

Can We Identify Antichrist?

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◆ INTRODUCTION ◆

"Even so, Come [quickly], Lord Jesus"

Few subjects have intrigued the student of prophecy more than the Antichrist—"Man of Sin." Small wonder, all Bible-believing Christians with the Apostle John long to be united with our Heavenly Bridegroom at his return, the event which will bring the satisfying grand fulfillment of "that blessed hope" (Titus 2:13). Excited by Paul's clue in 2 Thessalonians 2:8 that the Man of Sin must first be revealed before Christ returns, speculation on the identity of this mysterious figure has always been intense....

Eager for their Bridegroom's return, Christians during the first three centuries concluded that the Pagan Roman Empire was undoubtedly the Man of Sin. In the sixteenth century, the rallying cry of the Reformation leaders was that Papacy was the Man of Sin. And so the imminent return of Christ was the heart-throbbing expectation of Christians during the centuries that followed.

With the rebirth of the State of Israel in 1948 and Jewish zealots calling for the construction of the third temple, a literal, superhuman Man of Sin sitting in a literal temple in Jerusalem became a popular option of prophetic interpretation. What are the scriptural merits of this popular concept of Antichrist?

How can we identify the Antichrist, the Man of Sin, which must come before Jesus Christ can return for his Bride, his Church? When then can John's prayer representing the longings of the Church for centuries be answered?

◆ CHAPTER ONE ◆

*The Antichrist
and the
“Little Horn”*

The literal Man of Sin concept holds that the four *beasts* of Daniel 7 represent four governments or empires. The “little horn” of the fourth beast (vss. 8, 11, 20) symbolizes a single individual who is the Man of Sin. At the same time this concept claims that the Leopard *Beast* of Revelation 13 pictures not a government, but a personal Man of Sin and that the ten horns (verse 1) picture ten governments that support this worldwide dictator. But this interpretation is completely inconsistent with itself.

Inconsistent Interpretation

Daniel 7	Revelation 13
Horn = Individual Man of Sin	Horns = Governments
Beast = Government	Beasts = Individual Man of Sin

Once the Bible identifies a symbol, then we are on shaky ground to assign that symbol a different meaning. Since Daniel identifies these beasts as governments, most agree that these beasts of Daniel 7 are universal empires: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. By what logic then are the beasts of Revelation symbolic of an individual when beasts in Daniel are admittedly governments? Also, is it not inconsistent to claim the

little horn in Daniel is a man, whereas the horns of Revelation are governments? Consistency requires a uniform application of the beasts and horns in both Daniel and Revelation.

The justification for this reversal of interpretation is the claim that the Leopard Beast of Revelation 13 is referred to by a personal pronoun *he*; whereas the government beasts of Daniel are not. This reasoning, however, is simply not valid. The fourth beast (Daniel 7:19-20), which all agree represents the Roman Empire, is also referred to by the personal pronoun *his*. Additionally, the beasts picturing Medo-Persia and Greece in Daniel 8:3-7 are continually referred to by the personal pronouns *he* and *him*. Therefore, “*he*” or “*him*” do not at all necessarily indicate a man.

In Daniel and Revelation beasts are governments of long duration—empires. Horns are governmental powers within these empires. They can be sequential as in Daniel 7. Or they can be contemporaneous as in Revelation 13. According to history, Papacy was a power which grew out of the Roman Empire. Papacy as the “little horn” of Daniel 7 was a sequential government power erupting as a horn from within the Pagan Roman Empire. But in Revelation 13 Papacy is represented as a beast, actually a continuation of the Roman *beast* of Daniel 7 from the time the little horn emerged—the Papal Holy Roman Empire.

The Persecution of the Saints

Several other factors concerning the Little Horn prove that Antichrist is a system and not an individual. The “*little horn... wears out the saints of the most high*” (Daniel 7:25). This fact presents a dilemma if a personal Antichrist wears out the saints during a future “seven-year tribulation.” If, as some claim, the true Church is taken to heaven before the “tribulation,” who are the “saints of the most high” that are persecuted by the Man of Sin? They reply that these are the “tribulation saints” (Revelation 7:14) and not the *saints or Church of Christ* who are taken before the tribulation. They add that these “tribulation saints” will be in the Kingdom as subjects, but have no part in reigning with Christ in his Kingdom. This reigning in the Kingdom, they say, is

reserved exclusively for the *Church of Christ* who previous to the tribulation have been gathered together to Christ.

This difference cannot be correct. The same saints that are persecuted by the Little Horn, the Man of Sin, are also given the Kingdom. The sequence of events in Daniel 7 is significant: First, Christ is brought before the Heavenly Father and given the Kingdom (vss. 13, 14). The saints of Daniel 7, like Christ, are given the Kingdom (vss. 21, 22) *after* the Little Horn “made war with [them] the saints and prevailed against them.” Notice—the *saints* that are persecuted by the Little Horn are the same *saints* that reign with Christ. The *saints* of Daniel 7 are not the “tribulation saints” of Revelation 7. Only Christ and his Church reign in his Kingdom.

Therefore, “the saints of the most high” of verse 22 are not the “tribulation saints,” but the Church of Christ who reigns with Christ. This consistent reasoning also provides us the time element for the Man of Sin. The Little Horn persecutes these saints. Consequently, the Little Horn, the Man of Sin, must be revealed *before* the Day of Christ when the saints are resurrected—and before the tribulation occurs. Thus, a future, literal Man of Sin concept crumbles. The Man of Sin could not persecute saints who already are in heaven.

“The Seven Years’ Tribulation”

In fact, the whole “seven-year tribulation” concept dissolves before the Book of Daniel. “The saints of the most high” are worn out by the Little Horn for a period of a “time, times, and the dividing of time” (Daniel 7:25), which most agree refers to 3 ½ years or 1260 days. Since the saints persecuted by the Man of Sin are the Church who reign with Christ and not the tribulation saints, this 1260-day persecution must occur *before* the great tribulation and not be part of that tribulation.

The popular, literal Man of Sin view just does not harmonize with Daniel 7 and Revelation 13, the very scriptures that are used as an evidence for this teaching.... We must go back to the basic scriptures of the Apostles which clearly delineate the characteristics that enable us to identify the Man of Sin—the Antichrist.

♦ CHAPTER TWO ♦

What Do the Apostles Say?

The Apostle Paul’s discussion in his letter to the Thessalonians is essential in identifying the Man of Sin. In 2 Thessalonians 2:3-9 (KJV), Paul mentions three names for Antichrist:

1. The Man of Sin (Vs. 3)
2. The Mystery of Iniquity (Vs. 7)
3. That Wicked [One] (Vs. 8)

If the Man of Sin and Mystery of Iniquity are, indeed, names of the same entity, then we have an important clue as to both the identity and the time of operation of the Man of Sin.

Most translations—including the NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION (NIV) and THE NEW AMERICAN STANDARD (NAS)—leave no doubt that all three names refer to the same entity.

2 THESS. 3:3-8 (NIV)	2 THESS. 3:3-8 (NAS)
3 Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.	3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction.
4 He opposes and exalts himself over everything that is called God or is worshipped, and even sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God.	4 Who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.

5 Don’t you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things?

6 And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time.

7 For the **secret power of lawlessness** is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way.

8 And then **the lawless one** will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.

5 Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?

6 And you know what restrains him now, so that in his times he may be revealed.

7 For the **mystery of lawlessness** is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way.

8 And then **that lawless one** will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming.

Notice the names, “Man of Lawlessness” and “Mystery of Lawlessness” (vss. 3 and 7). These two translations are based on the two oldest Greek manuscripts of the New Testament where the same Greek word *anomia* (ἀνομία) is the basis of both names, “Man of Sin” (*anomia*) and “mystery of iniquity” (*anomia*).^[1] Actually, all three names (vss. 3, 7 and 8) contain this same basic Greek word. The NAS translates this basic Greek word *anomia* in the English, “man of lawlessness” (vs. 3), “mystery of lawlessness” (vs. 7) and “that lawless one” (vs. 8).

Obviously “that lawless one” (vs. 8) that is destroyed during the Lord’s second advent is the “man of lawlessness” (vs. 3) who is also called the “mystery of lawlessness” (vs. 7).

<p>NAS: That Lawless One = Man of Lawlessness = Mystery of Lawlessness</p> <p>KJV: That Wicked = Man of Sin = Mystery of Iniquity</p>

^[1] Constantine Tischendorf, THE NEW TESTAMENT WITH READINGS OF OLD MANUSCRIPTS (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Company, Limited, 1869), 330.

Although the name “man of lawlessness” is more Scripturally accurate, the name “Man of Sin” is the name of popular usage. Therefore, we will continue to use “Man of Sin” in this treatise as rendered in the King James Version.

Origin of the Man of Sin

Having established the Man of Sin and Mystery of Iniquity as names of the same entity, we can readily understand the important clues the Apostle Paul provides us in 2 Thessalonians 2:7 identifying the Man of Sin.

Clue #1
Already at Work

Paul calls the Man of Sin the Mystery of Iniquity and observes that it is already at work in his day. The Man of Sin could not be a literal man for he would be nearly two thousand years old by now!

Clue #2
Mystery Class

Why did Paul call the Man of Sin the Mystery of Iniquity? Paul’s lesson of contrast is clear. Remember the beautiful mystery of the true Church described in his letters (Ephesians 5:30-32; Colossians 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 12:12-28). Christ is “not one member, but many”!

Just as the human body is a union of many members, so the church is the body of Christ. Just as there is a mystery class of righteous or justified believers who compose Christ, so there is a mystery class of iniquity—evil workers—who comprise Antichrist.

Clue #3
Removal of Pagan Rome

All agree the King James Version is a poor translation of vs. 7 and 8, “For the mystery of iniquity [Man of Sin] doth already work [in Paul’s day]: only he who now letteth [Greek, *restrains*]^[2] will let [*restrain*] until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked [Man of Sin] be revealed.” All other translations are similar to the NAS. “For the mystery of lawlessness (Man of Sin) is already at work; only he who now *restrains* will *do so* until he is taken out of the way. And then that lawless one (Man of Sin) will be revealed.”

The Pagan Roman Empire was the restraining factor. Any profession of Christianity, true or false, was restrained in varying degrees during the first three centuries of church history. But the political power opportunists were ever present in the Church.

When Constantine became Emperor of Rome, the power-grasping Nicolaitan element found its opportunity and Christianity was declared the religion of the Roman Empire. When “he” (Pagan Rome) ceased to *restrain* the Christian Church, it was just a matter of time before a worldly Christian Church claimed to be the kingdom of God on earth.

^[2] The Greek word *kateko* is incorrectly rendered “letteth” in the KJV. *Kateko* is used eighteen other times in the New Testament and in every instance contains the thought of “hold” (possess) or “withhold” (restrain). THE NEW ENGLISHMAN’S GREEK CONCORDANCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT (Wilmington, DE: Associated Publishers & Authors, 1976), 417. It is translated “withholdeth” in the KJV of vs. 6 and “restrains” in the NAS version of vs. 6.

Clue #4
Revealed before Return of Christ

The Man of Sin is a “mystery” or secret during its incipient beginnings. This secret stage is in contrast to its revealment during its future full-scale operation. And that revealment, Paul explains, would come *before* “our gathering together unto him”(vss. 1-3), which many refer to as the “rapture.”

Carefully study 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3, NAS:

1 Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him.

2 that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed. . .to the effect that the *day of the Lord has come*.

3 Let no one in any way deceive you, *for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction.*

Verse 2 establishes that “the day of the Lord” includes **both** “*the coming of our Lord and our gathering together with him.*”

When Paul says in vs.3, “it will not come,” he is referring to “the day of the Lord” (vs. 2). Since the day of the Lord is the time of the “coming of our Lord Jesus and our gathering together to him,” we may conclude the “man of lawlessness” or the “Man of Sin” is revealed before the first resurrection of the saints or “rapture.”

This sequence presented by the Apostle Paul presents a problem to those who hold the pre-tribulation rapture scenario (that Jesus returns to rapture his saints before the tribulation). Paul is here teaching that the Man of Sin is revealed *before* “our gathering together to him,” whereas, pre-tribulationists^[3] believe the Man of Sin is revealed *after* their rapture.

^[3] Those who hold that the church will be taken before the tribulation.

Clue #5
Preceded by a Doctrinal Apostasy

“The day of Christ” could not come except there come “a falling away first” [apostasy] and secondly, “that man of sin be revealed” (vss. 2-3, KJV).

These two events must precede “the day of Christ.” “First,” the “falling away [Greek, *apostasia*]” and then the “Man of Sin be revealed.” Many believe this *apostasia* is a rebellion or wave of anarchy that will cause the world to accept a superman dictator who will during the last half of the 7-year tribulation be revealed as the “Man of Sin.”

However, this Greek word *apostasia* as used in the Bible means “a defection from the truth”^[4] and not a political rebellion. *Apostasia* is used twice in the New Testament—here and in Acts 21:21, where the text speaks of those who “forsake” the teachings of Moses.^[5] The revealment of the Man of Sin, which is a system and not an individual, will be preceded by a doctrinal defection and not a political rebellion.

Clue #6
Exalted in the Temple, the Church

The “Man of Sin” “exalts himself” “in the temple of God.”

2 Thess. 2:4 (NAS)

...who opposes and exalts himself [above every so-called] god or [object of worship,] so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.

^[4] Dr. James Strong, STRONG’S EXHAUSTIVE CONCORDANCE (Grand Rapids: Guardian Press), Gk. word #646.

^[5] NEW ENGLISHMAN’S GREEK CONCORDANCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, 76.

Can there be any doubt as to what “temple of God” Paul means? Paul speaks of only one temple of God in all his writings. “Know ye not that *ye are the temple of God*” (1 Corinthians 3:16). Paul speaks of Christians as being “built upon the foundation of the apostles” and “Jesus Christ...the chief corner stone; in whom all the building...together groweth up unto an *holy temple in the Lord*” (Ephesians 2:19-21). The church of Christ is now the temple of God.

Some speculate that Israelis will construct a literal temple just before or during the first part of a 7-year tribulation. But when God destroyed His literal temple in A.D. 70 during the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, that temple was only a picture or type of the Church which is the actual or antitypical temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16). God left no instructions for the Jews to build a temple before He sets up His Kingdom in Jerusalem. By no stretch of the imagination will a man-initiated, man-ordained temple built before God’s Kingdom be accepted and called by God as *His* temple—“the temple of God.”

Therefore, when the Apostle Paul said the Man of Sin will exalt himself in “the temple of God,” he meant Antichrist would exalt itself in the “temple” of professed Christians. “Know ye not, ye are the temple of God.”

Apostle John and Antichrist

Most students of prophecy agree that the Antichrist and the Man of Sin are one and the same entity. The Apostle John’s evaluation of Antichrist in 1 John 2 somewhat parallels the Apostle Paul’s description of the Man of Sin in 2 Thessalonians 2.

1 John 2:18 (NAS)

Children, *it is the last hour*; and just as you heard that [the] antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen; from this we know that *it is the last hour*.

By the authority of the Apostle John, the Christian dispensation is called the “last hour” during which the Antichrist—the Man of Sin—would come.

Clue #7
“Anti Means” “In Place Of”

The Apostle John calls the Man of Sin the “*Antichrist*” for good reason. The name Man of Sin implies an entity that would be against or opposing the righteous ways of Christ. But the Greek prefix *anti* signifies “instead of” or “in place of.”^[6] *Anti* is used 20 times in the New Testament as a complete word and never does it have the meaning of “against.” Nineteen times it is translated “for” as in Romans 12:17, “Recompense no man evil for evil.”^[7] We should not return or replace evil with evil. Thus, “*Antichrist*” replaces the position of Christ. Since Antichrist is also called the Man of Sin, obviously the operating principles of this system would be also against the principles of Christ.

[6] James Strong, Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, Gk. Word #473.

[7] New Englishmen's Greek Concordance Of The New Testament, 467.

Summary of the Apostles' Clues:

1. The Man of Sin was at work in Paul's day, but was not a literal man for then he would be almost 2,000 years old.
2. The Man of Sin is a counterfeit body of Christ, that is, a system of lawlessness intent on setting up a pseudo Kingdom of God contrary to God's arrangement and laws.
3. The Man of Sin was held back by the Pagan Roman Empire until a Roman Emperor joined forces with the power-hungry element of the Christian Church.
4. The Man of Sin system would be in full operation, identified and revealed before the dead and living in Christ are "gathered" to him.
5. The revealment of the Man of Sin system would be preceded by the apostasy, a great defection from pure Christian doctrine.
6. Professed Christians are the temple of God in which the Man of Sin will be exalted.
7. "Antichrist" signifies not only against Christ, but in place of Christ.

♦ CHAPTER THREE ♦

A Search Through History

Using the clues left by the Apostles Paul and John, we will trace through history for the Antichrist/Man of Sin system with the searchlight of the Scriptures. Our time frame, of course, is the Christian Age—between the Apostles' day and the gathering of the dead and living in Christ to himself in the first resurrection at our Lord's return.

The Apostle Paul said, "The apostasy comes first." No Protestant will deny that in the first centuries of the Christian Age, there was a great "falling away" (apostasy). Paul again warned of this apostasy in 2 Timothy 4:3-4. "In later times [not the "last times"—the Greek literally means after the present time] some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons...Men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from meat..." This description gives us further clues as to specific characteristics of the "Man of Sin." There is, of course, only one church that for centuries prohibited its clergy to marry and forbade the eating of meat on Friday.

Jude was one of the last writers of the New Testament. By the time Jude wrote the book that bears his name, some of the apostles had already died in the Lord. False teachers had become influential. It was necessary for Jude to sound an alarm to "earnestly contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints" (vs. 3). Jude warns that just as predicted, "certain men crept in unawares" and were teaching error (vss. 3-4). Then he devoted the rest of his epistle to warning against the dire consequences of their doctrine. Yes, just as Paul predicted in his first letter to Timothy (4:1-6), the apostasy would shortly follow.

Debut of the Man of Sin

The defection from pure doctrine that continued in the next few centuries was incredible. The system that this error developed was monstrous in both its claims and deeds. Indeed, very soon the Man of Sin made a debut in full splendor....

Pompous rituals and elaborate ceremonies replaced the simple preaching of the Gospel. Salvation was sought no longer through the blood of Christ alone—but from holy water, relics of saints, medals and amulets, the rosary and the intercession of Mary. Multitudes flocked to converted heathen temples to pray to and adore the very same idols which the Pagans had worshipped a short time before. The names of the statues were simply changed from those of Pagan gods and heroes to the names of Christian martyrs and saints.

The Roman Emperor, who as Pontifex Maximus (“Chief Religious Ruler”) had been the head of all the Pagan priests, vacated his office in favor of the Bishop of Rome, the new Pontifex Maximus. Whereas the Roman emperors had claimed to possess the “Keys of Janus and Cybele,” the new supreme pontiffs, dressed in the same costume as their forerunners (the Pagan Roman emperors), claimed possession of the “Keys of St. Peter” and attempted to prove that the Apostle Peter had once been the Bishop and Pope of Rome—a claim completely unsubstantiated by history.

This Man of Sin growing out of the apostasy as foreseen by Paul, exalted “himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God” (NAS). Since the “temple” Paul refers to is not a literal building but the Church of God, the self-exaltation of the Popes of Rome in the Church of God was extravagant beyond measure. Applying divine prerogatives, they claimed that every human being must be subject to their authority.

The System—Not Individuals

Not any one Pope was the Antichrist—much less is every Catholic or Pope a Man of Sin. The Man of Sin, Antichrist, the “Mystery of Iniquity,” is the Papal *system*. It is not an individual.

Astounding as these false claims are, they deceived the whole Christian world during most of Papacy’s dark reign. Only a faithful few escaped their baneful influence and remained loyal to their true Lord and Head. And as already noted, the Greek prefix *anti* signifies not merely “against” or “opposing,” but also “instead, in the place of.”

Thus, Antichrist is not simply an opponent of our Lord and his truth, but an impostor, a usurper of his position. Claiming to be the “Vicar of Christ” on earth and supreme “Head of the Church,” each Pope in turn, has applied the Messianic promises and titles of Scripture to himself. Even kings were required to kiss the Pope’s great toe, in supposed fulfillment of Psalm 2:12, “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry.” However, attributing the purest motives to the Popes, the Papacy would still be the Antichrist

If the development of such a pompous church defected from the original simplicity and purity of the apostolic church seems implausible, a glance at history will confirm our conclusions. The testimony of history presents a clear case of how the Papacy developed and claimed to be reigning in the place of Christ and his Kingdom on earth. (*See Appendix for a historic documentation of Antichrist’s incredible rise to power.*)

♦ CHAPTER FOUR ♦

*Man of Sin
Becomes the Antichrist*

Three centuries of defection from the teachings of the Apostles had gradually prepared the worldly Church to step into the role of the Antichrist. In A.D. 313 Constantine embraced Christianity and the Church embraced Constantine.

Although the next century witnessed an even further development of the Man of Sin, still, a minority of faithful Christians were not in harmony with this aberrant church-state organization. But with the stroke of a pen by the intellectual spokesman of the Church, the Man of Sin was finally transformed into *The Antichrist*—in the primary, fullest sense of the word—“instead of,” “in place of” Christ.

Between A.D. 413-426, Augustine wrote in a 22-volume work, the city of god, that Christians were all wrong in waiting for the second advent before the Kingdom of God is established on earth. Rather, he advanced the idea, the Catholic Church united with imperial Rome was in reality the Kingdom of God now reigning on earth. Augustine proceeded to weave an incredible fabric of prophetic fantasy to prove his new theology.^[8] He claimed that Christ at his first advent was the “stone” that smote the image and would fill the whole earth (Daniel 2):^[9]

[8] These following quotes and citations from Augustine's writing are found in the collection, A SELECT LIBRARY OF THE NICENE AND POST-NICENE FATHERS (hereafter abbreviated NPNF). These quotes and citations are also found in THE PROPHETIC FAITH OF OUR FATHERS by Le Roy Edwin Froom (Washington, D.C.: *Review and Herald*, 1950), Vol. 1, 473-490.

[9] Augustine, TRACTATE 4 ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN, Sec. 4, NPNF, 1st Series, Vol. 7, 26.

That stone increased and filled the whole earth: that he showed is His Kingdom, which is the church, with which He has filled the whole face of the earth.

The Millennium, Augustine advocated, was figurative of the period between the first and second advents. “From the first coming of Christ to the second time...during this interval, which goes by the name of a thousand years, he [Satan] should not seduce the Church.”^[10] That Satan was bound for a thousand years in God's Kingdom, Augustine construed to mean Satan could only inflict selective harm. “The devil is prohibited and restrained from seducing those nations which belong to Christ...” “By the abyss” is meant the countless multitudes of the wicked...when prevented from harming believers he takes more complete possession of the ungodly.^[11]

Augustine taught two resurrections for his Kingdom, the “first resurrection” of Revelation 20 is spiritual—“from the death of sin to the life of righteousness.” The second resurrection is that of the body which occurs at the end of the world, when the thousand years end. Thus he wrote, “There are two resurrections,—the one the first and spiritual resurrection, which has its place in this life...the other the second, which does not occur now, but in the end of the world.”^[12]

The Catholic Church readily embraced Augustine's theology that the Kingdom of God had begun. Then for centuries nothing could stand in the way of extending this kingdom to the ends of the earth. The Catholic Church, no longer a chaste virgin waiting the return of her espoused Bridegroom to set up his Kingdom (2 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 22:17), united with the kings of earth to set up her own kingdom. Revelation 17 describes such a union as symbolic “fornication.”

To this day, the Vatican with its vast network of ambassadors that reach around the world still claims to be the Kingdom of God on earth.

[10] Augustine, THE CITY OF GOD, Book 20, Ch. 8, NPNF, 1st Series, Vol. 2, 428.

[11] *Ibid.*, 428.

[12] *Ibid.*, 425, 426.

“Who Sits as God in the Temple of God”

2 Thessalonians 2:8

Before Pagan Rome became Papal Rome, the Pagan Emperor claimed the title of Pontifex Maximus, that is, the Greatest Religious Ruler. As a demigod, in some sense descended from their heathen deities, he was worshipped and his statues adored. Then when Pagan Rome became Papal Rome, the Emperor who still possessed the title of Pontifex Maximus was delighted with Augustine’s teaching that the Papal Roman Empire was the Kingdom of God on earth. But still it was the Catholic civil Emperor and not yet the Papacy that sat as God in the temple of God and declared himself the divine ruler over all Christians.

At that point in history (A.D. 413), no single one of the eight-hundred bishops of the empire was yet prepared to demand recognition as the head or pope. But several had their eyes on the prize. The prestige of the bishops of Rome, however, rapidly grew when the seat of the empire was transferred to Constantinople. As the city of Rome fell subject to the invasion of the barbarians from the north, the bishop of Rome was left as the most permanent and time-honored protector. Finally, in A.D. 455, the city of Rome was invaded and plundered by the Vandals, and Leo, the bishop of Rome, improved the opportunity for claiming spiritual power.^[13]

Beware! I am the successor of St. Peter, to whom God has given the keys of the kingdom of heaven...I am the living representative of divine power on the earth: I am Caesar, a Christian Caesar...I absolve all subjects from allegiance to kings; I give and take away, by divine right, all thrones and principalities of Christendom.

Succeeding bishops of Rome made the same pompous claims, but it was not until A.D. 533 that the bishop of Rome was so recognized by the Roman Emperor, Justinian I. Excerpts from a letter from Justinian reveals significantly the emperor’s acknowl-

[13] TIME IS AT HAND (New Brunswick: Bible Students Congregation of New Brunswick, 1977), 295.

edgment of the Pope John, Patriarch of Rome—as well as what the emperor expected in return:^[14]

The victorious Justinian...to John, the most holy archbishop of the fostering city of Rome...we have hastened to make subject to the See of your Holiness, and to unite with it, all the priests of the whole Eastern district...your Holiness...who is the Head of all the holy churches. For in all points...we are eager to add to the honor and authority of your See...now we entreat your Blessedness to pray for us, and to obtain for us the protection of heaven.

In another letter to the bishop of Constantinople, the arch rival of Pope John, the Emperor Justinian warned him to acknowledge Pope John of Rome as “his supreme Holiness, the Pope of Ancient Rome.”^[15] The Eastern Roman Emperor not only accepted the Bishop of Rome as Pope or head of the Catholic Church, but also as the authority over the Emperor himself.

However, one problem remained for complete sovereignty of the Church: The Ostrogothic kingdom that ruled Italy challenged the Pope’s authority. Consequently, Justinian dispatched his army to Italy. In A.D. 539 the Ostrogoths were defeated,^[16] an event significantly marked in prophecy. The “little horn” (Papal Rome) that grew out of the “fourth beast, dreadful and terrible” (Pagan Rome), first needed to displace three “horns” (political powers). The third “horn”—the Ostrogoths—now out of the way, the “little horn” could then be free to flourish and speak “great things” (Daniel 7:7-8). Now the Pope of Rome reigned supreme as the Pontifex Maximus—both civil and ecclesiastical ruler—over the entire Papal Roman Empire.

“The Holy Roman Empire”

The French kings, Pepin and Charlemagne, each in turn brought his army to the protection of Papacy’s dominion. In A.D. 800 Charlemagne formally presented Papacy with the Papal

[14] VOLUME OF THE CIVIL LAW. Codices lib. I tit. i (A.D. 533).

[15] Ibid., 75.

[16] Gibbon, THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE, Vol. 3, 536 (including footnote), 537.

States and the reign of the “Holy Roman Empire” began.^[17] Far from being holy, its history was written in blood. This transfer of power from Pagan Rome to Papal Rome was also a fulfillment of the prophecy in Revelation: “And the beast which I saw [generally accepted as Antichrist]...the dragon [civil Rome] gave him [Antichrist] his power and his seat and great authority” (Revelation 13:2).

The following is a capsulation of this supreme sovereignty of the Papacy:^[18]

The pontiff...trode on the necks of Kings, made and unmade sovereigns, disposed of states and kingdoms, and, as the great high-priest and vicegerent of the Almighty on earth, established an authority as lord paramount, and reigned over heads of other sovereigns...

Did Papacy as the Man of Sin fulfill sitting “in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God” (2 Thessalonians 2:4)? A standard Roman Catholic authority will speak for itself:^[19]

The Pope is of such dignity and highness that he is not simply a man but, as it were, God, and the vicar [representative] of God...the pope’s excellence and power are not only about heaven, terrestrial and infernal things, but he is also above angels...He is of such great dignity and power that he occupies one and the same tribunal with Christ...The pope is, as it were, God on earth...the Pope is of so great authority and power that he can modify, declare or interpret the divine law.

As the centuries progressed, the Popes became more and more arrogantly articulate in their presumptuous claims. “The pope holds the place of the true God,” declared Pope Innocent III (A.D. 1198-1216). The Lateran Council (A.D. 1123) acclaimed

[17] John M’Clintock and James Strong, *CYCLOPAEDIA OF BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL, AND ECCLESIASTICAL LITERATURE* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1877), Vol. 7, 630, and Vol. 9, 996.

[18] Adolphe Thiers & Edward E. Bowen, *THE CAMPAIGNS OF NAPOLEON* (London: Rivingtons, 1875), 89, 90.

[19] John Ferrar, *AN ECCLESIASTICAL DICTIONARY* (London: John Mason, 1858).

the Pope as “Prince of the Universe.” St. Bernard (A.D. 1090-1153) wrote that “none except God is like the Pope, either in heaven or on earth.” And Pope Nicholas (A.D. 858-856) boasted, “What can you make me but God?”

Ferrar’s (Roman Catholic) *ECCLESIASTICAL DICTIONARY* states, “The Pope, is as it were, God on Earth.”^[20] No wonder the Revelator wrote, “And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies... And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven” (Revelation 13:5, 6).

Clearly, the “Little Horn” of Papacy which grew out of the Roman Empire beast fits the description with “eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.”

[20] *Ibid.*, Thomas J. Capel, *THE POPE: THE VICAR OF CHRIST, THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH* (New York: Pustet & Co., 1885). FOX’S *BOOK OF MARTYRS* cited by H. Gratton Guinness, *THE APPROACHING END OF THE AGE* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1878), 191-192.

♦ CHAPTER FIVE ♦

*The Man of Sin
Revealed*

Since it is necessary that the “Lawless One will be revealed” before the Lord returns, has this prophecy (2 Thessalonians 2:8) been fulfilled? The answer is yes. The Man of Sin was understood and “revealed” in the writings of the sixteenth century Reformation. The historic Protestant identification of Antichrist is not a matter of superficial arguments against a common adversary—the Papacy. The Reformers comprehended root causes and serious consequences of sin in man and his institution. The Romish Church is the religious personification of fallen human nature.

The noted historian D’Aubigne observed, “We cannot reproach Rome with anything which does not recoil upon man himself.”^[21] For good reason, the Apostle Paul calls Antichrist the Man of Sin.

The Little Horn (Daniel 7:8) had “eyes like the eyes of *man*.” The leopard-like beast which all agree is the same power as the Little Horn—is said to have “the number of a *man*” (Revelation 13:18). The Papal system was developed by man—not God. But many were very good men. They might even have worked with great energy and self sacrifice to build up the Church of God on earth. But they gradually shaped the development of the church

according to “the eyes of man”— man’s carnal wisdom and understanding. More and more the Church of Rome bore the image and superscription of “Man” until it sat in the temple of God acting as if it were God. The Papacy was the embodiment of the singular sin of all ages—man taking the place of God. “They glorified him not as God...but became vain in their imaginations” (Romans 1:21).

Lest we become haughty in identifying the Man of Sin, we must realize the Antichrist succumbed to the same struggle that every individual leader in the Church of God faces to this day. The temptation was and still is to dominate and rule.

The Reformation

Although many pre-Reformation writers perceived Papacy as the Man of Sin, the leaders of the sixteenth century Reformation wove this identification into a larger prophetic mosaic. That Martin Luther, the father of the Reformation, recognized the Papacy as the Man of Sin is obvious, “We are convinced that the Papacy is the seat of the true and real Antichrist.”^[22]

The Protestant Church of the Reformation saw Papacy as more than the apostate church. Prophecy became the rallying point of the Reformation. Protestants identified the Papacy as the prophetic Antichrist of Daniel and Revelation. They acted on that belief and many died for that conviction:^[23]

From the first, and throughout, that movement [the Reformation] was energized and guided by the prophetic Word. Luther never felt strong and free to war against the papal apostasy til he recognized the pope as antichrist. It was then he burned the papal Bull. Knox’s first sermon, the sermon which launched him on his mission as a Reformer, was on the prophecies concerning the papacy...All the Reformers were unanimous in the matter...It nerved them to resist the claims of that apostate church to the uttermost. It made them martyrs, it sustained them at the stake. And the views of the Reformers were shared by thousands, by hundreds of thousands.

[21] J. H. Merle D’Aubigne, HISTORY OF THE REFORMATION OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY, Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976), 32.

[22] D. MARTIN LUTHER’S WORKS, ed. Briefwechsel (Weimar, 1930-1948), Vol. 2, 167, cited in WHAT LUTHER SAYS, ed. Ewald M. Plass, Vol. 1, 34.

[23] H. Grattan Guinness, ROMANISM AND THE REFORMATION (Toronto: S. R. Briggs, [n.d.]), 250-260.

Not only did the Reformers proclaim the mighty truth of justification by faith for the liberation of men's souls, but they nerved thousands to break from the tyranny of the dark ages of the Papacy by explicitly identifying the Antichrist of Bible prophecy.

The symbols of Daniel, Paul and John were applied with tremendous effect. The realization that the incriminating finger of prophecy rested squarely on Rome aroused the consciousness of Europe. In alarm, Rome saw that she must successfully counteract this identification of Antichrist as the Papacy—or lose the battle.

The Counter Reformation

Jesuit scholarship rallied to the Roman cause by providing alternatives to the historical interpretation of the Protestants:

“Futurism”—Antichrist, a Man in the Future

The most successful tack was taken by *Francisco Ribera* (1537-1591) of Salamanca, Spain. He was the founder of the Futurist system of prophetic interpretation. Ribera argued that Antichrist would appear in the distant future. About 1590 Ribera published a 500-page commentary on the apocalypse denying the Protestant application of Antichrist to the Church of Rome. The following is a synopsis:

While the first few chapters in the Revelation were assigned to ancient Rome in the time of John, the greater part of the prophecies of the Revelation were assigned to the distant future—to events immediately preceding the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Antichrist would be a single evil person who would be received by the Jews and would rebuild the temple in Jerusalem.

Antichrist would rule the world from this temple in Jerusalem for a literal three and a half years.

Doesn't this 1590 presentation sound like a page right out of Hal Lindsey's LATE GREAT PLANET EARTH—or some other current evangelical's writings on the Antichrist and the 7-year tribulation?

Joseph Tanner in 1898 made these observations on the origin of Futurism:^[24]

The Jesuit Ribera tried to set aside the application of these prophecies to the papal power by bringing out the Futurist system, which asserts that these prophecies refer properly not to the career of the papacy, but to that of some future supernatural individual, who is yet to appear, and to continue in power for three and a half years. Thus, as Alford says, *the Jesuit Ribera, about A.D. 1580, may be regarded as the Founder of the Futurist system in modern times.*

Ribera's futurism was polished and popularized by the great Papal controversialist, Cardinal Bellarmine (1542-1621) of Italy. He took up the battle against Protestantism and became the foremost apologist for Rome in the Counter Reformation. Bellarmine insisted that the prophecies concerning Antichrist in Daniel, Paul and John had no application to the Papal power. Between 1581 and 1593 he published the most detailed defense of the Catholic faith ever produced. The following quotation summarizes:^[25]

For all Catholics think thus, that Antichrist will be one certain man; but all heretics teach...that Antichrist is expressly declared to be not a single person, but an individual throne or absolute kingdom, and apostate seat of those who rule over the church.

For 300 Years Protestants “Revealed” Antichrist

The Reformation Cry identifying Papacy as the Antichrist predicted in 2 Thessalonians 2:8 nerved countless thousands to leave the Roman Catholic Church. The concept fabricated by Catholic Jesuits that an individual Antichrist seated in a literal

^[24] Joseph Tanner, DANIEL AND THE REVELATION (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1898), 16, 17.

^[25] Robert Bellarmine, DE SUMMO PONTIFICI, DISPUTATIONS, 1593, Bk. 3, 185.

temple in Jerusalem would reign for 3 ½ years *had little effect*. So clearly was Papacy “revealed” as the Man of Sin that Protestants stood united for nearly 300 years in declaring this fact. Dr. L. E. Froom, the accepted authority on prophetic exposition in the Christian Church, noted that in the nineteenth century, three centuries after the Reformers first revealed Papacy as the Antichrist, all the leading prophetic expositors (62 European and 57 American) were “a unit in identifying the Antichrist as the Papacy.”^[26]

Wake Up, Protestants!

Two hundred and forty years after the Jesuit Ribera founded the Futurist school (individual man of Sin who will reign in a literal temple for 3 ½ years), John Darby, embraced Ribera’s Futurist concepts.

Darby, a founder of the Plymouth Brethren, embellished the idea of a future Antichrist with a Pre-tribulation-Secret-Rapture concept. S. P. Tregelles, whose scholarly works are still highly esteemed among evangelicals, was an associate of Darby in the Plymouth Brethren. Tregelles identified the origin of the Secret Rapture idea:^[27]

I am not aware that there was any definite teaching that there should be a Secret Rapture of the Church at a secret coming until this was given forth as an “utterance” in Mr. Irving’s church from what was then received as being the *voice of the Spirit*. But whether anyone ever asserted such a thing or not it was from that *supposed* revelation that the modern doctrine and the modern phraseology respecting it arose...it came not from Holy Scriptures, but from that which *falsely* pretended to be the Spirit of God.

The Pre-tribulationist—Secret—Rapture—Antichrist—Superman concept is not scriptural. Furthermore, this concept traces back to a *Protestant*, John Darby. He ironically utilized the *Catholic* idea

of a one-person Antichrist to counter the historic Protestant belief of Papacy as Antichrist, *which had stood for 300 years*. However, Darby’s *Catholic* view did not become popular among born-again Christians until after World War II.

Although a vociferous minority currently has yielded the 300-year-old historic Protestant view of Antichrist in favor of a Catholic view, the Antichrist was still unmistakably identified. That the Papacy is Antichrist was the rallying cry of the Reformation! There can be no doubt that the Man of Sin, The Antichrist, was completely “revealed” to the Christian Church as a necessary prerequisite to the second advent of Christ (2 Thessalonians 2:8).

But Antichrist will again take center stage at an “end-time drama” before it’s complete demise.

^[26] Dr. L. E. Froom, THE PROPHETIC FAITH OF OUR FATHERS, Vol. 4, 396.

^[27] S. P. Tregelles, THE HOPE OF CHRIST’S COMING, p. 35, cited by George L. Murry, MILLENNIAL STUDIES—A SEARCH FOR TRUTH (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1960), 138.

♦ CHAPTER SIX ♦

The 1,260 Days of Daniel *The Saints Are Worn Out*

As established in Chapter 1 of this treatise, the saints that are persecuted by the “little horn” (Daniel 7:25) compose the Church who reigns with Christ. Further, it was proven this 1,260-day persecution must occur *before* the great tribulation and not be part of that tribulation. These persecuted saints are not the “tribulation saints.”

What and when is this 1,260-day period? The Bible is its own interpreter. That is, the Lord has put into the Bible certain rules for interpreting symbols, parables, time prophecies, etc. If we ignore these basic Scriptural rules, then our understanding of scriptures will be confused.

The Scriptural key for interpreting time prophecy is found in Ezekiel 4:1-8. A 390-day period is prophesied and a key is also provided, “I have appointed thee *each day for a year.*” By this divinely provided rule of interpretation, 390 days equals 390 years. Based on this day-equals-a-year key revealed in Ezekiel, all readily agree that in the Seventy Weeks prophecy (Daniel 9:24), the seventy weeks refer to 490 years and not 490 literal days (70 weeks x 7 days = 490 days/years).

Why then do some make an exception to the 1,260 days of Daniel and Revelation and insist on a literal period of 1,260 days? According to the Lord’s rule of a day for a year, this period would be 1,260 years. When did it begin? How did it end?

As already proven, A.D. 539 marked an important prophetic date when the last of the three horns (civil powers)—standing in

the way of the Pope of Rome being recognized as the civil ruler of the Roman Empire—was removed (Daniel 7:8).

What followed was 1,260 years of unrelenting, pitiless bloody persecution of so-called heretics. Then it was that Popes, councils, theologians, kings, crusaders and inquisitors combined their fiendish powers to exterminate every opponent. This persecution reached its ultimate in the “Holy Inquisition.” Established by Pope Innocent III in A.D. 1204, it was applied with unimaginable cruelty in every country. Whole villages and towns were indiscriminately slaughtered on the theory that “God will know his own.” Tens of thousands were burned alive at the stake, while countless others were subjected to torture by the most hideous inventions. The following history, which can be verified by numerous records, is but a glimpse into the nightmare of the Dark Ages:^[28]

The Nightmare of the Dark Ages

Pope Innocent III proclaimed a crusade against the Albigenses and offered to all who would engage in it the pardon of all sins and an immediate passport to heaven without passing through purgatory. The city of Beziers was stormed and taken in 1209 and the citizens, without regard for age or sex, perished by the sword to the number of sixty thousand. Lavaur was besieged in 1211. The citizens were without discrimination put to death, four hundred being burned alive. The flourishing country of Languedoc was devastated, its cities burned, and its inhabitants swept away by fire and sword. It is estimated that one hundred thousand Albigenses fell in one day.

[28] These diabolical events are documented in the following reference works: Baron Thomas Babington Macaulay, *THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND FROM ASCENSION OF JAMES II* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1861). John L. Kotley, *THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC*, 1855. Jean Hinore D. Aubigne, *HISTORY OF THE GREAT REFORMATION* (New York: Robt. Carter, 1842). White, *ELEMENTS OF UNIVERSAL HISTORY*. Edward B. Elliot, *HORÆ APOCALYPTICÆ* (London: Seeley, Jackson & Holliday, 1860). William Byron Forbush, Ed., *FOX’S BOOK OF MARTYRS* (Philadelphia: John C. Winston Company, 1926).

All this rioting in blood and villainy was done in the name of religion: professedly for the glory of God, but really to uphold Antichrist, sitting in the temple of God [the church], showing himself that he is a god.... The clergy thanked God for the work of destruction and a hymn of praise was sung for the glorious victory at Lavaur.

But it would be a great mistake to suppose that the crusades against whole communities were the only persecutions. The quiet, steady *crushing* of individuals, in the aggregate also numbering thousands all over Papacy's wide domain ground steadily on "year after year, decade after decade, century after century" wearing out the saints of the Most High.

Charles V, Emperor of Germany and King of Spain and the Netherlands, persecuted the friends of the Reformation throughout his extensive dominions. Paolo reckons the number who in the Netherlands were executed on account of their religion at 50,000; and Grotius gives the list of the Belgic martyrs at 100,000. Charles, with his dying breath, exhorted his son, Philip II, to carry on to completion the work of persecution and extermination of heresy which he had begun.

Francis and Henry, the French kings, followed the example of Charles and Philip...The massacres of Merindol, Orange and Paris are forcible illustrations of their zeal in the cause of Antichrist. Roman Catholic historians admit that in compliance with a commission approved by the French parliament in Merindol, thousands, including men, women and children, were massacred, twenty-four towns were ruined and countrysides left waste and desolate. Five hundred women were thrown into a barn set on fire. When any leaped from the windows, they were received on the points of spears. Women were violated and children were murdered in the sight of their parents. Some were dashed over precipices and others dragged naked through the streets.

In the massacre of Orange in A.D. 1562, the Italian army sent by Pope Pius IV was commanded to slay men, women and children. The defenseless heretics were slain with the sword, precipitated from rocks, hanged, roasted over slow fires and exposed to shame and torture of every description.

The massacre of Huguenots in Paris on St. Bartholomew's day in 1572 is stigmatized even by Catholic historians as ferocious cruelty, without a parallel in all antiquity. The carnival of death lasted seven days. The city flowed with human blood and the same scenes were accordingly enacted in nearly all the surrounding provinces. Estimates of number slain vary from 25,000 to 70,000.

For this signal victory, a medal was struck by the king in memory of the massacre, bearing the inscription, "The slaughter of the Huguenots, 1572." The other side presented the raised figure of Pope Gregory XIII.

In 1641 Antichrist proclaimed a "war of religion" in Ireland and called on the people to massacre the Protestants by every means in their power. Protestant blood flowed freely throughout Ireland, houses were reduced to ashes, towns and villages were almost destroyed. Thousands died of cold and hunger while endeavoring to migrate to other lands. In the province of Ulster alone, over 154,000 Protestants were either massacred or expelled from Ireland.

The total number of deaths directly or indirectly accountable to the so-called "Holy Inquisition" is incalculable due to the limitations of recorded history. However, if we tally the many historic accounts, we can attribute several million deaths to Papacy down through the centuries.

When dealing with such numbers, the enormity of human suffering also becomes incomprehensible. After a point, figures and details begin to dull the mind of its sensitivity. But perhaps the Apostle Paul succeeded in encapsulating the enormity of the diabolical acts of the Papacy by the title, "The Man of Sin." That system has proved itself capable of escalating astronomically every sin conceivable to man.

Papacy's Persecuting Power Broken

This steady, relentless crushing of whole communities as well as individuals over many centuries lasted until Papacy's persecuting power was broken by Napoleon imprisoning the Pope in 1799. Pius VI died in prison. The historian of Napoleon's wars,

describing the capture of Toledo by his army, discussed the opening of the Inquisition prison:^[29]

Graves seemed to open, and pale figures like ghosts issued from dungeons which emitted a sepulchral odor.... Many of them were reduced to cripples.... The number of machines for torture thrilled even men inured to the battlefield, with horror.... In a recess in a subterranean vault...stood a wooden figure made by the hands of monks and representing the Virgin Mary.... On closer scrutiny it appeared that the forepart of the body was stuck full of extremely sharp nails and small narrow knife-blades, with the points turned toward the spectator. The arms and hands were jointed, and the machine behind the partition set the figure in motion. One of the servants of the Inquisition was compelled by command...to work the machine as he termed it. When the figure extended her arms, as though to press some one lovingly to her heart...hugged it closer and closer, and when the attendant, agreeably to orders, made the figure unclasp her arms and return to her former position, the knapsack was perforated to the depth of two or three inches and remained hanging on the points of nails and knife blades.

No wonder the vision of the long 1,260 years of persecution of God's people had such a terrifying effect on Daniel, "As for me Daniel, my thoughts were greatly alarming me and my face grew pale...." From 539 to 1799, the saints were relentlessly persecuted. During the 1,260 years in which Papacy persecuted the true Church, the Bible was also suppressed. The period of persecution and suppression was long and wearing.

Seven-Year Tribulation—A Jesuit Fabrication

A thorough search through a Bible concordance—preferably an exhaustive concordance—will reveal not a single verse of Scripture mentioning a 7-year tribulation. Not one! The only other possibility for construing a 7-year tribulation, is piecing two back-to-back 1,260-day (or 3 ½-year) periods which would

^[29] Thiers & Bowen, *The Campaigns Of Napoleon*, cited by H. Grattan Guinness, *The Approaching End Of The Age* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1878), 205-207.

then equal 7 years. But the only place (Revelation 11:2,3) where 1,260 "days" are mentioned in two succeeding verses, does not justify a 2,520-day or 7-year tribulation. All exponents of the Pre-tribulationist and/or the Futurist school readily concede that verses 2 and 3 of Revelation 11 are concurrent. They refer to events during the *same* 1,260-"day" period. They cannot be added together to make seven years.

While the Scriptures prophesy a "great tribulation" which will conclude the Age, they do not describe a 7-year tribulation. The concept of 7 years' tribulation was a convenient invention of the Catholic Jesuits which Protestants have bought. The 1,260 "days" obviously are symbolic of years which occurred during the Christian Age. The combined testimony of the following scriptural citations is conclusive:

Text	1,260 Years of Papal Power	Note
Daniel 7:25	Little Horn wears out saints 1,260 days*	Papal power grew out of fourth beast, Dan. 7:7-8
Daniel 12:7	Scattered the power of the holy people 1,260 days*	Saints means "holy ones"
Revelation 11:2-3	Holy city trod under foot 42 months (or 1,260 days*); two witnesses prophesy in sackcloth	City identified in Rev. 21:2 as Bride of Christ; Old and New Testaments "witnessed," spoke, in dead language of Latin
Revelation 12:6,14	Woman flees into wilderness, nourished 1,260 days*	Symbolic of Church, 2 Cor. 11:2, sustained during a spiritually barren time
Revelation 13:5	Leopard beast (Papacy) blasphemes God and makes war with saints 42 months (42x30=1,260 days*)	Beast same as Little Horn of Daniel which persecutes saints who later reign with Christ

*Key: 1 day = 1 year (Ezekiel 4:6)

More Convincing Evidence

Four characteristics by which the Man of Sin are identified are summarized in Daniel 7:25: “And he [1] shall speak great words against the most High, and [2] shall wear out the saints of the most High, and [3] think to change times [4] and laws.”

The first two points have already been considered, namely, the preposterous words by which popes claimed to be “as God” and the wearing out of the true Church by Papacy. Additionally, the Papacy did “change times.” Unwilling to await the unfolding of God’s plan, Papacy changed the time of Christ’s Kingdom by declaring Papacy’s rule over the nations as God’s kingdom on earth. Another example of Papacy’s attempting to “change times” is in its changing of the calendar.

How did Papacy also “change...laws”? The precepts and commands of God meant little. By the claimed right of issuing “dispensations,” the Popes frequently set aside the moral laws. Murder of heretics was called praiseworthy; subjects were encouraged to rebel; oaths and contracts were cancelled; torture was declared to be an “act of faith.” Spying, intrigue, perjury and theft were pronounced virtuous deeds when performed in the service of the church. Not content, moreover, in dispensing with divine laws, the popes were always ready to create new ones if convenience so required. Clerical celibacy was prescribed; meat was forbidden for centuries on Fridays; ecclesiastical taxes were levied and often personal liberties of the people were forbidden. Papacy’s rationale for changing divine law is pointedly reflected in the following quote from a Catholic authority:^[30]

The Pope is of so great authority and power that he can modify, declare or interpret the divine law.... The pope can sometimes counteract the divine law by limiting, explaining, etc.

But no individual—even a Pope—qualifies as the Man of Sin, the Antichrist. All the characteristics and actions of the Little Horn of Daniel unmistakably brand the Papacy as the great Antichrist system.

^[30] Farrar, AN ECCLESIASTICAL DICTIONARY.

♦ CHAPTER SEVEN ♦

***Wounded to Death—
And Then Healed******Revelation 13:3, 14***

Some, wrongly expect a superman Antichrist at the end of the Age who is wounded—then healed—based on Revelation 13:12-15. Is this reasonable? According to this scenario, the Antichrist superman is killed. Then this Antichrist superman is miraculously raised from death to life. How preposterous. Only the power of the Heavenly Father can raise a being to life. (Even Jesus had to pray for the Father’s power to raise Lazarus. John 11:41-44) Certainly, the Heavenly Father would not raise an Antichrist superman to life! And no amount of satanic power can raise the dead to life. (In view of this obvious problem, some conclude the Antichrist man will just seem to die and then be revived.)

Then according to this scenario, the Two-Horned Beast/False Prophet—another individual who possesses great satanic power—makes an “image of the beast.” They claim the image will be a statue likeness of the superman Antichrist. Using satanic power, the Two-Horned Beast/False Prophet will then cause this statue to come to life and speak. All who would not worship him would be killed.

The absurdity grows...this scenario is not anticipating a statue becoming mechanically or electronically animated. (That would not be a miraculous phenomenon.) The claim is satanic power will infuse life into this statue transforming it into a living creature—a human-type being. This is impossible. Only the power of God can create a living being.

Reason returns to interpretation when we realize that these prophecies in Revelation are highly symbolic. The language of Revelation is consistently symbolic. Just as the Leopard Beast is symbolic of Papacy, a system, so the Two-Horned Beast and the Image of the Beast are also church-state systems. Exercising similar power as the Papacy and working together with the Papacy, the Image of the Beast will probably be a *Protestant* federation united with civil government.

While it is unreasonable to suppose satanic power creating a human-type being, it is customary to speak of organizations “dying” or one organization putting “life” into another organization. The Papal Leopard Beast, the Two-Horned Beast and the Image of the Beast interpreted as organizations, harmonizes with the highly symbolic terminology of Revelation 13. A literal superman Antichrist scenario does not.

Papacy’s Deadly Wound

The Papal Leopard Beast was to be wounded, “And I saw one of his [Leopard Beast’s] heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast” (Revelation 13:3). Has this happened?

Many believe that the Protestant Reformation inflicted this deadly wound that was eventually healed. Just prior to the Protestant Reformation, it is interesting to note by contrast the unchallenged position Papacy enjoyed:^[31]

Just prior to Luther’s movement, the Pope, in a bull closing the Laternal Council, A.D. 1517, felicitated himself and his bishops, because the unity of the Catholic church was at the moment untroubled by a single heresy. There was an end of all resistance to Papal tyranny.

On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther nailed his Ninety-Five Theses to the church door at Wittenberg with a resounding blow of the hammer that severed Germany, Holland, Denmark,

^[31] H. Grattan Guinness, *LIGHT FOR THE LAST DAYS* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1887), 74.

Sweden and England from Papal Europe. The Protestant Reformation succeeded in wounding the Papal Beast!

But when the Protestant churches united with the state... Reformation and cleansing for a time ceased, and, instead of progressing with the cleansing, the reformers gave attention to organizing themselves, and to revamping and repolishing many of the old Papal dogmas, at first so loudly condemned. Thus did Satan decoy the reformers into the very "harlotry" (union of church and state) which they had denounced in the Church of Rome. And thus the deadly wound which Papacy had received was for a time healed. Rev. 13:3 ^[32]

666—The Number of the Beast

The fascinating identifying number of Antichrist is 666, “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” (Revelation 13:18). What does this number signify?

The number *seven* is the most frequently used number in the Bible and has long been thought to denote completeness or perfection. Three sevens (777) would signify the ultimate in perfection. (“Holy, holy, holy” denotes God’s holiness to the greatest magnitude. Revelation 4:8)

Six, on the other hand, is symbolic of human imperfection. Therefore, 666 would denote the ultimate of human imperfection—great depravity. Just as the Little Horn had the “eyes of a man,” Antichrist is the creation of imperfect man’s wisdom. When an institution of imperfect man attempts to replace God (2 Thessalonians 2:4), the result can only be an ingenious deception of greatest corruption—symbolized by 666.

This number 666 is not going to be displayed prominently on worshippers like a barcode on everybody’s forehead—or even on I.D. cards that everyone has to carry in his or her wallet. The number of Antichrist will only be discerned by “wisdom.” “Let him that hath understanding *count* the number of the beast.” The

^[32] *THY KINGDOM COME* (New Brunswick: Bible Students Congregation of New Brunswick, 1977), 110, 111.

numerical value of the letters of many names have been found to total 666. How can it be determined which name is correct? First, the “wisdom from above” will enable one to Scripturally confirm that Papacy is the Antichrist. Then with this “understanding,” one can sift through the many numerical interpretations and correctly calculate the numerical value of its name.

Interpretations are many. But once Papacy has been Scripturally identified as Antichrist, the number of Antichrist’s name becomes apparent. There is one title that the Popes of Rome have assumed to themselves and caused to be inscribed over the door of the Vatican, which exactly fits the number 666. That title is Vicar of the Son of God, “*Vicarivs Filii Dei*”^[33] *This title refers to the Pope as reigning vicariously in the place of the Son of God—which coincides exactly with the meaning of Antichrist—in the place of Christ.* This confirms that the organization the Pope heads—Papacy—is the Antichrist.

Vicar							of the Son					of God			
V	I	C	A	R	I	V	S	F	I	L	I	I	D	E	I
5	1	100	-	-	1	5	-	-	1	50	1	1	500	-	1

When the numerical values of the letters of this title are added together, the irresistible conclusion points to the Vatican as the Antichrist Beast of Revelation:

V	.....	5
I	.....	1
C	.....	100
A	.....	0
R	.....	0
I	.....	1
V	.....	5
S	.....	0
F	.....	0
I	.....	1
L	.....	50
I	.....	1
I	.....	1
D	.....	500
E	.....	0
I	.....	1

Number of the Beast = 666

This prophetic, numerical identification of Papacy is further confirmation that the Antichrist is really the Papacy. The Papacy’s career also fits the description of being “wounded,” then recovered. Papacy, the Antichrist, is very much alive—ready for its end-time role in prophecy.

^[33] Robert Fleming, THE RISE AND FALL OF ROME PAPAL (London: Houlston & Stoneman, Pateroster Row, 1849), 47, 48.

♦ CHAPTER EIGHT ♦

*The Antichrist in the
Twentieth Century*

The twentieth century has certainly witnessed the Papacy again as a prominent force in world affairs. By maneuvering as a world political power, it has affected the course of world events. One area has been Papacy's support of Fascism.

In **1919** Archbishop Pacelli (who later became Pope Pius XII) gave Hitler Church money to "help his small, struggling band of anti-Communists 'to quell the devil's work,' as Pacelli told Hitler."^[34] Hitler's Nazi-ism was born. By the Vatican exerting international pressure, part of Ukraine was taken from Communist Soviet Russia and given to Catholic Poland.^[35]

Much to the Vatican's delight, in **1922** Mussolini set up a Fascist dictatorship in Italy. Finally, because of the Vatican's political power, any Vatican representative was forbidden to enter the Soviet Union. Then from **1925** onward, the real Vatican campaign against the Soviet Union "began to flood the whole world."^[36]

Under Vatican pressure, in **1926** Pilsudski set up a Catholic Fascist dictatorship in Poland. For over 15 years Catholic priests accompanied Polish soldiers in expeditions to punish the so-called "rebel Ukrainians" in parts of the Ukraine previously

annexed by Poland. Orthodox churches were burned and "thousands upon thousands" were executed.^[37]

Between **1929** and **1942** the Vatican focused on establishing powerful Fascist political and military blocks designed to oppose and finally to destroy Communism and Socialism. First, the Vatican would support Fascist parties within the various nations of Europe that were devoted to the destruction of Socialism and Communism within the country. Second, the Vatican would support the takeover of that government for the purpose of war against the Soviet Union. Powerful economic, social and financial forces throughout the world would assist in this double purpose.^[38]

The Vatican even reached out to Japan as reflected in the CATHOLIC TIMES (November 23, 1934):

In the event of a war between Japan and Russia, Catholics would sympathize with Japan, at least in so far as religion is concerned, so let us beware of any Anglo-American bloc against Japan involving us on the side of Russia.

Understandably, the Vatican was not pleased with the U.S. involvement in the Grand Alliance (Great Britain, United States and Russia) of World War II. The Vatican in **1929** signed the Lateran Treaty with Mussolini, which guaranteed the full and independent sovereignty of the Vatican State in Vatican City. Also Fascist Italy paid the Vatican a vast sum of money to compensate for the loss of the Papal States in **1870**.^[39]

In **1933**, the Pope had Franz von Papen persuade President Hindenburg to appoint Hitler to be a Chancellor of Germany.^[40] Fritz Thyssen, a rich Catholic steel magnate who financed Hitler, wrote an article in the Swiss Arbeiterzeitung entitled, "Pius XIII, As Nuncio, Brought Hitler to Power."^[41] Impressed with the

[37] *Ibid.*, 273-275 (Many references given for documentation).

[38] Manhattan, THE VATICAN IN WORLD POLITICS, 168, 169.

[39] Murphy, LA POPESSA, and Manhattan, THE VATICAN IN WORLD POLITICS, 22-24.

[40] Manhattan, THE VATICAN IN WORLD POLITICS, 168,169.

[41] Leon Lehmann, BEHIND THE DICTATORS (1942), Fritz Thyssen, I PAID HITLER (1941).

[34] Paul J. Murphy, La Popessa (New York: Warner Books, 1980), 52.

[35] Avro Manhattan, The Vatican In World Polics (New York: Horizon Press, Inc. 1949), 272.

[36] *Ibid.*, 272, 280.

organization of the Papacy, Hitler is quoted as saying the following:[42]

I learned much from the Order of the Jesuits...until now there has never been anything more grandiose on the earth than the hierarchical organization of the Catholic Church. I transferred much of this organization into my own party.

In **1936** the Vatican and Mussolini backed General Franco's bloody civil war against the Spanish Republic and vigorously supported his Fascist regime.[43] Then between **1939** and **1941** the Vatican pressured Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Belgium and France to cave in to Germany.[44] With the fall of Czechoslovakia, the Vatican and Hitler in 1939 set up a Catholic Fascist State in Slovakia headed by a Catholic Prelate Monsignor Tiso. His regime was brutal towards Jews and non-Roman Catholics. (After the war he was executed for war crimes.)[45]

The Pope even collaborated with Hitler regarding the invasion of Poland:[46]

The Pope had been informed of the war plans of Hitler to invade Poland. Hitler had told of his grand strategy and his ultimate aims. He had to risk a European war in order to achieve them, but they were worth it. The ultimate and main goal was the invasion of Soviet Russia. To do that Hitler needed to occupy Poland.... The Pope would have to use all his influence in persuading the Poles to settle matters with Hitler.... If the Poles refused, Hitler would invade Poland. He asked the Pope, first not to condemn the invasion, and secondly not to ask the Catholics in Poland to oppose it, but to rally them to a crusade against the Soviets. Hitler made two promises: he would, this time, respect all the privileges of the Church in Poland, and secondly, the occupation of Poland would be "temporary".... Pius XII accepted. He did, however, put forward three conditions.... Once more Hitler promised all that the Vatican asked.

[42] Hermann Rauschning, *HITLER SAID TO ME* (1939), 266-267.

[43] Manhattan, *The Vatican In World Politics*, 95-99.

[44] *Ibid.*, 247-265, 340-341.

[45] *Ibid.*, 262-263.

[46] Manhattan, 192-194.

The Vatican began to exert pressure on the Polish Government, through the services of Cardinal Hlond, and in French Catholic circles, so that, if the worst should happen, the French would not enter the war against Germany. The negotiations failed.

France and Great Britain had a mutual defense pact with Poland against aggression by Germany. The Pope was feverishly negotiating with the Western Powers to acquiesce to the occupation of Poland and then join Hitler in a war against the Soviet Union. Before his invasion of Poland, Hitler gave the Pope the opportunity to dissuade France from hostilities.

General Pétain, Laval and General Weygand (of Belgium birth) were the pawns in this ploy. By Papal intrigue Pétain became Premier of France and Weygand Commander in Chief of the armed forces. Pétain, Lavan, Weygand and the Papacy had a plot to surrender France to Hitler without the firing of a shot. Then France would become a Fascist-Catholic State under the dictatorship of Pétain. This plan failed the last minute when Mussolini demanded certain territories in France.

Hitler invaded Poland. After bringing Poland to her knees in less than a month, Germany's military might turned to the West. When Belgium was invaded, Weygand of France and the Vatican induced King Leopold to surrender prematurely. This threw the Allied timetable off.

Meanwhile, by Papal intrigue in French affairs, the power of Pétain, Lavan and Weygand consolidated to the point that they could surrender France long before the military was ready to cede defeat. Of course, a Fascist-Catholic State ruled in Belgium and France until the Allied liberation. All opposition was ruthlessly suppressed.[47]

Hitler promised the Pope that a German victory in Europe would result in a "new Christian Europe, formed by Catholic States and by victorious Germany, who together would bring about the complete restoration of a Christian Europe, the prosperity of the Catholic peoples...."[48]

[47] *Ibid.*, 282-291, 307-322.

[48] *Ibid.*, 327.

In 1941 the Axis Powers and the Vatican set up the Catholic Fascist Party, Ustashi, in Croatia under the dictatorship of Ante Pavelic. Archbishop Stepinac was the Supreme Military Vicar of the Ustashi Army. Jews were murdered, Serbian Orthodox churches were destroyed and Serbs were given the choice to convert to Roman Catholicism or be killed.^[49]

Under the headline, “The Catholic Church is Accused of Complicity in the killing of Serbs,” *The New York Times* (September 6, 1994), gave the real reasons for the cancellation of the Pope’s visit to Sarajevo:

Serbian anger, which is evident in the Bosnian Serbs’ refusal to assure the Pope’s visit, is essentially rooted in the events of World War II, so a papal visit might have been greeted with whistles and boos. During the War, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Zagreb, Alojzije Stepinac, greeted the installation of the Pavelic regime as “God’s hand at work” and never publicly denounced the onslaught on Serbian civilians. The ferocity of this onslaught, which often involved conversion of Greek Orthodox Serbs to Roman Catholicism at gun point or their massacre in churches, was well known in the Vatican.

The article then described some executions of masses of Serbs by the Croats. As incredible as it sounds, Pope John Paul II, during his visit to Croatia in September of 1994 lauded Cardinal Stepinac as a national hero and a “vigilant, true pastor of his flock”—despite his World War II involvement with the murderous Pavelic regime.

When in 1943 it was known that Germany would eventually lose the war, the Vatican and Britain tried to plot the fall of Hitler and then have Germany join forces with Great Britain and the U.S. in a war against Russia.^[50]

In 1945 The Axis Powers and the Vatican lost World War II and until 1989 Communism swept over one third of the world. But in 1982 through 1989 Pope John Paul and former President Reagan successfully plotted the downfall of the Communist

[49] Avro Manhattan, *THE TERROR OVER YUGOSLAVIA, THE THREAT TO YUGOSLAVIA* (London: waters, 1953).

[50] John Loftus & Mark Aarons, *THE SECRET WAR AGAINST THE JEWS* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994), 87.

Empire (*Time*, February 24, 1992). Regarding this clandestine campaign, Archbishop Pio Lashi said to the U.S. diplomat, Vernon Walters, “It is a very complex situation...listen to the Holy Father [Pope]. We have 2,000 years experience at this.” It was further observed, “Step by reluctant step, the Soviets and the Communist government of Poland bowed to the pressure imposed by the Pope and the President.” Finally in 1989 the Communist Empire fell. A leading newspaper reported that Mikhail Gorbachev observed, “Pope John Paul II played a major political role in the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe.”^[51] The Papacy finally triumphed over her bitter enemy.

The New Look of Papacy for an Old Concept

In 1990 the Vatican’s ultimate agenda is revealed in the following statement the Pope made on April 21:^[52]

A united Europe is no longer a dream. It is not *utopian memory from the Middle Ages* [emphasis added]. The events that we are witnessing show that this goal can be reached.

The Pope wants to revive the Holy Roman Empire of the Middle (Dark) Ages! ...How is this possible? After World War II, the Papacy’s rapprochement with Protestants began to intensify. Ecumenism seems the appropriate solution for both Catholics and Protestants in mutually bolstering up their credibility—and survival. Although essentially the Papacy has not changed, a few cosmetic alterations have helped the Roman Church have a new look. Vatican II has played a significant role in the face-lift project. Bible studies in the Church—albeit restricted—are now permitted. Meat on Friday is okay. Philanthropic activities around the world abound. Services no longer have to be exclusively in Latin. And the Church of Rome beckons to its “separated brethren”—the Protestant Churches. *Have the Protestant Churches forgotten why they separated?*

In November of 1993, Moody Bible Institute in its periodical said, “Today, for good or bad, the lines that separate evangelicals

[51] *World*, March 6, 1992.

[52] *New York Times*, April 23, 1990.

and Roman Catholics are fading. More and more people from both sides are working together...” Charles Colson wrote, “It’s high time that all of us who are Christians come together regardless of the difference of our confessions and our tradition...” Today the ministries of Billy Graham, Luis Palau, World Vision and charismatic groups such as YWAH involve activities with Catholics.

In 1994 a group of 40 prominent evangelical and Catholic scholars and leaders agreed that Christians must stop aggressive proselytizing of one another’s flocks and work together more closely to “contend against all that opposes Christ and His cause.” The statement signed March 29 in New York further stated, “We dare not by needless and loveless conflict between ourselves give aid and comfort to the enemies of the cause of Christ.” Finally, the statement concluded, “Not since the 16th century have Protestants and Catholics ‘joined in a declaration so clear in respect to their common faith and common responsibility.’”

In May of 1995 Pope John Paul II issued an encyclical on Christian unity, “*Ut Unum Sint*” (“That They May be One”). The encyclical was an unprecedented call for Protestant and Orthodox denominations to dialogue on a Christian unity that would accept the authority of the Pope. In response, a prominent group of Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant scholars and church leaders gathered in South Carolina to re-examine the road to unity. In spite of much disagreement, the consensus was to keep open the dialogue at regular intervals.

On May 12, 1999, the co-chairman of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission issued the document “The Gift of Authority.” It stated, “the need for a universal primacy exercised by the Bishop of Rome [the Pope] as a sign and safeguard of unity within the reunited Church” (cf. Authority in The Church 11, 9).

On October 31, 1999, the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church issued the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, which they said ended a conflict that began with Martin Luther in 1517.

The Antichrist is posturing for its end-time scenario with the image of the beast and false prophet.

♦ CHAPTER NINE ♦

The Antichrist’s End-Time Rule

After Papacy brought the demise of Communism, Pope John Paul’s stated agenda was the re-establishment of the Holy Roman Empire of the Middle Ages/Dark Ages. The ecumenical activity of the 1990s could well mark the buildup to Antichrist’s End-Time reign.

Although Revelation 13 showed the Antichrist, Papal reign during the 1,260 days—years—ended in 1799 A.D., verses 15-18 predict a future End-Time rise to power of Antichrist. This time Antichrist will be united in power with the *image of the beast*. If the *beast* is symbolic of a system—Papacy—then the *image of the beast* is symbolic of a system—probably a federation of Protestant churches headed by the Church of England. This would explain the reason for the ecumenical activity within Protestantism. The Church of England has already acknowledged the headship of Papacy in such a union.

The *image of the beast*—a federation of Protestant churches—together with the *beast*—Papacy—will control the thinking of the people. Only those with *the mark, name or number* of the *beast* will be able to *buy or sell*, that is, express doctrinal views in a public forum. All others will be persecuted. At the same time Revelation 17 predicts a church-state union between Papacy and ten kingdoms or nations of Europe.

Many students of prophecy are pondering the role of the European Union in this scenario. Possibly this is a reference, not

to ten nations, but to the ten language grouping of nations that has averaged out in Europe over the centuries. Actually there are more than ten nations in the European Union.

This reign of Papacy with the European Union will be short lived. They will do battle with the Returned Lord—the Lord of Lords and King of Kings—and the beast, the image of the beast and the kings of the earth will meet their Waterloo. Revelation 19: 11-21.

Triumph of Christ over Antichrist

Thus the Apostle Paul (2 Thessalonians 2:8) assures us that this inglorious saga of the Man of Sin will finally have a fitting conclusion:

And then shall that Wicked [Antichrist] be revealed, whom the Lord shall Consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his [Christ's] coming [Greek, parousia, presence].

The Papacy, which for centuries claimed to be the Kingdom of God, was in reality the Man of Sin. Such an exaggerated claim inevitably corrupted leaders of that system. And that corruption wrought the incredible carnage of human suffering that Papacy perpetuated down through the centuries. Many have been the engines of human oppression and destruction throughout history, but the Antichrist has been unique. By taking the place of Christ and his true Kingdom, Antichrist also misrepresented God's true character and wonderful plan.

But Christ will triumph over Antichrist. The Man of Sin has been revealed. After a brief rise to power, it remains for Christ to destroy that pretentious, counterfeit Kingdom of God during his parousia or presence. Then the true Kingdom of God will be set up which will rule in righteousness throughout the whole earth. Instead of oppressing, Christ's Kingdom will bless. Instead of misrepresenting God's character, Christ's Kingdom will practice it. Instead of replacing and opposing God's plan, Christ's Kingdom will fulfill it.

♦ APPENDIX ♦

Historic Documentation of Antichrist's Rise to Power

“In the first century the Christians were not of sufficient importance to be generally persecuted by the government.... They had no great men in their ranks, either...[of] wealth, or social position.... Yet in this century converts were multiplied in every city, and traditions point to the martyrdoms of those who were prominent, including nearly all of the apostles.” [John Lord, *OLD ROMAN WORLD* (New York: Chas. Scribner & Co., 1867), 542-47.]

The Second Century—

Foundation for Future Power Laid

“In the second century, there were controversies in the Church...but no outward conflicts, no secular history.... But they had attracted the notice of the government and were of sufficient consequence to be persecuted...bishops had become influential, not in society, but among the Christians; dioceses and parishes were established; ...ecclesiastical centralization commenced... the weapons of excommunication were forged...Gnosticism was embraced by many leading minds...the formulas of baptism and the sacraments became of great importance; and monarchism became popular. The Church was thus *laying the foundation of its future polity and power*. [Ibid.]

“The problem of organization lay in determining the center of that power. After the weakening of the mother church at Jerusalem.... The church of Rome...claimed to have been founded by Peter....” [Will Durant, *CAESAR AND CHRIST* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1944), 616, 617.]

*The Third Century—
Bishops Contend for Power*

“The third century saw the Church more powerful as an institution... Christianity had spread so extensively that it must needs be either persecuted or legalized.... Almost in every city, the ancient churches were found insufficient to contain the increasing number of proselytes; and in their place more stately and capacious edifices were erected.... Prosperity had relaxed the nerves of discipline. Fraud, envy and malice prevailed in every congregation. The proselytes aspired to the Episcopal office, which every day became an object more worthy of their ambition. The bishops, who contended with each other for ecclesiastical pre-eminence, claimed a secular and tyrannical power in the church.” [Lord, OLD ROMAN WORLD, 542-547.]

“The story of Paul of Samosata, who filled the metropolitan see [bishopric] of Antioch...may serve to illustrate the condition and character of the times [A.D. 270]. Paul considered the service of the church a very lucrative profession. His ecclesiastical jurisdiction was venal and rapacious: he extorted frequent contributions from the most opulent of the faithful, and converted to his own use a considerable part of the public revenues.

“...His council chamber, and his throne, the splendor with which he appeared in public, the suppliant crowd who solicited his attention, the multitude of letters and petitions to which he dictated his answers, and the perpetual hurry of business in which he was involved, were circumstances much better suited to the state of a civil magistrate than to the humility of a primitive bishop.” [Edward Gibbon, THE HISTORY OF THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE, (Chicago: Donahue Bros., 1900), Vol. 1, 633, 646,647.]

“It was the opinion of the Christians that the emperor [Decius] would more patiently endure a competitor for the purple than a bishop in the capital [Rome].” [Cyprian, EPISTOL. 55 cited in Gibbon, THE HISTORY OF THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE, 623.]

*The Fourth Century—
Removal of the Restraint to Papacy’s Power*

The Pagan Roman Empire, however, was at first a restraining factor (2 Thessalonians 2:7). But by the fourth century the Pagan Roman Empire was rapidly failing. Its strength and unity were divided among six claimants to the imperial honor when Constantine became emperor. In order to unite his empire, Constantine converted to Christianity in A.D. 313. Then declared Christianity the religion of the Roman Empire. At this point, Pagan Rome ceased to be the restraining power and was “taken out of the way.” Pagan Rome died and Papal Rome was born.

On this questionably blessed event, history records:

“Whether Constantine embraced it [Christianity] from conviction of its truth, or from policy, is a matter of dispute.... Worldly ambition pointed to the course which the emperor pursued in declaring himself a Christian.... Constantine made it the religion of the empire, and thenceforth we find its influence sullied with earthly things.... No particular bishop was regarded as head of the whole Church, but the emperor was such in point of fact....” [Emma Willard, UNIVERSAL HISTORY IN PERSPECTIVE (New York: A. S. Barnes & Co., 1854, 163.)

“War and commerce had spread the knowledge of the gospel beyond the confines of the Roman provinces; and the Barbarians...soon learned to esteem a religion...embraced by the greatest monarch, and the most civilized nation of the globe.... The gratitude of the Church has exalted the virtues and excused the failings of a generous patron who seated Christianity on the throne of the Roman world.” [Gibbon, THE HISTORY OF THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE, Vol. 2, 182, 183.]

“With Pagan Rome out of the way and Constantine the inheritor of the Pontifex Maximus title in the Christian Church, the Man of Sin was free to grow and thrive. Soon civil rulers became the persecuting arm of the Catholic Church as pointed up in the “Edict of the Emperors Gratian, Valentinian II and Theodosius I,” February 27, 380 A.D. — “We order those who follow this doc-

trine to receive the title of Catholic Church, but others . . . are to be punished not only by Divine Retribution but also by our own measure.” [Sidney Z. Ehler and John B. Morrall, CHURCH AND STATE THROUGH THE CENTURIES: A COLLECTION OF HISTORIC DOCUMENTS WITH COMMENTARIES (London, 1954), 7.]

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