and dominion was given to it.

**7** After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.

**8** I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things...

**11** I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.

**12** As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.

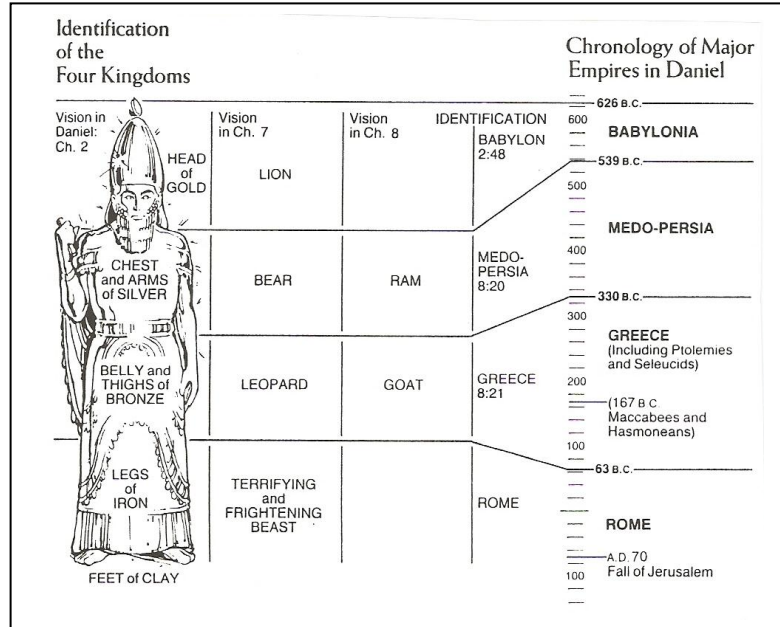
**13** I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

**14** And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

The interpretation of what these “four beasts” represent is right before us; for later in this chapter it is expressly stated: “these great beasts, which are four, are four kings (or kingdoms), which shall arise out of the earth”—Daniel 7:17.

To help demonstrate how the four beasts of Daniel 7 correspond to the four metals of Daniel 2, we have provided the illustration at right, which is an unaltered photocopy from the *The NIV Study Bible*, page 1311 (Copyright 1985 by Zondervan Bible Publishers). This, we hope, will prove that what we are setting forth is certainly the standard interpretation of the four beasts and metals.

Like the image of Daniel chapter two, we again find comfort in the fact that the kingdoms of men are not always to control the earth; for in Daniel chapter seven we are told these fleshly powers of men are ultimately to be replaced by the Kingdom of God upon earth:



“And, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed”—Daniel 7:13-14.

Daniel 7:27—“And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.”

Until the Kingdom of God is established in the earth, our attention is drawn to identifying these four beasts, representing four empires. The **FIRST BEAST**, we are told, resembled a “lion” with “eagle’s wings.” This beast corresponds with the Babylonian head of gold in Daniel 2. In fact, it is interesting that the Scriptures style this empire as a “lion.” **Jeremiah 50: 17 states: “Israel is a scattered sheep; the lions have driven him away... Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones.”**

The **SECOND BEAST**, described as “a bear, and it raised up itself on one side,” corresponds with the Medo-Persian breast and arms of silver in Daniel 2. The reason the bear is raised up on one side is due to the fact that while the Medo-Persian Empire was a joint power, the Persians were dominant over the Medes.

**Funk and Wagnalls Encyclopedia Vol. 16 page 5937** states: “Media was politically subservient to Persia; however, the Persians regarded the Medes as equals, and thenceforth the two peoples were considered one.”

The subject of the joint Medo-Persian Empire is taken up again in Daniel chapter eight, as shown in the illustration from the NIV Study Bible. **Daniel 8:3** describes “a ram which had two horns; and the

two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last.” Later in the same chapter we are expressly told: “the ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia”—**Daniel 8:20.**

The details of this prophecy are quite explicit: the two horns represent the Medo-Persian Empire. However, it is specifically stated that the “higher (horn) came up last.” This means that while the Medo-Persian Empire was a joint power, one portion of the kingdom was stronger, or higher-than the other. Furthermore, the stronger rule developed last or later. To this agree historians:

Here, we repeat an earlier quote from the **Funk and Wagnalls Encyclopedia Vol. 19 page 6958**: **“The Persians were dominated by the Medes until the accession to the Persian throne in 558 B.C. of Cyrus, afterward known as the Great. He overthrew the Median rulers, conquered the kingdoms of Lydia and Babylonia in 546 and 539 respectively, and established the Persian Empire as the pre-eminent power of the world.”**

History and Bible prophecy are found in complete harmony, demonstrating that while the Persians were dominated early on by the Medes in the joint empire, they later rose to greater power.

Concerning the **THIRD BEAST** in Daniel 7, we are told it was “like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast also had four heads”—Daniel 7:6. This beast, according to our illustration, represents the Greek Empire; for it was Alexander the Great who delivered the final blow to the Medo-Persian Empire to raise the Grecians to undisputed world power.

Noting again that the illustration from the NIV Study Bible draws attention to the eighth chapter of Daniel, we find the Greeks are named specifically as the power that destroyed the Medo-Persian Empire. **“An he goat came to the ram that had two horns (the Medes and Persians)... and ran unto him in the fury of his power... and smote the ram, and brake his two horns; and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him; and there was none to deliver the ram out of his hand”—Daniel 8:5-7.**

It is not left to speculation regarding the identification of the he goat, for we are plainly told: **“and the rough goat is the King of Grecia; and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king”—Daniel 8:21.** Unquestionably, Alexander the Great is represented by the powerful great horn that destroyed the Medo-Persian Empire.

But we note how the prophecy continues in Daniel 8, as it also provides a key for identifying the four-headed and four-winged leopard **THIRD BEAST** of Daniel 7: **“Therefore the he goat (Alexander) waxed very great; and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven ... Now that (great horn) being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power”—Daniel 8:8,22.**

When Alexander the Great died at the age of 33 his powerful kingdom was divided into four parts by his four generals. This answers to the four-headed and four-winged leopard of Daniel 7. Obviously, the “four heads” represent the four kingdoms, while the “four wings” represent the dispersion of Alexander's power.

It is quite interesting that Daniel 8:8 describes these four powers arising out of Alexander's reign as "four notable ones." Note carefully the following statement from **Funk and Wagnalls Encyclopedia Vol. 12 page 4259**: "**Following Alexander's death, the Macedonian generals, notably Antigonus, Lysimachus, Ptolemy, and Seleucius began to partition the vast empire among themselves.**"

Concerning the **FOURTH BEAST**, the development of which is the main focus of Daniel 7, we note its graphic description: "**and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it; and it was diverse from all beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.**"

The "iron" element associates this fourth beast with the Roman Empire, as described in Daniel chapter two. Something about this "beast" demands our attention, for we are told: "it was diverse from all beasts that were before it." In what way was it diverse? While the first three beasts were political powers, we will see that this dreadful and terrible beast developed into a dangerous religious power; arising from the Holy Roman Empire.

Note again Daniel's description of the **FOURTH BEAST**: "**After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things**"—Daniel 7:7-8.

The "ten horns" and the "little horn," like the four beasts, are defined for us in the same chapter. Daniel continues: "**and the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise; and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. AND HE SHALL SPEAK GREAT WORDS AGAINST THE MOST HIGH, AND SHALL WEAR OUT THE SAINTS OF THE MOST HIGH, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. Hitherto is the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart**"—Daniel 7:24-28.

While this "little horn" developed out of the Roman Empire, it is "diverse" from all others in the fact that it "speaks great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High," that is, it is a political-ecclesiastical power.

Notice how the prophecy of Daniel 7 focuses repeatedly on the "speaking" of this little horn—denoting teaching: "**a mouth speaking great things,**" verse 8; "**the great words which the horn spake,**" verse 11; "**spake very great things,**" verse 20; and "**he shall speak great words against the Most High,**" verse 25. Obviously, Almighty God is drawing our attention to *what* the little horn of the fourth beast "speaks," for it is against the Most High. It represents false teaching. The erroneous doctrines and claims of the Roman Catholic Church are evident in Study 1 through 6.

In addition to “speaking very great things... against the Most High,” we are told: **“the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High, and the time came that the saints possessed the Kingdom”**—Daniel 7:21-22.

And again: **“and he (the little horn) shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit and they shall take away his dominion to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him”**—Daniel 7:25-27.

What system arising out the Roman Empire became religious—speaking words against (concerning) the Most High, and began to persecute the saints? Undoubtedly the answer is the ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH. This fact cannot be erased from the pages of history.

**John Foxe (1517-1587), in his well-known book *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, states the following: “We come now to a period when persecution, under the guise of Christianity, committed more enormities than ever disgraced the annals of paganism. Disregarding the maxims and the spirit of the Gospel, the papal Church, arming herself with the power of the sword, vexed the Church of God and wasted it for several centuries, a period most appropriately termed in history, the ‘DARK AGES.’ The kings of the earth, gave their power to the ‘Beast,’ and submitted to be trodden on by the miserable vermin that often filled the papal chair, as in the case of Henry, emperor of Germany. The storm of papal persecution first burst upon the Waldenses in France.”**—Foxe's Book of Martyrs, Chapter IV.

**Funk and Wagnalls Encyclopedia Vol. 13 page 4919 states: “THE INQUISITION: a system of tribunals formerly existing in the Roman Catholic Church, for the discovery, repression and punishment of heresy. After Christianity became the established religion of the Roman Empire, heresy was regarded as a crime against the civil as well as the canon law, and heretics were punished by the secular courts... civil and ecclesiastical authorities became alarmed at the spread of the Cathari, Waldenses, and Albigenses, sects reputed to be dangerous to both church and state... no appeal was possible except to the Holy See, and after 1542, to the Holy Office in Rome. When found guilty of heresy and contumacious or obstinate in his belief, the heretic was yielded to the civil courts for punishment. Judicial torture for eliciting evidence, then in common use in the civil courts, was authorized by Pope Innocent IV in 1252.”**

The above quotation shows a direct cooperation between the Roman Catholic Church and political authorities. This is a point we will draw attention to in the paragraphs ahead.

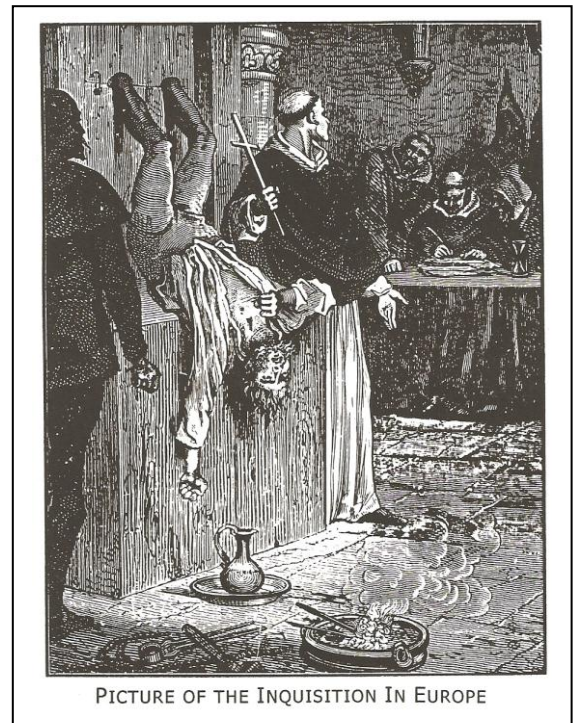
**Funk and Wagnalls Encyclopedia Vol. 23 page 8582 states: “A decree of Pope Innocent IV... calling on civil magistrates to put persons accused of heresy to the torture to elicit confessions against themselves and others, was probably the earliest instance of ecclesiastical sanction being extended to this mode of examination. Gradually, the ecclesiastical courts developed from the Roman law and applied a system of torture, which reached its culmination in the Inquisition.”**

This quotation again provides proof of religious persecution at the hands of the Roman Catholic Church, with the support and cooperation of civil authorities. Persecution of the saints is one of the characteristics of the Harlot system referred to in the book of Revelation (Rev. 17:6; 16:6).

Most people are at least vaguely familiar with the many cruel forms of torture used during the Inquisition. It is a horrible period etched into history. One of the most popular methods of torture was known as “the rack,” where accused heretics were tied to a long table by hands and feet, then slowly stretched in order to dislocate joints. Giant pinchers were used to tear out fingernails, sharp knives were used in various methods to lacerate parts of the body, and some heretics were forced to jump from cliffs onto long spikes, where they slowly died in pain. Some who rejected the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church had molten led poured into their ears and mouths. Others had their eyes gouged out or their tongues ripped from their mouths. In “torture rooms” many who protested Catholic teaching were chained all night to the floor or wall where they were helpless to defend themselves against rats and other vermin.

Although initiated by **Pope Innocent IV in 1252**, the decree for heretics to be “**crushed like venomous snakes**” was renewed and reinforced by popes **Alexander IV (1254-1261)**, **Clement IV (1265-1268)**, **Nicholas IV (1288-1292)**, **Boniface VIII (1294-1303)** and others. The practice of the Inquisition was not simply the work of one pope, but many.

**The Saint Bartholomew Day Massacre** is also a well-known period in history. On **August 24, 1572**, a mass killing of the Huguenots who were French Protestants, commenced at the hands of the Roman Catholics. Although it originated in Paris, the slaughter spread throughout France for two months until nearly 100,000 Protestants were killed by Roman Catholics, and the Huguenots became nearly extinct from the face of the earth.



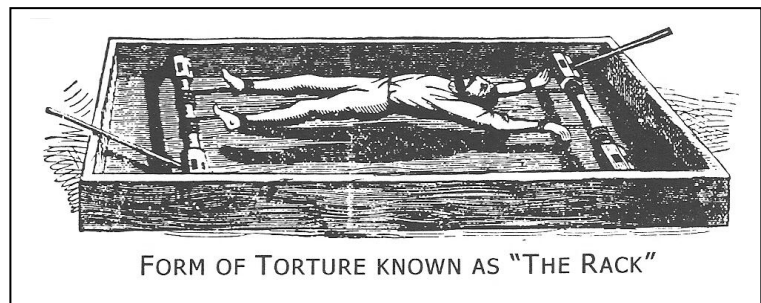
PICTURE OF THE INQUISITION IN EUROPE

## THE INQUISITION

*From the Encyclopedia Britannica*

INQUISITION: in Roman Catholicism, a papal judicial institution that combated heresy and such things as alchemy, witchcraft, and sorcery and wielded considerable power in medieval and early modern times. The name is derived from the Latin verb *inquirō* (“inquire into”), which emphasizes the fact that the inquisitors did not wait for complaints but sought out heretics and other offenders.

After the Roman Church had consolidated its power in the early Middle Ages, heretics came to be looked upon as enemies of society. With the appearance of large-scale



FORM OF TORTURE KNOWN AS “THE RACK”



heresies in the 11th and 12th centuries—notably among the Cathari and Waldenses—Pope Gregory IX in 1231 instituted the papal Inquisition for the apprehension and trial of heretics.

The procedure of inquisition was quite detailed and gruesome. Generally, the process gave one suspected of heresy time to confess and absolve himself. The use of torture to obtain confessions and the names of other heretics was at first rejected, then later authorized in 1252 by Innocent IV. On admission or conviction of guilt, a person could be sentenced publicly to any of a wide variety of penalties, ranging from simple prayer and fasting to confiscation of property and imprisonment, even life imprisonment. Condemned heretics who refused to recant, as well as those who relapsed after condemnation and repentance, were turned over to the secular arm, which alone could impose the death penalty.

### REVELATION 17—MYSTERY BABYLON

Described as the Mystery of Iniquity by Paul (2 Thessalonians 2:7) and the Mystery Babylon by John (Revelation 17:5), the history of the Roman Catholic Church, with the Papacy as its head, is graphically depicted in the last book of the Bible.

**Revelation 17: 1 And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:**

**2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.**

**3 So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.**

**4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:**

**5 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.**

**6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.**

The interpretation of the symbols used in this chapter are quite evident. *Revelation 1:1* “signified” or given by symbols. Using the Bible as its own dictionary will provide student with the necessary means to decipher the language before us.

We are told the great whore sitting upon “many waters” in verse 1 is represented as a system influencing multitudes of people in **verse 15: “The waters which thou sawest where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations and tongues.”** We have already noted the Catholic is the largest religious body in the world.



In the Bible, the representation of a “harlot” is that of spiritual unfaithfulness (Ezekiel 16: 15-35; 22:5; Jeremiah 3: 1-8; Hosea 4: 15; James 4:4; Revelation 2:20), while the true body of believers are styled “virgins” (Matthew 25: 1-14; 2 Corinthians 11:21). The feminine element of a woman, wife or bride describes an ecclesiastical system. See: Ephesians 5:31-32.

In **verse 2** we are told that kings and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. Obviously, this alludes to the corrupt teaching of the Roman Catholic Church upon the common man, as well as political leaders, for all admit The Vatican and the Pope are political powers.

As many know, the Holy See enjoys a unique and influential status among the United Nations. The Vatican holds the status of Permanent Observer and has the right to participate in debate in the UN General Assembly. There is no other religious body on earth where their religious head yields such power and influence like the Papacy. Through the ages, popes have personally presided over the exaltation of many world leaders, as the pictures of the coronation of Charlemagne and Napoleon illustrate (L-R).



In **verse 3** we find the woman-full of the names of “blasphemy” or full of religious corruption (Revelation 2:9;

Romans 2:24; Luke 5:21; 1 Timothy 1:19-20... etc.). She is sitting upon a beast, which has seven heads. Again, it is not left to speculation what this means. We are told in **verse 18** of the same chapter: “**the woman which thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth.**”

Furthermore, **verse 9** states: “**the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth.**”

Therefore, the harlot system described in Revelation 17 corresponds to a great city where the woman sits on seven mountains (the seven heads). How remarkable that ROME is known as the “City of Seven Hills!” The NIV and others translate Revelation 17:9 as “seven hills.”

**Funk and Wagnalls Encyclopedia Vol. 21 page 7636 states: “The original site of Rome consisted of a group of low ridges, known in history as the Seven Hills... Rome is still familiarly known as the City of Seven Hills.”**

The outward pomp of the Catholic system, with its expensive and luxurious display of splendor adorning both churches and hierarchy, is described in **verse 4**; where the woman is arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious



stones and pearls. This outward show, as described in the chapter before us, hides the fact that the Catholic system is one full of corrupt doctrine and practice.

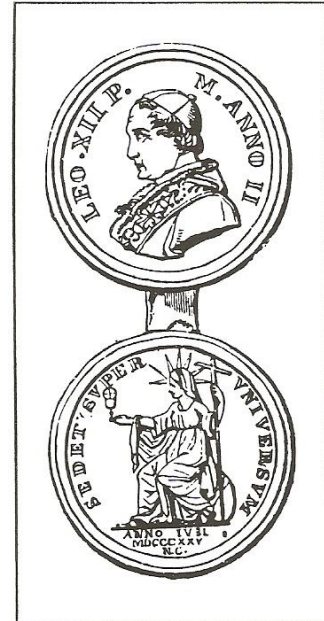
Furthermore, this divinely inspired verse goes on to describe the woman as possessing a **“golden cup in her hand, full of the abominations and filthiness of her fornication.”**

It is a most remarkable fact that the Papacy chose to represent itself as a woman holding an alluring cup. The coin was struck by **Pope Leo XII** in 1825. (Right)

**Pope Innocent XI** also struck a medal in 1680 depicting a woman holding a cup.

As we continue, **verse 5** tells us the woman had written upon her forehead **“Mystery Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the earth.”** It is prominent that the word “mystery” was engraved on the Pope's tiara, but was removed by Pope Julius III because of continual Protestant comments connecting the papacy with Bible prophecy.

That Babylon would be used to symbolize Rome is a fact many historians are aware of; for an article on **BABYLON** in **The Bible Almanac, page 687** reads: **“Most scholars believe the references in First Peter 5:13; and Revelation 14:8; 18:2,10-21 are to Rome.”**



**The New Westminster Dictionary of the Bible, page 739** states the following concerning the First Epistle of Peter: **“(Peter) publishes his hearty agreement with the apostle Paul and at the same time pens what is preeminently the letter of hope. The place of its composition was probably Rome, for Babylon according to early patristic tradition was the mystic name of the new center of persecution of the people of God.”**

Babylon denotes confusion (Genesis 11:9), which draws attention to Catholic doctrine that blatantly contradicts the Bible. One such example is the term “father” adopted by Catholic clergymen. In contrast, the Bible states: “call no man your father upon earth; for one is your Father, which is in heaven”—Matthew 23:9. Like the Pharisees of old, the Catholic Church “have made the commandment of God of none effect by (their) tradition,” said Christ, “But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men”—Matthew 15:6-9.

The Catholic Church, which refers to itself as the “Mother” church, assumes the full authority to override the Bible in doctrine and practice.

**Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion, page 134** “It is not by any means easy to prove the doctrine of Infant Baptism,” wrote Catholic leader **Monsignor Knox**, “if you are basing your argument on the Bible only, with no appeal to tradition” (see also: *The Teaching of Christ: A Catholic Catechism for Adults, page 458*).

The Roman Catholic Church admits many of their doctrines, such as the teaching of purgatory, infant baptism and others are not to be found in the Bible. Yet they demand such doctrines are to be accepted on the authority of the church clergy.

We quote again the words of **Daniel 7:25**, concerning the little horn: **“And he shall speak great words against the Most High... and think to change times and laws.”** The Papacy has fulfilled this very prophecy, changing times and laws, by the granting of pardons and indulgences for sins; canonizing persons whom he chooses to call saints; appointing fasts and feasts; instituting new modes of worship; new articles of faith; and new rules of practice nowhere mentioned in the Scriptures. History reveals the Catholic Church merged pagan traditions with Christianity to popularize the celebration of Easter, Christmas and other holy days. Even Protestants know these holidays to have deep pagan roots.

**The Gregorian Calendar** is the most widely used calendar in the world and was decreed by Pope Gregory XII, after whom it was named, on February 24, 1582. By issue of a papal bull, it replaced the Julian Calendar.

**“The pope is the supreme judge, even of civil laws, and is incapable of being under any true obligation to them”** Roman Catholicism page, 481.

**“When the pope speaks we have no business to examine. We have only to obey. We have no right to criticize his decisions or discuss his commands”** Wacthmen! What of the Night? page 60-61.

Finally, **Revelation 17:6** identifies the mystical Babylon as one known for its persecution of religious people: **“drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.”** As pointed out in Daniel 7, the Roman Catholic Church, by decree of various popes, has had a history filled with persecution and bloodshed.

With the evidence provided from the Word of God and strengthened by historical documentation we can only conclude that this great persecuting system arising out of Rome is none other than the Catholic Church and the Papacy. It must be concluded by all discerning readers that this system is fundamentally ecclesiastical, yet at the same time, holding powerful political sway.

#### THE BIBLE AND THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

**New Catholic Encyclopedia Vol. 2 page 515 “Indiscriminate reading of the Bible with independent interpretation was forbidden by Pius IV in 1564. For the same reasons, non-Catholic Bible societies, established to spread Bible translations to be interpreted without Church guidance, were reprovved by Pius VII.”**

**New Catholic Encyclopedia Vol. 2 page 515 “No one, relying on his own ingenuity, in matters of faith and morals pertaining to the development of Christian doctrine, should distort Sacred Scripture to suit himself, contrary to that sense which the holy Mother Church has held and continues to hold, whose place it is to judge concerning the true sense and interpretation of Holy Scriptures.”**

**New Catholic Encyclopedia Vol. 2 page 515 Pope Leo XIII wrote: “... it is impossible for any legitimate interpretation to be extracted from the Bible that is at variance with the doctrine of the**

**Church. Any interpretation is therefore false that makes the sacred writers disagree or that is opposed to Church doctrine.”**

The Bible is regarded by Catholics as absolute 'church property' and therefore leaves all guidance in moral and doctrinal issues to the duty of the Catholic clergy.

**Catholic Belief and Practice page 88 “The duty of interpreting God's word... whether the word is in Scriptural form or not, has been entrusted exclusively to the teaching office of the Church. This teaching office is exercised by the pope and the bishops in the name and authority of Christ.”**

**Faith of Millions page 176, by Rev. John A. O'Brien “It must be abundantly clear that the Bible alone is not a safe and competent guide because it is not now and has never been accessible to all, and because it does not contain all the truths of the Christian religion. The simple fact is that the Bible, like all dead letters, calls for a living interpreter... She [the Catholic Church] has been the preserver and custodian of the Bible through the centuries, and she interprets it for us in the name and with the authority of Jesus Christ. The only authority which non-Catholics have for the inspiration of the Scriptures is the authority of the Catholic Church.”**

**Faith of Millions page 176 “She [the Catholic Church] is not the child of the Bible, as many non-Catholics imagine, but its mother. She derives neither her existence nor her teaching authority from the New Testament. She had both before the New Testament was born.”**

**“If she [the Catholic Church] had not declared the books composing the New Testament to be the inspired word of God, we would not know it” (page 175)**

**“There are certain truths which Christ and the Apostles taught which are not recorded in the Scriptures but which are embodied in the life, practice and ministry of the Church, in her written and unwritten traditions, which supplement the Bible record... She is not dependent on it for her existence, nor is she limited in her doctrine to it” (page 186)**

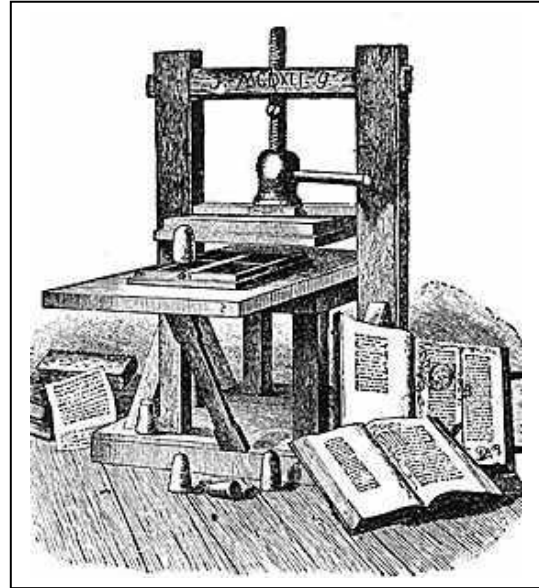
**“Just as the Supreme Court is the authorized living interpreter of the constitution, so the Catholic Church is the living authoritative interpreter of the Bible” (page 186)**

**“If all the books of the Bible and all the copies thereof were blotted out, she [the Catholic Church] would still be in possession of all truths of Christ and could still continue to preach them as she did before a single word of the New Testament was written” (page 176)**

With such claims from the Catholic Church emphasizing their teaching authority is to be preferred as superior to the Holy Bible, we can certainly appreciate why *protestants* understood this system to be that of Antichrist.

Most people are familiar with the *Dark Ages*, a period in history when ignorance of the Bible was widespread, and suppression of God's Word was promoted by the Catholic Church. During the Dark Ages, most copies of the Bible were hand-written, and for the most part in Latin, which few people could read. And when it was eventually translated into English, it was banned by the Catholic Church. *According to Catholic authorities, just 450 years ago it was a punishable offense to own an English Bible.*

Johannes Gutenberg, a German goldsmith is credited with inventing the moveable type printing system, and responsible for the first mass production of the Bible in the 1450's (right). The Gutenberg Bible is a well-known print.



As noted in the quotes above, Catholic Church clergy considered it dangerous for the laity to openly and freely read the Bible. In fact, to help control the spread of Bible societies, Bibles were kept chained to church pulpits so that only suitably “qualified” clergymen could read and interpret it.

The reader can search the pages of history books, where “unqualified” people were imprisoned at the direction of Catholic authorities and cruelly treated for reading the Bible in church!

The experience of the Catholic Church over many centuries had revealed that Bible reading caused people to challenge the “authority” of the church. As teachings of the Catholic Church were found to be contradictory to Scripture, people began to disregard the so-called “authority” of the Catholic system and relied instead upon their own conclusions drawn from the Word of God.

The translation and printing of the Bible in the early part of the 16th Century magnified the issue, as it became a question of the authority of the Catholic Church versus the Bible. The resistance of the Church to the growing influence of Scripture was seen in the famous “**Council of Trent**” (1545-1563), which **CONDEMNED** the proposition that: “The Holy Scriptures contain all things necessary for salvation.”

This position was a straight challenge to the Bible itself. **“The Holy Scriptures are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works”**—2 Timothy 3: 15-17.

Such works as *The Faith of Millions*, quoted earlier, are standard books representing the Catholic position. Even the “**Knights of Columbus**” offered a booklet entitled: *God's News For Man*. Originally published in 1963, the booklet states: **“The Bible is not everyman's Bible; it is the Church's Bible... the Holy Spirit dwells in the Church, leading it to all truth. Hence, if some passage of Scripture seems to say to you something that is contrary to the teaching of the Church, you will know that you have misunderstood it.”**

To accept the Catholic view requires that Bible teaching be disregarded. Christ himself invited his hearers to **“search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me”**—John 5:39. Likewise, the Bereans won the endorsement of the apostle because **“they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily whether those things were so”**—Acts 17: 10-11. If the teaching of Christ and the apostles was not to be accepted without a full Scriptural investigation, certainly we should put to the test all the doctrines

of the Roman Catholic Church. Indeed, Catholic suppression of the Bible has always been rooted in the numerous contradictions between the traditions of the church and the Word of God. All of us do well to follow the apostolic direction to **“study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of Truth” 2 Timothy 2: 15.**

If the Catholic position were correct, to what purpose would be the warning of John? **“Beloved, believe not every spirit (teaching), but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” 1 John 4: 1.** Likewise, would not the words of Isaiah be in vain? **“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” Isaiah 8:20.**

The Catholic Church reigns through the medium of Bible ignorance, as so many obvious distinctions between the two are rarely challenged. For example, Catholic teaching states that the pope is actually a successor to Peter's throne, which was established in Rome. However, the Bible never records that Peter visited Rome, though his visits to Antioch, Samaria, Joppa, Caesarea and other places are recorded. Furthermore, the apostle Peter was married (Matthew 8: 14; 1 Corinthians 9:5), yet Catholic law requires the pope to remain celibate. Catholic bishops are also required to live a life of celibacy; yet the word of God reveals that bishops in the Bible were married (1 Timothy 3: 1-5). While the list could go on, this one particular example is used by Paul to note an eventual departure for the Truth: **“In the latter times some shall depart from the faith... forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats” 1 Timothy 4: 1-3.**

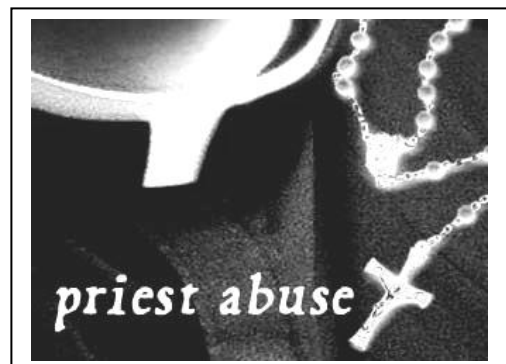
It must be admitted by anyone examining the Bible that there is absolutely no evidence in Scripture that Peter was the first pope of the “Mother Church.” In fact, Peter never acted, dressed, or spoke like a pope; nor was he worshipped or bowed before like Catholic popes (Acts 10:25-26).

## 2 THESSALONIANS 2—THE MAN OF SIN

We now come to the Scripture to which numerous Protestant writers drew attention in their endeavor to identify the system of Antichrist: 2 Thessalonians 2. In this chapter, the apostle Paul speaks directly about a corruption of true Christianity that would occur before the second advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. For the purpose of clarity, we will address this chapter in a general verse-by-verse fashion.

**Verses 1-3 “Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition”**

The phrase “falling away” is the Greek *apostasia*, meaning “apostasy.” The word is translated “forsake” in Acts 21:21. The context in which this word appears is very important. In an attempt to draw attention away from themselves, Catholics have set forth the idea that this verse refers to paganism. However, since “pagans” never held belief in the only True and Living God, it would be impossible for



them to “fall away” from the faith. In this chapter, Paul is certainly describing a departure from Bible Truth. Furthermore, this system of apostasy describes “the MAN of sin.”

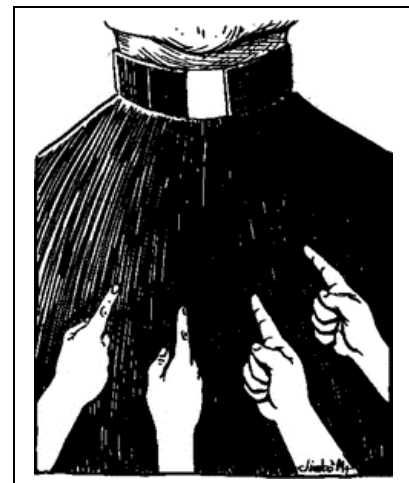
Though a “man of sin”—singular—it is actually a succession of men. Since Paul speaks of this mystery of iniquity that “doth already work” in his day (verse 7), and yet will be evident at the Lord's return, this verse is obviously referring to more than one man.

We must be honest Bible students. Therefore it is vital to demonstrate that the Word of God often use “man” in the singular sense to represent a succession of “men.” For example, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, is identified in Daniel 2:38 as: “thou art this head of gold.” Though Daniel told the Babylonian king that his kingdom would be overtaken by the Medo-Persian Empire, Nebuchadnezzar was not individually the “head of gold” that was overtaken. In fact, it was Belshazzar (Daniel 5:30) who was ruling when the Babylonian Empire was overthrown. Similarly, the four great kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome, where numerous kings ruled, are described as “four kings” (Daniel 7: 17).

Concerning Paul's reference to the “MAN OF SIN,” the language should not go unnoticed. An examination of history will reveal that the succession of popes has been the apostate throne of most ungodly men. Incest, indulgences, adultery, material ambition, and cruel torture have all been the characteristics of the papacy down through the ages. Modern media has produced countless documentaries and dramas testifying to this fact. Even a casual scan of news will display almost weekly some recorded misdeeds of members of the Catholic clergy.

We provide some evidence here:

**“Pope Vagilius waded to the pontifical throne through the blood of his predecessor. Pope Joan, the Roman Catholic writers tell us, a female in disguise, was elected and confirmed pope, as John VIII. Platina says, that 'she became with child by some of those that were round about her; that she miscarried, and died on her way from the Lateran to the temple.' Pope Marcellinus sacrificed to idols. Concerning Pope Honorius, the council of Constantinople decreed, We have caused Honorius, the late pope of Old Rome, to be accursed; for that in all things he followed the mind of Sergius the heretic, and confirmed his wicked doctrines.' The council of Basil thus condemned pope Eugenius: We condemn and despose pope Eugenius, a despiser of the holy canons; a disturber of the peace and unity of the church of God... a man fallen from the faith, and a willful heretic.' Pope John II was publicly charged at Rome with incest. Pope John XIII usurped the pontificate, spent his time hunting, in lasciviousness, and monstrous forms of vice; he fled from trial to which he was**





summoned, and was stabbed, being taken in the act of adultery. Pope Sixtus IV licensed brothels at Rome... Of the popes, Platina, a Roman Catholic says: 'The chair of Saint Peter was usurped; rather than possessed, by monsters of wickedness, ambition and bribery. They left no wickedness unpracticed"—Notes on the New Testament, page 1113.

“Just as the Church's grasping for power begot confession, and confession begot purgatory, so purgatory begot indulgences, and indulgences begot priestly traffic in souls for ready money, and this begot the revolt of Protestantism,” wrote ex-priest Emmett McLoughlin. “From the Vatican's viewpoint the principle purpose of indulgences was to raise money. The medieval records are filled with ingenious devices with accompanying fees of granting indulgences for every conceivable 'charitable and worthy cause.’”—Crime and Immorality in the Catholic Church page 237-239.

The Catholic Encyclopedia calls Pope John XII “a course, immoral man, whose life was such that the Lateran was spoken of as a brothel, and the moral corruption in Rome became the subject of general odium.” Vol. 8 page 427.

The Catholic Encyclopedia notes Pope Boniface VII “overpowered John XIV (April 984) thrust him into the dungeon of Sant' Angelo, where the wretched man died four months later... for more than a year Rome endured this monster steeped in the blood of his predecessors.” Vol. 2 page 661-662.

Concerning Pope Boniface VIII, The Catholic Encyclopedia states: “Scarcely any possible crime was omitted: infidelity, heresy, simony, gross and unnatural immorality, idolatry, magic, loss of the Holy Land, death of Celestine V... Protestant historians, generally, and even modern Catholic writers... class him among the wicked popes, as an ambitious, haughty, and unrelenting man, deceitful also and treacherous, his whole pontificate one record of evil.” Vol. 2 page 668.

As remarkable as it may sound, it was this same pope, Boniface VIII (1294-1303), who declared in 1302: “We, therefore, assert, define and pronounce that it is necessary to salvation to believe that every human being is subject to the Pontiff of Rome.”

Admitting the evil of many of the popes, The Catholic Encyclopedia claims that the papacy is still to be obeyed: “A sinful pope... remains a member of the (visible) church and is to be treated as a sinful, unjust ruler for whom we must pray, but from whom we may not withdraw our obedience.” Vol. 4 page 435.

Pope John XXIII (1410-1415) was charged with 54 crimes, including fornication, adultery, incest, sodomy and murder. Pope Pius II (1458-1464) and Pope Innocent VII (1484-1492) fathered many illegitimate children. See The Catholic Encyclopedia Vol. 8 page 1. Alexander VI (1492-1503) fathered some five children. According to Life Magazine, Pope Paul III (1534-1549) as a cardinal fathered three sons and one daughter—Life, July 5, 1963.

Pope Leo X (1513-1521) “gave himself up unrestrainedly to amusements that were provided in lavish abundance. He possessed an insatiable love of pleasure... He loved to give banquets and expensive entertainments, accompanied by revelry and carousing.” The Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 9 page 162-163.

While not all popes were as wicked as the aforementioned, we must conclude that the examples provided certainly show that the Roman Catholic Papacy is not the faithful line of successors of

Peter, nor are popes the representative of Jesus Christ on Earth. In fact, the examples provided reveal that the title “MAN OF SIN” is a fitting description of the office of the Papacy.

In view of the evidence of papal immorality, we must not miss the fact that this system known as the “mystery of iniquity” concerns a MAN, not a supernatural being. The popular and modern day teaching throughout Christendom concerning the *future appearing of Antichrist* is not within the accurate context of Scripture. Paul said: “it doth already work.”

#### IDENTIFYING 666

In **Revelation 13:18**, we are told this man has a mark by which he can be identified: **“Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six (666).”**

- Through the use of symbolic language, the Apocalypse foretells the number of the beast is actually the number of a man; to which the number 666 can be associated.

**Irenaeus**, who wrote about 70 years after John recorded the book of Revelation, stated: **“The name Lateinos contains the number 666; and it is very likely, because the last kingdom is so called, for they are Latins who now reign; but in this we will not glory.”**

**Hippolytus**, a companion of Irenaeus in Lyons, urged: **“The plague of the first beast was healed, and he shall cause the Image to speak, that is, to be powerful, and it is manifest to all, that the rulers are now Latins, Lateinon, transmuted therefore into the name of one man, it becomes Lateinos.”**

While this information may seem ambiguous to the reader, the above quotes are rather remarkable, for there was no Pontiff (Pope) reigning in Rome professing Christianity in the days of Irenaeus and Hippolytus, yet they still identified the “number of the man” with Lateinos.

- The reader, no doubt, will be familiar with the fact that languages used by the Hebrews, Greeks, Chaldeans, Romans and others used letters of their alphabet for numbers. For example, the mystics of Egypt spoke of “Thouth” (known as the messenger of the gods, and associated with Mercury), who was symbolized by the number 1218. The reason was due to the fact that the Greek letters composing the name “Thouth” added up to the number 1218- TH (9) o (8001 U (400) TH (9).

Unlike the Greeks and Hebrews, however, the Romans did not use all letters of their alphabet to represent numbers. Most are familiar with the Roman Numeral System.

All other numbers, as we know, were made up of combinations of these letters (the letter “M” was later employed to represent 1,000).

<b>1=1</b>
<b>V=5</b>
<b>X=10</b>
<b>L=50</b>
<b>C=100</b>
<b>D=500</b>
<b>Total: 666</b>

Simple mathematics reveals the **Roman Numeral System** adds up to 666. This principle is most interesting, for in Greek *Lateinos* (Latin) equates to 666: L=30, A=1, T=300, E=5, I=10, N=50, O=70, and S=200. This was pointed out by **Irenaeus** as early as the third century.

The **Latin Kingdom** or **He Latiae Basileia** also makes up the Greek numeric value of 666: HE=8, L=30, A=1, T=300, I=10, N=50, E=8, B=2, A=1, 8=200, I=10, L=30, E=5, I=10, and A=1.

Astonishingly, the *Latin language* was made the official religious tongue by **Pope Vitalian** in the year **A.D. 666**. Subsequently, the Roman Catholic Latinized everything: mass, prayers, hymns and canons.

In 1612, **Andreas Helwig** pointed out in his book *Roman Antichrist* that the pope's title of "VICAR OF CHRIST" had a numerical value of 666.

The official signature of the Pope is "**DVX CLERI**," which means high or chief priest. Being Latin, this signature adds up to 666: D=500, V=5, X=10, C=100, L=50, E=0, R=0, and I=1.

Likewise, the Hebrew word for this power is "**ROMIITH**," which also adds up to 666: R=200, O=6, M=40, I=10, I=10, TH=400.

Many have also noted that St. Peter's Church—the largest church in the world (costing some \$300 million to build)—is an astonishing 666 feet long (408 feet high, and 284 feet wide), and originally consisting of 666 pillars.

**Verse 4 "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God"**

To the more than one billion Catholics, St. Peter's Basilica is regarded as the temple of God, as Christ's seat in the "visible church." The criteria describing this "man of sin" are expressed in the verse above: He will exalt himself above all, set himself as God, and show himself to be God. Who fulfills this prophecy other than the pope?



We stress to the reader of the Bible that most fail to recognize who the pope claims to be, for even many Catholics are unaware of what assertions are made by the papacy. Note the following quotes:

**"The Lord our God no longer reigns; He has resigned all power to the Pope." The History of Protestantism Vol. 1 page 255-260.**

**"The Pope is not only the representative of Jesus Christ, he is Jesus Christ himself, hidden under the veil of the flesh. Does the Pope speak? It is Jesus Christ who speaks." Watchman! What of the Night? page 50, 60-61.**

**Roman Catholicism claims the pope is to be called "the Lord God the Pope" page 73. "Into this fold of Jesus Christ no man can enter if not under the guidance of the Sovereign Pontiff;**



The above painting depicts Pope Leo X at his Coronation, April 1512 A.D. impersonating Christ as Ruler of Earth, Sea and Heaven. The inscription at the foot of the painting reads: "In thy hand I behold the Empire of Earth, and Sea, and Heaven."

**and men can securely reach salvation only when they are united with him, since the Roman Pontiff is the Vicar of Christ and represents his person on this earth.” Roman Catholicism page 480.**

The evidence of the above quotations is witnessed in every age, as almost everyone—through various forms of media—has seen popes exalted upon the shoulders of men and paraded through crowds of people in a portable red velvet, high-back chair as he prepares to conduct a special mass or deliver an important message. Is there any such religious procession that can be likened unto it? Furthermore, those who kiss the gold ring of the Roman Pontiff are granted a special indulgence for a period of days, as are those who kiss one of the bishop's episcopal rings, or a cardinal's ring. Was the apostle Peter ever lifted up and paraded through crowds of people to bow before him? On the contrary, Peter refused any such worship (Acts 10:25-26).

The Pope, meaning papa or father, wears many titles, among them: ***His Holiness; The Holy Father; The Bishop of Rome; Vicar of Christ; Successor of St. Peter; Prince of the Apostles; Supreme Pontiff; Patriarch of the West; Primate of Italy; Sovereign of Vatican City; and Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Roman Province***, as well as others.

**Verse 5-7 “Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way”**



One of the key points stressed by the Roman Catholic system is their claim of an unbroken, successive line from the apostles to the present day. This is worthy of our attention; for Paul teaches that the mystery of iniquity began during the times of the apostles and will continue in evidence until the Lord's coming. To their own embarrassment, the Catholic Church insists that its foundations can be traced back to Christ and the apostles.

**“One of the most striking and unmistakable proofs of the divine origin of the Catholic Church is the cold historical fact that for more than fourteen centuries after the death of Christ there was no Christian church in existence save the Catholic Church...”**

**“The Voice of History shows at a glance that the Catholic Church is the only church in the world today which traces her origin back to Christ” Faith of Millions, pages 20 and 46.**

**“The title deeds of all the non-Catholic denominations are invalid ... worthless ... for none go back beyond the sixteenth century... None come even close to Christ ... the original owner... the founder. How unfortunate ... how tragic ... that non-Catholics never stop to examine their title deeds” What's the Truth About Catholics, page 69.**

The proof is before the reader to examine. Regardless of their many man-made doctrines and practices, such as *worship of Mary, papal infallibility, infant baptism, indulgences, celibacy for their priesthood, the rosary (prayer beads), prayers for the dead, holy waters and others*, the Catholic Church claims to be the only true Mother Church upon its insistence that they are the only church to trace its origin from Christ and the apostles. To Catholics, it matters not that their church usurps the teaching of Christ and the apostles, but only that they can trace their history to the first century.

**Verse 8-12 “And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness”**

The “powers and signs and lying wonders” are a notable feature of the Roman Catholic Church. The delusion that pervades Catholicism is so strong that belief in relics continues even though they have been exposed as false. For example, the bones of “St. Rosalia” in Palermo, Sicily, were for many centuries used for effective cures, but when examined by an anatomist were revealed to be the bones of a goat! Nevertheless, the so-called miraculous cures continued, which is a source of income for the Catholic Church.

Catholics have claimed to see many visions or sightings of Mary and Jesus; who in turn, deliver to them some special message. Special “saints” within the Catholic Church are claimed to have miraculous power to heal and bless people. The Jesuits of Vienna in 1583 are said to have cast out 12,652 demons. Catholics are taught that special blessings come by touching various statues or persons associated with the church. This practice has almost entirely withered away the big toe on a massive statue of the apostle Peter in St. Peter's Basilica.

Other “powers and signs and lying wonders” include: the blood of St. Januarius is claimed to liquefy three times each year, though normally in the form of fine powder. When this occurs, the blood is paraded through the streets, where those who worship the relic are promised deliverance from all calamities (no scientist has been permitted to examine the phials or their contents). A picture of Madonna (Mary and child) in Poland, 1949, wept tears of blood, according to Catholic authorities.

- The Roman Catholic Church claims to be in possession of the following relics: parts of Jesus' crib; thorns from Jesus' crown; the board on which Jesus' superscription was written at his crucifixion; the head of the soldier's spear that was thrust into Jesus' side (four different spears!); pieces of Jesus' cross (equaling tons!); 14 nails from which Jesus was hung; tears and blood of Jesus; parts of the table of the upper room; the head of John the Baptist (two of them: one in Rome, the other at Amien!); portions of the tables of the law given to Moses; the rods of Moses and Aaron; the tables at which Jesus' disciples sat; skulls of the three wise men; parings from the toenails of Peter; feathers from the wings of angels; dirt left over from the fashioning of Adam; milk from the Virgin Mary and others.

With such astonishing evidence, the reader can appreciate why the apostle concludes this section dealing with the MAN OF SIN with this statement: **“And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” 2 Thessalonians 2: 11-12.**

Sadly, the Roman Catholic system is based upon a multitude of vain “church tradition” and superstition rather than sound Bible reasoning. Therefore, we conclude where we began, in asserting there can be no “middle ground” concerning our opinion of the Roman Catholic Church. After taking into consideration the evidence both Catholic and Protestant alike must form one of

two opinions: either the Catholic Church and the Papacy are what they claim to be—the only true “mother church” with an infallible leader—or they constitute the most blasphemous Christian religion known to man.

**“The Church,” declared Pope Pius IX in 1864, “has the power to define dogmatically the religion of the Catholic Church to be the only true religion” Roman Catholicism page 40-41.**

***Revelation 18:4 “And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”***

### **IS THE POPE INFALLIBLE?**

According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, the *Vatican Council* determined as **“a divinely revealed dogma”** that **“the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks *ex cathedra*, that is, when in the exercise of his office as pastor and teacher of all Christians he defines, by virtue of his supreme Apostolic authority, a doctrine of faith and morals to be held by the whole Church—is, by reason of the Divine assistance promised him in blessed Peter, possessed of that infallibility with which the Divine Redeemer which His Church to be endowed in defining doctrines of faith and morals; and consequently that such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are irreformable of their own nature (ex sese) and not by reason of the Church's consent.”**

Since the word “infallible” means “not able to err,” the Catholic Church asserts that the Roman Pontiff is unerring in any doctrine of faith and morals when he exercises his teaching office. Not only do Protestants reject this claim, we have found that most Catholics do as well. In fact, modern popes have completely changed long-standing church positions on critical “moral” subjects, such as homosexuality and evolution. Is this infallibility?

Several popes—including Virilinus, Innocent III, Clement IV, Gergory XI, Hadrian VI, and others—outright rejected the doctrine of papal infallibility. Many popes have condemned and overturned previous pontiffs in matters of doctrine and morals.

For example, Pope Steven VI (896-897) brought former Pope Formosus (891-896) to trial, and proved him guilty of various charges. Besides the fact that this event provides evidence that one pope condemned another, the account is more horrible than what appears for Pope Formosus had been dead for eight months when Pope Stephen VI brought his corpse from the tomb and placed it on the throne to face charges!

According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, **“the second successor of Stephen had (Formosus' body)... reinterred with full honors in St. Peter's. He furthermore annulled at a synod the decisions of the court of Stephen VI, and declared all orders conferred by Formosus valid...On the other hand Sergius III (904-911) approved in a Roman synod the decisions of Stephen's synod against Formosus.”** Such strong disagreement among popes certainly destroys the idea of papal infallibility.

For example, Pope Sixtus V had a version of the Bible prepared that he declared to be authentic, while two years later Pope Clement VII declared it full of errors. Pope Hadrian II (867-872) declared civil marriages to be valid, but Pope Pius VII (1800-1823) condemned them as invalid. Pope Eugene IV (1431-1447) condemned Joan of Arc to be burned alive as a witch, while later, Pope Benedict IV declared her a “saint” in 1919.

When Pope John Paul II endorsed the theory of evolution in October 1996, the entire Christian world, Protestant and Catholic alike, was taken aback. In his attempts to bridge two opposing views, Pope John Paul II said that “theories of evolution are sound as long as they accept that creation was God's work”—AP (10/25/96).

Likewise, on Sept 11, 2013 Pope Francis wrote: “You ask me if the God of the Christians forgives those who don't believe and who don't seek the faith. I start by saying—and this is a fundamental thing—that God's mercy has no limits if you go to him with a sincere and contrite heart. The issue for those who do not believe in God is to obey their conscience.”

In July of 2013, Pope Francis stated: “If someone is gay and is looking for the Lord, who am I to judge him?”

In May of 2018, the pope declared to a gay man who was a victim of sexual abuse by a Catholic priest “God made you like that and loves you like that.”

- **“The Protestant principle is: The Bible and nothing but the Bible; the Bible to them, is the sole theological source; there is no revealed truths save the truths contained in the Bible... Catholics, on the other hand, hold that there may be, that there is in fact, and that there must of necessity be certain revealed truths apart from those contained in the Bible...  
“Holy Scripture is therefore not the only theological source of the Revelation made by God to His Church. Side by side with Scripture there is tradition, side by side with the written revelation there is oral revelation. This granted, it is impossible to be satisfied with the Bible alone for the solution of all dogmatic questions. Such was the first field of controversy between Catholic theologians and the Reformers”—Catholic Encyclopedia**

2 Timothy 3:13-17 *“But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works”*