

THE FALSE PROPHET:



11. And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. 12. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. (Revelation 13)

After John sees, and describes for us, the image of the beast rising up out of the sea, he then sees *another* (*allos* – another of the same kind¹) wild beast (the same Greek word as used in verse one), except that this one is rising up out of the earth rather than the sea. We have already identified the first beast as the Antichrist who will very quickly gain great popularity in the world and, just as quickly, will impose his rule over all. Even though the Antichrist will come to exercise control over the kingdoms of the earth, it would be unrealistic to think that everyone will be enthusiastically supportive of him, even among those who are not a part of the kingdom of God. We saw the Antichrist emerge from the *sea* (humanity as a whole; Revelation 13:1, 17:15); however, now John sees a similar wild beast coming up out of the *earth*. During creation, God brought the earth out of the seas (Genesis 1:9), and, based upon this, I see this second beast coming out of a sub-group of humanity rather than from the general population. The contexts from which these two world leaders come are different: the first arises out of the general population, the second from a particular segment of humanity – probably from among those who will acclaim the greatness of the Antichrist.

We are given very little description of this beast, except that he has two horns like a lamb (*arnion* – a diminutive form of *aren*, or sheep), and that he sounds like Satan (*dragon*).² The lamb is particularly identified as an animal of sacrifice; Jesus, as the Lamb of God, came to make the payment for the sins of the world. This beast (the False Prophet³) comes with a religious agenda; he will add an element of spirituality to the work of the Antichrist. The world today loves and honors spirituality, yet they want nothing to do with the God of the Bible. Deepak Chopra, a guru of this New Age spirituality, defines the term this way: “Spirituality is the experience of that domain of awareness where we experience our universality”;⁴ I’m

¹ Friberg Lexicon.

² Strong’s Online.

³ Revelation 19:20 identifies this beast as the *False Prophet* and close associate of the Antichrist.

⁴ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/deepak-chopra/only-spirituality-can-sol_b_474221.html

sure that even he doesn't have any idea of what that means, but I'm also quite sure that he could add many other high-sounding, empty words to explain it further.



Oprah Winfrey and Deepak Chopra

Oprah, who has been highly influenced by Chopra, writes: “Spirituality **for me** is recognizing that **I am** connected to the energy of all creation, that **I am** a part of it and it is always a part of **me**. Whatever label or word we use to describe ‘it’ doesn't matter. ... Spirituality **isn't something I believe in**. It is what and who **I am** ...” (emphasis added).⁵ Such spirituality is highly subjective, and so *me* and *I* play a significant part in determining exactly what form this philosophy will take. There is an

acknowledgment of the spiritual dimension of man, but with a definite unwillingness to accept what the Bible tells us about our spiritual condition. “Beware lest any man spoil you [*see that no one will be taking you captive*] through philosophy and vain [empty] deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Colossians 2:8).⁶ This is the spirituality of the world; it bears a strong element of universality (inclusiveness), and it is foolishness to the God of the Bible (1 Corinthians 3:19) even though some, like Oprah, may try to include Him in their philosophy. I have written much about the Ecumenical (*universal*) movement, and how the Roman Catholic Church is taking the lead in bringing all religions into one; the tentacles of this movement are everywhere. John describes for us a spiritual beast (it has two horns like that of a sacrificial lamb) arising out of the Antichrist's following; this is someone who will very easily assume the leadership role within the worldwide Ecumenical movement.

John tells us that this beast *spake as a dragon*. *Spake* comes from the Greek word *laleo*, which places the focus on the speaking rather than on the reasoning behind the words.⁷ In essence, this second beast is a mouth-piece for the dragon, or Satan; he speaks, but his words are what one would expect to come from a dragon, not a lamb. The *lamb* character of this beast goes no further than its two horns, it is strictly superficial; he is controlled by Satan for he demonstrates all of the authority of the *first beast* (the Antichrist) – Satan is the active agent within both the Antichrist and the False Prophet. The False Prophet is so effective in his use of the authority of Satan that he is able to make the earth and those who are in the world to worship the Antichrist. Yes, the text says that the *earth* will bow before the first beast. Remember

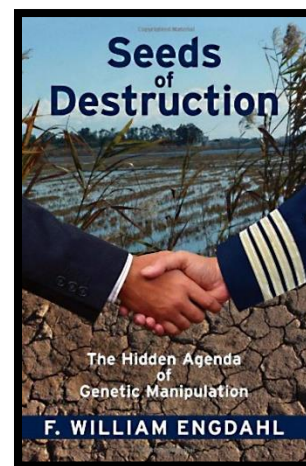
⁵ <https://www.eckharttolle.com/article/Oprah-Winfrey-On-Spirituality-And-Eckhart-Tolle>

⁶ Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

⁷ Friberg Lexicon.

that the purpose of the rider of the black horse is to bring famine to the world; this would indicate that the natural world will come under the control of the Antichrist. This is not farfetched at all.

With the introduction of GMO (Genetically Modified Organisms) seeds in the late 1970s and their associated designer chemicals for pest and disease control, came a whole new era within agriculture. The seeds and chemicals were patented, of course, in order to protect the invested interests of the huge corporations that were behind the project to bring GMO to the world. With US government and UN support (through the WTO – World Trade Organization), such giants as Monsanto, DuPont and Dow were able to bypass the normal scientific testing and regulations, and were able to get their products onto the world market with great speed. Two aspects to this new venture that are somewhat bothersome are that 1) the harvested seeds cannot be kept for sowing in subsequent years because that would be a violation of the patent laws (the patent holder needs to be paid every time one of their seeds is sown), and 2) testing of the long-term impact of GMO on humans and animals is not encouraging – it is actually showing devastating results.⁸ The corporate agri-business plan is for all of the food production of the world to be theirs with the full support of governments and the WTO; in other words, the world food production will rest securely in the hands of a few very powerful mega-corporations. However, in order to provide themselves with an additional layer of protection, they quickly began work on GURT (Genetic Use Restriction Technologies) – the development of seeds that would not reproduce, thus protecting the patent holders from anyone who might unscrupulously sow harvested GMO seeds without paying for them. These “Terminator seeds,” as they were dubbed, would grow once, but the seeds that they produce would be sterile; the DNA of the plant was modified so that it would kill the embryonic life in its seeds – thus forcing the producer to buy new seed every year.⁹ This development was followed by T-GURT (Trait Genetic Use Restriction Technologies, or “Traitors”) that only permitted the disease resistance and fertility of a seed to be turned on by the application of a specific chemical, which, of course, is only available from the same controlling corporations.¹⁰ Indeed, the *earth* will be under the control of the Antichrist and his henchmen, and the population of the world will be at his mercy;



⁸ F. William Engdahl, *Seeds of Destruction*, p. 29

⁹ Ibid, p. 258.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 258-9.

the rider of the black horse could very well use the large agricultural corporations like Monsanto of the US and Syngenta of Switzerland, operating under the control of the Antichrist, to create famine.

Worship comes from the Greek word *proskuneo* (*pros-koo-neh'-o*), which means to “bow down to kiss someone's feet, garment hem, or the ground in front of him.”¹¹ The world will be under the control of the Antichrist; many will bow before him in adoration of his wisdom in dealing with the issues of the day, and many more will submit to him simply because they have no other choice if they want to maintain their lifestyle or avoid significant problems. Jesus warned us, “... ye shall be hated of all nations [the nations; foreigners (within this context, those who are not children of God)¹²] for my name's sake [because of My name] ... But he that shall endure [the one who is remaining faithful in the midst of trials] unto the end, the same [this is the one who] shall be saved” (Matthew 24:9, 13).¹³ The False Prophet will use enticing words in order to persuade all people, even those who have placed their faith in the Lord, to submit to the authority of the Antichrist (Matthew 24:24-25).



13. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, 14. And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by *the means of* those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. (Revelation 13)

As Jesus spoke of end time events, He warned, “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if *it were* possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before” (Matthew 24:24-25). A careful study of this tells us that Jesus did **not** say that the elect (those who have placed their faith in Him for their salvation) cannot be deceived; His statement indicates that **if** the *false Christs* and *false prophets* **are able to**, then they will even lead those who are *in Christ* (the *elect*) astray. In other words, we must be watchful for we will be faced with the allure of deception. Jesus' added comment

¹¹ Friberg Lexicon.

¹² Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon. This is a subject for another study (*The Role of Israel Today* - <https://www.thenarrowtruth.com/the-role-of-israel-today.html>), but suffice it to say that Paul made it very clear that it is the inward change of heart that makes one a Jew (Romans 2:28-29), and that if we are *in Christ*, then we are the children of Abraham (Galatians 3:28-29). In this application (Matthew 24:9), the child of God will be *hated* by everyone who is not a part of God's kingdom on earth; perhaps, like it was during the days of Nero, the Christians will be blamed for all of the problems in the world.

¹³ Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon.

that He has forewarned us (*told you before*) tells us that we need to be alert to these false teachers, and Paul clarifies for us how we are to respond to them (Romans 16:17-18; 2 Corinthians 6:17). Jesus says that these deceiving religious leaders will come with *great signs and wonders* (*megas semeion kai teras*), and John tells us that the False Prophet will do *great wonders* (*megas semeion*).¹⁴ Very obviously, this is someone against whom Jesus has given us a specific warning! The ability of the child of God to resist the influence of the False Prophet will be largely dependent upon his knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, which, in turn, comes through the Spirit of God using the Word of God; it is fundamentally important that we know the Scriptures, not what someone else has said about them. We are to make every effort to be approved of God (2 Timothy 2:15) and to be growing in our understanding of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18) – our obedience to these two commands (and they are commands!) can come only through immersing ourselves in the Scriptures. We will succumb to the False Prophet for one of two reasons: 1) we are not sufficiently grounded in God’s Word to recognize the deception, or 2) we choose to follow the pathway of the least hardship.

Permit me to digress sufficiently to include a reminder that the salvation that is ours through the Lord Jesus Christ does NOT include something commonly called *eternal security*. The Scriptures do **not** teach that once we have placed our faith in the Lord for salvation that we can never lose it. A very conservative Baptist church has this in their statement of faith: “We believe that **salvation wrought by grace is everlasting**; that the Holy Spirit-begotten and born are kept by the power of God; that they are securely held in both the hand of the Father and the Son” (emphasis added)¹⁵ However, this doctrine (noted in bold) has been fabricated by Satan in order to deceive the unwary child of God into living carelessly while still under the delusion that his place in heaven remains secure. This false teaching is based upon a superficial reading of what Jesus said: “My sheep hear [*are hearing*, present tense (PT)] my voice, and I know [*am knowing*, PT] them, and they follow [*are following*, PT] me: And I give [*am giving*, PT] unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish [*cannot perish*; the Greek includes *ou* and *me* (two negatives) and *perish* is an aorist subjunctive verb, thereby making this a very strong negative], neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father’s hand. I and *my* Father are one” (John 10:27-30).¹⁶ The first promise that Jesus gives is that His sheep who are hearing His voice and following Him (i.e., faithful obedience) *shall never perish*;

¹⁴ Strong’s Online.

¹⁵ <http://www.bethelbaptist.ca/doctrine/>

¹⁶ Strong’s Online; https://www.ntgreek.org/pdf/subjunctive_uses.pdf.

the *hearing* and *obedience* are present tense realities (i.e., we are *in Christ*) and as long as this remains, Jesus has assured us that we will be saved (Matthew 24:13). The second certainty is that no one can snatch us out of the Father's hand, and, as wonderful as this is, this is a reflection of only one side of our Covenant relationship with the Lord – nothing and no one can remove us from the hand of the Lord. The promise is that the Lord's hold on us is secure, and that if we should perish, it will not be because He has released His grip on us but because **we** have permitted unfaithfulness to enter our hearts (Hebrews 3:12; we are no longer *hearing* and *following*). Nevertheless, as we have seen, Jesus saw fit to warn us to not be deceived by false teachers, which simply provides additional support that **we** must, indeed, be vigilant against being led away from His truth – apostasy is always a reality.

Paul used the illustration that we are branches who have been grafted into the Root (Jesus Christ) while the original branches (Israel) have been removed; he goes on to say, “Well; because of unbelief [*apistia* – a want of faith, unfaithfulness] they were broken off, and thou standest [active voice – *we* must exercise faith; perfect tense – describes an action that is viewed as completed in the past, but with ongoing (present) results] by faith [*pistis*]. Be not highminded [do not be proud (a command)], but fear [a command; a fear of God that leads to obedience]: For if God spared not the natural branches, *take heed* lest he also spare not thee” (Romans 11:20-21).¹⁷ This confirms that we are *in Christ* (the Root) by faith, and we can only remain in Him by faith (by remaining faithful; unfruitful branches are removed – John 15:2); if we should become faithless (unfruitful), like many Israelites (the original branches), then we, too, will be removed just as they were. In Hebrews we are warned: “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief [*apistia* – a want of faith, unfaithfulness], in departing [having fallen away, become apostate] from the living God” (Hebrews 3:12)¹⁸; becoming *unfaithful*, which is something that we can choose to do, means to become apostate. The same writer shows us that this apostate condition is permanent: “For if we sin wilfully [we choose to live in sin, a state of unfaithfulness] after that we have received the knowledge [a precise and correct knowledge] of the truth, there remaineth no more [no longer exists a] sacrifice for sins ... [a] sorer punishment ... shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, **wherewith he was sanctified**, an unholy thing” (Hebrews 10:26, 29; the bold text leaves no doubt that this is to be applied to a child of God, someone who has been made holy [*sanctified*] by the blood of Christ; the permanency of apostasy

¹⁷ Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon; https://www.ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/verbs1.htm.

¹⁸ Strong's Online; Gingrich Lexicon.

is further affirmed in Hebrews 6:4-6).¹⁹ Do not be deceived, even though God has done everything to ensure that we will never be snatched out of His hand, we can still choose to depart from Him into apostasy and forfeit our salvation simply by becoming faithless (disobedient). Jesus warned us to count the cost of becoming His disciple (Luke 14:25-33) lest having begun with Him, we turn away in unfaithfulness when life brings challenges (Luke 8:13-14) and we become those who are without hope – lost forever, having rejected, or turned away from, the only Way of salvation (Luke 9:62; John 14:6).

John now goes on to explain exactly what the greatest sign is that this False Prophet will do – according to his desire, fire will fall from heaven. There is a subtle, yet very significant message here. When Elijah entered into a contest with the priests of Baal and Asherah on Mt. Carmel (1 Kings 18:19²⁰), it was to demonstrate to the gathered people of Israel and king Ahab, the power of Jehovah – the pagan priests and Elijah were to prepare sacrifices, and the one who answered with fire from



Mt. Carmel, from Jezreel Valley

heaven would be the all-powerful God Whom Israel was to follow. The priests of Baal and Asherah built their altar, prepared their sacrifice, and cried out to Baal for most of the day. As it came time for the daily sacrifice to Jehovah, Elijah rebuilt the Lord's altar that was in ruins, laid the sacrifice out, drenched the sacrifice and wood with water, and then prayed, "Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou *art* the LORD God, and *that* thou hast turned their heart back again.

Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that *was* in the trench" (1 Kings 18:37-38). The Lord answered Elijah's prayer with consuming **fire from heaven** causing the people of Israel to identify Jehovah as their God.

When Ahaziah, the son of Ahab, was king in Samaria (the capital of northern Israel), he injured himself, and sent messengers to inquire of Baalzebub (the pagan god of flies) to find out if he would recover from his injuries (2 Kings 1:2) – clearly, the message taught at Mt. Carmel had not been learned. Elijah intercepted the messengers and sent word back with them to tell Ahaziah that he would die. When

¹⁹ Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon.

²⁰ *Groves* is from the word *Asherah*, a Canaanite goddess and companion of Baal, comparable to the Babylonian *Ishtar*, goddess of love; Strong's Online; [International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#), "asherah."

Ahaziah ascertained that it was Elijah who had sent him word, he dispatched a military captain and 50 men to bring Elijah; when they came to Elijah, he called down **fire from heaven** to consume them (2 Kings 1:10). A second military contingent met the same fate; however, the third captain came with humility and begged mercy for himself and his men, and all was well. These are two separate occasions when Elijah called fire down from heaven; as we will see, these are notorious within the annals of Jewish history.

Malachi 4:5 states: “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD” When John the Baptist began his ministry, the Jewish religious leaders inquired of him if he was Elijah (John 1:21), and John said that he was not, but was the *voice of one crying in the wilderness*, sent to prepare the way for the Promised One (John 1:23; Isaiah 40:3). In accordance with Malachi’s prophecy, the Jews expected Elijah to come before the Messiah, hence their question to John. However, as Jesus began His ministry, He said this concerning John the Baptist: “all the prophets and the law prophesied [proclaimed what God wanted to make known] until John. And if ye will receive [accept or believe] *it*, this is Elias [Elijah], which was for to come” (Matthew 11:13-14).²¹ Jesus identifies John the Baptist as, in fact, being the fulfillment of Malachi’s prophecy of the coming of Elijah, even though John did not see it, and very few accepted it.

When Jesus was not received by a village of the Samaritans because it was evident that He was going to Jerusalem, James and John asked the Lord if He would like them to call fire down from heaven to consume these inhospitable people (Luke 9:54). These two disciples remembered what Elijah had done and thought that this would be an ideal opportunity to repeat his miracle. Fire from heaven was something that was linked to Elijah (who was to be the forerunner of the Messiah) and God’s judgment.

Now let’s bring these things together into Revelation 13 and the False Prophet. We are told that the False Prophet will demonstrate many great signs (*wonders*), but the most notable will be calling fire down from heaven, which will be a particularly convincing sign for those who are religious (especially for the Jews).²² It will be reasoned that this is the one about whom Malachi prophesied – the promised Elijah has come because everyone has seen his sign of fire falling from heaven. Therefore,

²¹ Friberg Lexicon.

²² The Jews still await their *mashiach*; “The word ‘mashiach’ does not mean ‘savior.’ The notion of an innocent, divine or semi-divine being who will sacrifice himself to save us from the consequences of our own sins is a purely Christian concept that has no basis in Jewish thought. ... The mashiach will be a great political leader descended from King David.” The Jewish expectation today has changed little from that demonstrated by the Pharisees of Jesus’ day. <http://www.jewfaq.org/mashiach.htm>

if this is the promised forerunner, then the one to whom he is pointing must be the long-awaited messiah who has come to bring peace and order to the earth. When they perceive that the prophecies of Scripture are being fulfilled before their eyes, it will be very convincing evidence for them. The False Prophet, who will be exercising the full power of Satan (exactly the same power as that of the Antichrist), will be very persuasive in executing this amazing sign, and it will be pivotal to sealing the deception of many on the earth. “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if *it were* possible [so that if they are able (what is possible)], they shall [*even*] deceive the very elect” (Matthew 24:24).²³ Remember, this is not an impossibility as the translators of the KJV made it sound; rather, this is something that Jesus warned against many times: “Take heed lest any *man* [anyone] [*should – deceive* is in the subjunctive mood, a possibility but not a certainty] deceive [lead away from the truth] you” (Mark 13:5, also Matthew 24:4).²⁴

Deception will be the mainstay of both the Antichrist and his False Prophet; how they appear before men will not express the true intent of Satan who is energizing them, at least not initially. As we have already seen, the Antichrist will come with “all deceivableness of unrighteousness” (2 Thessalonians 2:10); Satan’s ability to appear as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14) will find its ultimate expression through the Antichrist as his minister, and we’ve already noted that the False Prophet will come in the same power (Revelation 13:12). Unless we have committed ourselves to knowing the truth of God, we will be susceptible to this powerful deception (2 Thessalonians 2:10-11) – and even then we must remain vigilant! We can only *take heed*, as Jesus commanded, if we have a love for God’s truth and live in obedience to it; anyone who is not living in obedience to the commandments of God “is a liar, and the **truth is** [absolutely] **not in him**” (1 John 2:4).²⁵ It is to these, who might well hold a profession of Christianity (which includes everyone who has bought into Ecumenical thinking), to whom the Lord will send a *strong delusion* so that they will believe the lies of the Antichrist and the False Prophet (2 Thessalonians 2:11). “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith ...” (2 Corinthians 13:5); does our love for the truth include obedience to it, regardless of the cost? Are we prepared to separate from error, or do we rationalize our Ecumenical accommodations away by reasoning that we are not perfect either? It is our faithfulness to the Lord and His Word, even in the face of trials, that will bring us through to salvation (Mark 13:13); compromising the truth and making room for

²³ Friberg Lexicon; Stephanus 1550 NT.

²⁴ Strong’s Online.

²⁵ Ibid.

error have NO place in the life of someone who desires to be faithful to the Lord; it doesn't matter if such compromise or accommodation is vocalized and evident for everyone to see, or if it takes place behind closed doors as a lack of discernment in what we do, read, watch, or listen to. "Be not deceived [led away from the truth]; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man [may] soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7);²⁶ we have a choice as to what we will sow (whether obedience unto life, or disobedience), but we do not have a choice as to the harvest that will come from what we have sown (John 3:36).

The False Prophet is not content with his great success in deceiving so many with his signs and wonders, he also wants an image (*eikon* – a likeness of something) to be made for the Antichrist (*the beast*).²⁷ The False Prophet is a very self-less individual; everything that he does promotes the Antichrist in the eyes of the world. These two are Satan's dream-team on earth, and their sole purpose is to deceive everyone in the world into following them and Satan – since he controls them. The world is enthralled with the Antichrist (Revelation 13:3) and bow before him, but they also willingly bow before Satan who is the power behind the Antichrist – the False Prophet's signs and wonders only serve to deepen the people's support of the Antichrist. Now the False Prophet provides the world with an opportunity to honor him for all of the good that he has done, and to give him god-status because of his marvelous restoration. Perhaps a quick review at this point would help to bring all of the pieces together.

We have identified the fourth beast of Daniel 7 as being the Islamic Caliphate that began to take hold toward the end of the seventh century AD (with Muhammad and his successors); it was a brutal regime that *devoured and brake in pieces* all who were in its path (Daniel 7:7). At the end of World War I, the authority of the last Islamic Caliphate (the Ottoman Empire) was signed into oblivion; the sword of the pen, in effect, killed this dreadful power. However, there are signs that the Muslims are intent on resurrecting the Islamic Caliphate to its former "glory," although serious in-fighting among the Muslims is definitely hampering their goal for the moment. The Muslims, like the Jews, are awaiting their messiah – that one who will come to bolster their cause. If, in fact, the Muslim messiah is the Antichrist (as I have proposed), his coming will immediately curb the in-fighting and will serve to unite the largest faith-group on earth. The Antichrist will become the head of a revived Islamic Caliphate – he is the long-awaited Mahdi, the one who personifies the recovery from the deadly blow that was inflicted in 1924. The role of the False

²⁶ Strong's Online.

²⁷ Ibid.

Prophet will be to solidify the position of the Antichrist in the minds of the majority of the people of the earth; he is already their hero and savior, and the False Prophet will elevate their adoration to the level of acclaiming the Antichrist to be a god.



15. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. (Revelation 13)

As the False Prophet prepares the image for the Antichrist (v. 14), amazingly it turns into an “image of the beast” (v. 15). Rest assured that it will not be an image of the seven-headed monster that John saw rising up out of the sea of humanity; it will be evident to all that the image is a depiction of their hero, the Antichrist. The first phrase is literally translated as: *and it was given to it* [referring to the False Prophet, the *beast* from out of the earth] *to give breath to the image of the beast* [the Antichrist].²⁸ This demonstrates, again, that the False Prophet is also the recipient of the power of Satan; he will be able to do mighty things, but they will be through an enabling from the devil. The image of the Antichrist now appears to have life – another miracle: man has now created life! Man is now a god in his own right – at least this appears to be true of the Antichrist and his False Prophet; undoubtedly, many will see this as a fulfillment of the promise of Satan to Eve: “ye shall be as gods” (Genesis 3:5). Satan will be working through the Antichrist and the False Prophet in an effort to persuade everyone that utopia is on the horizon.

The image not only appears to have life, but it even speaks; the image, of course, affirms the agenda of the False Prophet. Whether it will become the means that the False Prophet will use to communicate with the people of the world, is unclear. The KJV word *both* does not appear in the Greek, therefore it is not certain if the death penalty for not bowing before the image comes directly from the False Prophet or through the image; either way, it becomes known that anyone who does not show proper reverence to the image is to be killed (this is not new: Daniel 3:3-6). What is evident is that the Antichrist and the False Prophet are increasing the pressure for people to join their cause. It is Satan’s desire to destroy everyone who does not acknowledge his supremacy – knowing full well that it will be those who are the children of God who are the targets of this attack (Revelation 12:17, 13:7). The image becomes another means for Satan to communicate his destructive agenda to the world, and it fits with his determined war against the kingdom of God on the

²⁸ Stephanus 1550 NT.

earth – the faithful in Christ. Satan is unrelenting in his determination to exterminate the remnant of God’s people from the earth; perhaps he is aware that the faithful followers of the Lord are the carriers of the Holy Spirit of God in this world, and if **he** could just remove all of the saints, then he would have a small victory, for the world would be his alone.

Despite the apostasy that will take place before the Lord comes for His people (2 Thessalonians 2:3), we are assured that when He comes there will still be some faithful left on the earth: “... we which are alive [living] and remain [surviving] unto the coming of the Lord shall not [by no means] prevent [precede] them which are asleep [dead] ... [but] shall be caught up [seized] together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air:” (1 Thessalonians 4:15);²⁹ very clearly there will be those who are *in Christ* on the earth when Jesus comes to catch-away His own – it will be the Lord Who removes the saints from the earth, not Satan! However, just as surely as we are told that there will be a *remnant* present on the earth (Romans 11:5), we must understand that this will not be a large number (after all, it is a *remnant* – a few).³⁰ Today, when we hear of large numbers of people becoming “Christians,” we must take such news with a healthy helping of Biblical skepticism; turning away from God’s truth is the norm for today. Most professing Christians are deceived; therefore, we must evaluate all things (in this case, those who make such claims) against the standard of God’s Word (1 John 4:1). Nevertheless, we can be assured that the only time that Satan will have the earth all to himself (along with those who are his) is after the Lord has removed His people from the earth (the *rapture*), which will be the time when the wrath of God will be poured-out. The deception of the devil is rampant today, and we must fill our hearts and minds with the truth of God’s Word so that we, with the enablement of the Spirit of God, are able to **live in faithfulness** to the Lord, and, thereby, remain among that faithful remnant of the kingdom of heaven. Jesus made it very clear that it is “he that shall endure [to remain faithful through trials] unto the end, the same [it is this faithful one who] shall be saved” (Matthew 24:13).³¹ Our faithfulness will be evident through our obedience to the Word of God; God calls us to be spiritually separate from every form of evil, whether it is subtle (Romans 16:17-18) or blatant (2 Corinthians 6:14-17) – are we? Jesus commands us to place Him as the top priority in our lives (Luke 14:26, 33) – is He? “Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone” (James 2:17).

²⁹ Friberg Lexicon.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.



¹⁶. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: ¹⁷. And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. ¹⁸. 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)

The False Prophet will require the death of anyone who does not show due reverence to the image of the Antichrist, yet there is evidence that he will be unable to enforce complete compliance.³² Consequently, he will also implement a system of control that will make life even more difficult for the faithful in Christ and anyone else who refuses to comply. He seeks to force (*causeth*) everyone, regardless of his station in life, that he should be given a *mark* on his right hand or his forehead in order to purchase the necessities of life.³³



Phylacteries or Tefillin

The sign upon the hand and/or forehead is not new. As the Lord outlined for Moses the traditions that the people of Israel were to observe regarding the Passover, He said: “And thou shalt shew thy son in that day, saying, *This is done* because of that *which* the LORD did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt. And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the LORD’S law may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath the LORD brought thee out of Egypt” (Exodus 13:8-9). In essence, the Passover celebration was to impact the daily living of the children of Israel, and it was to be a continual reminder of what the Lord had done for them; both their activities (the sign upon their hand) and their thinking (the sign between their eyes) were to be influenced by the wondrous acts of Jehovah through the Passover, which foreshadowed the coming One Who would be the Passover Lamb for the sins of the world. However, it seems that the religious Jews soon took the Lord’s instructions literally, which, in turn, resulted in them forsaking the Passover’s influence on their daily living to the extent that when Jesus, the Messiah, came, they rejected Him as the fulfillment of their Passover celebration. The practice of the Jews is to wear phylacteries or tefillin, which are small, leather boxes containing specific Scriptures

³² Revelation 16:2 tells of a grievous sore that comes upon those who have the *mark*; this is the first vial of God’s wrath that is poured out upon the earth and will take place after the Lord’s children have been taken up.

³³ Friberg Lexicon.

that are worn on the inside of the left arm and above or on the forehead.³⁴ Jesus condemned the religious leaders for making their phylacteries bigger so that they would be sure to be noticed by those about them as being particularly righteous (Matthew 23:5). Even though Jews still use phylacteries today, this is not what the Lord had in mind for His people, nor is it what the False Prophet is advocating by the use of the mark.

In the new heaven and earth, the slaves of God (those who turned from being slaves of sin to being slaves of righteousness – Romans 6:16-18) will have His name on their foreheads (Revelation 22:4). When we read of the multitude standing with the Lamb of God upon Mt. Zion, it is noted that they all have the name of God on their foreheads (Revelation 14:1); they are the **first fruit** of those who will be with the Lord forever in the new heaven and earth. The woman of Revelation 17 is said to have on her forehead the name *Babylon the Great* (Revelation 17:5). What we see is that, in each of these cases, the inscription upon the forehead identifies the allegiance of the one who bears it. This is precisely what the False Prophet has in mind when he proclaims that everyone should be given a mark – it will express their loyalty to the Antichrist; *should* is a key word here (although not in the text), for *receive* is in the subjunctive mood (indicating a possibility, but not a certainty). Perhaps as he begins his program, the mark will be voluntary and will initially be accepted by those who enthusiastically support the work of the Antichrist. However, as his program unfolds, it will become increasingly difficult for those who do not have the mark to survive.

The Greek word translated as *mark* (*charagma*), means an imprinted mark, character, or inscription, and also includes engraving and etching within its meaning.³⁵ Paul said that he bears in his body the marks (a different Greek word, *stigma*) of the Lord Jesus Christ (Galatians 6:17), which speaks of a mark that is incised or punched (the literal meaning of the Greek word is to prick or stick).³⁶ Therefore, the *mark* that the False Prophet is advocating is applied to the hand or forehead, which rules out an implanted microchip (as is so often suggested today). However it will be applied, we are told that it will take one of three different forms: a mark that will be identifiable as belonging to the Antichrist, the name of the Antichrist, or the number of his name. Even if the application of the mark might begin as a personal choice, it will not be long before the pressure is increased – unless you have the mark, you will not be able to buy or sell anything. From this it

³⁴ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/phylactery>

³⁵ <http://www.kypros.org/cgi-bin/lexicon>; Friberg Lexicon.

³⁶ Strong's Dictionary.

seems that the mark will permit access to trade goods, or it may include a link into a centralized financial system; either way, buying and selling will be limited to those who have the mark, name, or number of the Antichrist.

Finally our attention is drawn to wisdom; the one who has understanding is commanded to calculate the number of the Antichrist, which is the number of man, or 666 (which is shown as $\chi\xi\varsigma$ in Greek). Greek, like Hebrew, does not use numerical characters but letters of their alphabet to represent numbers; within the Greek, χ (*chi* [*khee*]) = 600, ξ (*xi* [*xee*]) = 60, and ς (*stigma* [*stig'-ma*]) = 6.³⁷ The years since John wrote these words have been filled with speculations as to whom this applies, yet no one has filled all of the characteristics of the Antichrist – it remains a mystery today. However, it will be evident to those who see the rise of the Antichrist, and the calculation of his number will become an additional clue to his identification.

It might seem to be incongruent for the False Prophet, who appears to be a religious leader, to implement a mark that has such a tremendous economic impact



Four Modern-Day False Prophets: Billy Graham, Pope Francis, Rick Warren, Robert Schuller

on the people of the world – yet it is in keeping with his primary work to bring everyone to bow before the Antichrist. Who is this False Prophet? Do we have any clues in Scripture as to the identity of this mysterious assistant to the Antichrist? *Prophet* (*prophetes*) comes from bringing together *before* (*pro*) and *to declare* (*phemi*); for the OT prophets and the Apostles of the NT, it could mean the proclamation of events that were yet in the future, but within a broader Christian context, it means to proclaim or teach God's Word publicly, particularly as it relates to His salvation and the interpretation of the times.³⁸ Therefore, when we read of a *false prophet*, we must think of someone who will be fulfilling the mandate of a prophet, but the message that is being declared is false – one that is alongside of the

³⁷ <http://www.russellcottrell.com/greek/utilities/greeknumberconverter.htm>

³⁸ Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon.

truth (Romans 16:17). So when we read of this second *beast* (the False Prophet), we must realize that to the undiscerning he might well appear to have the words of God; his identity as being *false* will only take place within the mind of the child of God who is firmly grounded in the Scriptures so as to recognize that his words and works spring from the devil. Consider the pope, Robert Schuller, Billy Graham, Rick Warren, et al., each is a *false prophet* in his own right, for they do not hold the truth of God in righteousness (Romans 1:18). Being a false *prophet* provides a strongly religious or spiritual connection for this person; the devil loves religion (or religions), for, through false religious fervor, he draws the people of the world to place their faith in him, the *enlightened* one (2 Corinthians 11:14). For that reason, we must consider the False Prophet as the head of a false religious system that will complement the Antichrist's rule over the world.

We have already noted that the Antichrist will be the long awaited *Mahdi* of the Islamic faith; although a somewhat religious man, his focus will be on uniting the peoples of the earth under Islamic governance – i.e., he will be more political than religious. To complement this, he will need someone who will be able to bring the non-Muslims into his following, which will require a large degree of compliance with the Islamic faith.

In the world today, there are two religious groups that together make up almost 4 billion people: the Muslims (1.6 billion) and the Christians (2.2 billion); the figure for *Christians* includes 1.2 billion Catholics who follow their Ecumenical pope, and, if you consider the remainder to be about 95% Ecumenical, it is clear that a 2.2 billion figure for Ecumenical Christianity is fairly accurate.³⁹ Is there anything that would indicate a possible joining of Muslims with Christians (or vice versa) who would then willingly follow the False Prophet?

In October of 2007, 138 Muslim clerics drafted a document called *A Common Word Between Us and You*, which was addressed to the sitting pope, 26 other named religious leaders, and then “Leaders of Christian Churches, everywhere”⁴⁰ In this



document, the Muslim clerics spelled out the common ground that purportedly exists between

³⁹ <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/12/18/global-religious-landscape-exec/>;

https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Christian_denominations_by_number_of_members

⁴⁰ <http://www.acommonword.com/recipients/>

Christians and Muslims, and summarized it this way in their opening statements: “The Unity of God, the necessity of love for Him, and the necessity of love of the neighbour is ... the common ground between Islam and Christianity.”⁴¹ In response to this extended olive-branch of peace, Yale Divinity School drafted a “Christian” response that included: “That so much common ground exists – **common ground in some of the fundamentals of faith** – gives hope that undeniable differences ... cannot overshadow the **common ground upon which we stand together** (emphasis added).”⁴² We might well understand how such a desecration of the God of the Bible could come out of Yale, but we must look further to see who it was who signed this letter of response. Included among the **initial** signatories are the following who might be familiar names to many of us: Leith Anderson (National Association of Evangelicals), Rev. Dr. Stuart Briscoe, Lynn Green (Youth With A Mission), Bill Hybels (Willow Creek Community Church), Greg Livingstone (Frontiers), Richard Mouw (Fuller Theological Seminary; plus another dozen identified with Fuller), Harvey Thiessen (OM Canada), and Rick Warren (Saddleback Church).⁴³ What this clearly demonstrates is that there is a strong desire among influential Evangelicals, and even mission leaders, to broker peace with the Muslims in direct violation of 2 Corinthians 6:14-17.

In 2011, Abraham Meulenberg (a leader at Saddleback Church) and Jihad Turk (a director of the Islamic Center of Southern California) drafted a document called *King’s Way* that was unveiled at a meeting of Saddleback members and Muslims. Reporting on this historic event, Jim Hinch (of the *Orange County Register*) stated that it was “an effort to heal divisions between evangelical Christians and Muslims by partnering with Southern California mosques and **proposing a set of theological principles that includes acknowledging that Christians and Muslims worship the same God** (emphasis added).”⁴⁴ Despite Rick Warren’s accusation that he got it wrong, and after numerous discussions with other Saddleback staff, Hinch came to this conclusion: “Everyone I have talked to from the church [Saddleback] has told me that **the story is entirely factually accurate** but they wish certain phrases had been worded differently” (emphasis added).⁴⁵ In other words, the intent of Saddleback staff was expressed just a little too plainly to suit them – they would

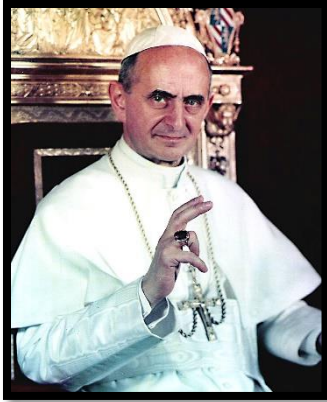
⁴¹ <http://www.acommonword.com/the-acw-document/>

⁴² <http://faith.yale.edu/common-word/common-word-christian-response>

⁴³ Ibid; each of “these signatories were all confirmed via email and in most cases were reconfirmed by further email exchange.” In other words, there was ample opportunity for each of these to retract their endorsement of this document.

⁴⁴ <http://www.ocregister.com/articles/muslims-341669-warren-saddleback.html>

⁴⁵ <http://www.piratechristian.com/berean-examiner/2012/03/05/finally-a-look-at-the-kings-way-document-that-sparked-the-chrislam-questions>



Pope Paul VI

have been happier with the truth being less obvious. Therefore, when the dust all settled around the principles within *King's Way*, the common ground that Warren is seeking to build upon is that Muslims and Evangelicals worship the same God – an important note for our present consideration.

On October 28, 1965, as a product of the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI clarified the Roman Catholic Church's attitude toward non-Christian religions.⁴⁶ In the document, he stated: "The Church regards with esteem also the Moslems. They adore the one God ... they revere [Jesus] as a prophet. They also honor Mary, His virgin Mother"⁴⁷ To help us understand how the Catholics could come to this conclusion over 50 years ago, it is pointed out that the basis for this statement (*they adore the one God*) is *classical theism*, which is "embraced by the greatest thinkers of the Abrahamic religions [Judaism, Islam, Christianity]," and it works like this: "Because ... there can only in principle be one God, Christians, Jews, and Muslims who embrace classical theism must be worshipping the same God."⁴⁸ Therefore, when we hear Pope Francis say that the Muslims "worship the one living and merciful God, and call upon him in prayer," we should not be surprised.⁴⁹ Interestingly, Catholic theologians were quick to say that this must be taken as a *pastoral* comment meant to build bridges and not one that is doctrinal. However you want to spin the pope's comment, it is impossible to get around the fact that it can only mean that the Muslims and Catholics are worshipping the same God; unless, of course, the Catholic pope is admitting that he is not worshipping a *living and merciful* God, or, perhaps, he is lying.

What we have very briefly looked at are a few of the overtures made by Muslims, Evangelicals, and Catholics in an effort to build bridges of understanding. If we consider that it wasn't that many years ago that Chuck Colson worked tirelessly to justify and facilitate bringing Catholics and Evangelicals together, it seems very evident that that mission has been completed and no longer requires much attention. The Roman Catholic Church has taken the lead in everything Ecumenical, and the Evangelical community has quickly clambered on board – Rick Warren has provided ample proof of that. However, let's broaden the Evangelical muddled-waters just a

⁴⁶ http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ <https://www.thecatholicthing.org/2015/12/17/do-muslims-and-christians-worship-the-same-god/>

⁴⁹ <https://www.catholic.com/magazine/online-edition/christians-muslims-and-the-one-god>

little. In 1997, Billy Graham stated: "... I think Islam is misunderstood ... And I think that we're closer to Islam than we really think we are."⁵⁰ We've seen glimpses of where the Catholics and Muslims might find common ground, but let's take a moment to examine this in more detail; since Evangelicals are not far behind the Catholics in this regard, it is important that we are familiar with where the compromises are entering.

The first area of agreement seems to be coming around the concept that both, the Muslims and the Catholics, worship the *same god*. The pope of Rome has affirmed this; Rick Warren, despite his empty protests over the media's documentation of *King's Way*, is in full agreement that *Allah* and *Jehovah* are the same. The basis for this seems to stem from the fact that the Jews and Arabs come from a common ancestor, Abraham; the assumption that is made is that there is a continuity of the God of Abraham through both Isaac and Ishmael – one calling Him *Jehovah*, the other *Allah*. Clearly, such an assumption would open the way for the Catholics and Evangelicals to easily accept that *Allah* is the God of the Bible; however, this needs to be given careful evaluation.

As the Lord reiterates to Isaac the promise that He made to Abraham, He says that He does so because Abraham "obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws" (Genesis 26:5). Abraham displayed an active faith in the Lord – a faith that was evident through how he lived. Ishmael, Abraham's first son, would have witnessed this display of faith until he was sent away with his mother when he was between 16 and 17 years of age.⁵¹ However, despite the Lord speaking to her and providing for her, Hagar did not follow Abraham's God, for when it was time for Ishmael to marry, she found him a wife from Egypt, someone from her own pagan culture (Genesis 21:21). With this glimpse from the Scriptures into Ishmael's early years, we would not expect that his descendants would have followed the God of Abraham – and we would be correct.

Centuries before Muhammad, the Arabians (the descendants of Ishmael) worshipped a number of



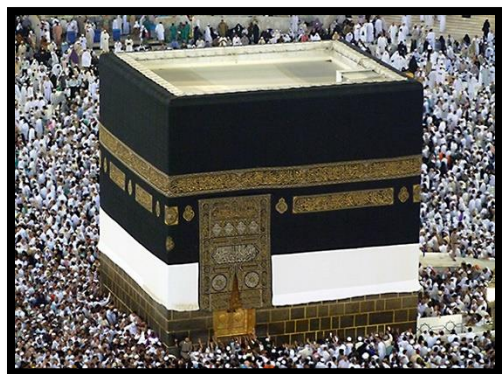
Moon-god Allah or Hubal or Sin

⁵⁰ Cathy Burns, *Billy Graham and His Friends*, p. 118.

⁵¹ Ishmael was 14 when Isaac was born (Genesis 16:16; 21:5), and he and Hagar were sent away when Isaac was weaned, which generally means that he would have been two or three years of age. <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/search?utf8=%E2%9C%93&keywords=child+weaned&commit=search>

gods and goddesses, but the chief among them was the moon-god, known variously as Allah, Hubal, or Sin; his wife was the sun-goddess, and their daughters were the stars.⁵² Interestingly, both Ur (Abraham's birthplace) and Haran (the place where Terah, Abraham's father, paused on their journey to Canaan, and where he died) were strong centers for the worship of this moon-god, and where many images of Allah with the crescent phase of the moon carved onto his chest have been excavated.⁵³ From ancient times, the crescent moon became the accepted symbol for the moon-god, Allah. What should be very evident to us is that Allah cannot possibly be the God of Abraham, for He would never be depicted as a man sitting on a throne with a crescent moon carved on his chest (John 4:24). It is much more likely that God called Abraham out of the worship of this moon-god. It is also very interesting that the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* tells us that Allah "is the **proper name** of God among Muslims ... Thus it is not to be regarded as a common noun meaning 'God' (or 'god'), and the Muslim must use another word or form if he wishes to indicate any other than his own peculiar deity" (emphasis added).⁵⁴

Mecca became the center for worship for the pre-Muhammad Arabians; it is a generally accepted Muslim tradition that Abraham built the altar that is now the Kaaba, that this was where Abraham left Hagar and Ishmael, and the nearby Well of Zamzam is the water that was provided for Hagar.⁵⁵ Once again, tradition does not align itself with Scripture (Genesis 21:14 – Hagar "wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba," which is almost a thousand miles from Mecca), but that is of little



The Kaaba - Sacred site to Islam

concern to the Muslims who consider our Scriptures to have been corrupted by men. Nevertheless, Mecca became a center for idol worship and the Kaaba a shrine that, at one time, housed some 360 different idols.⁵⁶ The Kaaba, now the most sacred site for Muslims, came out of the mists and mysteries of pre-Islamic paganism; it was retained by Muhammad along with its famous black stone, which Muslims, on their *hajj* (a pilgrimage to Mecca that every Muslim is encouraged to make at least once in their life), will kiss or touch (or, at least, point at) as they walk around the Kaaba seven times. Venerating and kissing the black

⁵² <http://www.biblebelievers.org.au/moongod.htm>; <http://www.studytoanswer.net/islam/hubalallah.html>

⁵³ <http://www.biblebelievers.org.au/moongod.htm>.

⁵⁴ James Hastings, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Volume 1, "Allah."

⁵⁵ <https://www.quora.com/When-and-how-was-the-Kaaba-built>

⁵⁶ https://wikiislam.net/wiki/Pagan_Origins_of_Islam

stone is one of several pagan traditions that Muhammad incorporated into Islam; others include praying five times each day toward Mecca, walking frantically back and forth seven times between Safa and Marwa (two hills by Mecca), ritual washings and wearing special garments for the pilgrimage to Mecca, and using the crescent moon as its symbol.⁵⁷ It was Muhammad who chose Allah as the one god that his followers would worship, and he removed the other offending idols from the Kaaba; even today, the Muslim phrase *Allahu Akbar* supports this by declaring that “Allah is the greatest” (i.e., the *greatest* among many).⁵⁸ Nowhere do we find that Muhammad explained to the Arabs who Allah was – they all knew this god, for they had worshipped him for many years, along with many others.

What we discover from this brief review of a very contentious matter is that Allah did not originate with Muhammad, nor yet with Abraham, but, rather, from among the polytheistic, pagan tribes who worshipped the moon god. Therefore, when the pope, Rick Warren, or anyone else equates the God of the Scriptures to the god of the Muslims, he is either being deceitful in his rush to establish a spiritual connection with the Muslims, or he does believe that they are the same, and, without evaluation, has accepted what he is told (i.e., he is deceived). It appears that this fallacy forms a significant part of the common ground between the Muslims and the Catholics, and the Evangelicals are hastily joining their brothers (the Catholics) in this error – a one-world religion that will be led by the False Prophet.

Probably the next most significant common element between the Catholics and Muslims is that they both hold Mary (the mother of Jesus) in high regard. The Quran quotes Mary’s mother as saying to Allah: “I have named her Mary, and have



Mary, the mother of Jesus, as depicted in Islam (L) and Catholicism (R)

commended her and her descendants to Your protection, from Satan the outcast” (Quran 3:36).⁵⁹ Within Islam, it is believed that everyone is born without sin (they do not believe in original sin), but that Satan will touch the newly born child,

⁵⁷ https://wikiislam.net/wiki/Pagan_Origins_of_Islam.

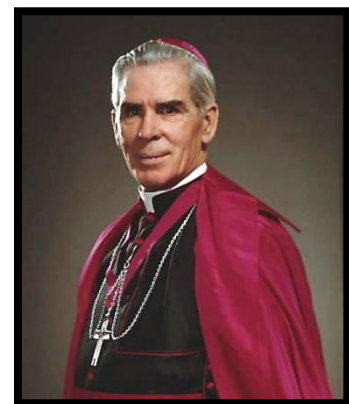
⁵⁸ <https://www.ijihadwatch.org/2015/12/robert-spencer-at-breitbart-allahu-akbar-doesnt-mean-what-media-says-it-means>

⁵⁹ <http://islamawakened.com/quran/3/36/> (Talal A. Itani).

thus infecting it with sin (contrary to Psalm 51:5). Therefore, based upon this, it is understood within Islam that Jesus and Mary were the only two to be born who were not thus infected by Satan (even Muhammad doesn't share in this). In other words, the Muslim tradition is that Mary was not a sinner like everyone else – they believe in her immaculate birth and her sinless life! In 1854, Pope Pius IX declared that Mary, “in the first instance of her conception, by a singular privilege and grace granted by God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the human race, was preserved exempt from all stain of original sin.”⁶⁰ Incredibly, both the Catholics and the Muslims believe that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was without sin – something that is not supported by Scripture (Luke 1:46-47) but it serves to provide them with significant common ground.

Even within the Muslim concept of the afterlife, Mary will hold a position that is above all women. Muhammad had one daughter, Fatimah, who is reported to have said, “The Messenger of Allah [referring to Muhammad, her father] ... told me that I was the master over all the women of the inhabitants of Paradise, except for Mariam [Mary] the daughter of ‘Imran”⁶¹ Mary, the mother of Jesus, is to be greater than Muhammad's own daughter, Fatimah – truly an exalted position!

However, despite the common ground that Muslims and Catholics enjoy concerning Mary, there is still a significant gap between their doctrinal understandings of Who Jesus is. I say “doctrinal” because, although the Roman Catholic Church's doctrinal statements concerning Christ may be quite Biblical, their practice, as we have seen, tells a different story. Nevertheless, Fulton Sheen, a well-known bishop of the Catholic Church (and good friend of Billy Graham), has stated “that Moslemism ... will eventually be converted to Christianity ... It is our belief that this will happen not through the direct teaching of Christianity, but through a summoning of the Moslems to a veneration of the Mother of God.”⁶² In other words, Mary will become the means of drawing Muslims and Catholics together – Islam will not become Christian, but, through a common veneration of Mary, Sheen envisioned a merging of Catholic and Islamic followers. It is no coincidence that, in 1917, an apparition of Mary appeared six times to three children at the Portuguese village of Fatima; this has become a



Bishop Fulton Sheen

⁶⁰ <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07674d.htm>

⁶¹ <https://sunnah.com/tirmidhi/49>; English reference Volume I, Book 46, Hadith 3873.

⁶² http://www.ignatiusinsight.com/features2009/fsheen_maryandislam_jun09.asp

significant point of identification of Muslims with Catholics. Tradition has it that this village was named for a Muslim girl who fell in love with a Catholic soldier and converted to Catholicism; he so loved her that he named the village in honor of her Muslim name, Fatima.⁶³ After the 1917 visions, the Catholic Church added Our Lady of Fatima to the many names that it has given to Mary, the mother of Jesus. It was Bishop Sheen's observation that "in Mozambique the Moslems, who were unconverted, **began to be Christian** as soon as the statue of Our Lady of Fatima was erected" (emphasis added).⁶⁴ In other words, these people began to conduct themselves after the manner of Catholics by paying homage to the idol of the Lady of Fatima – Mary provides significant commonality between Muslims and Catholics (Jesus is sidelined in both religions), and it is becoming increasingly evident that Evangelicals are elevating their view of Mary, too. For example, in 2007, Timothy George, an ordained Southern Baptist Convention minister, wrote a book titled, *Evangelicals and the Mother of God*, in which he espoused the need for Evangelicals to embrace many of the Catholic doctrines regarding Mary, that doing so did not detract from the central role of Christ in salvation, and that an adulation of Mary was required in order "to be faithful to the whole counsel of God."⁶⁵ Truly, the universal attraction of Mary is becoming very evident!

In their devotion, both Muslims and Catholics make use of prayer beads. For the Muslim, the *subha* is made up of 33 beads (or 99 beads separated into three groups by flat discs), which are used to count off recitations of praise to Allah; Muhammad claimed that such recitations would ensure that all of their sins would be pardoned.⁶⁶



Islamic Subha - Catholic Rosary

The rosary is a means for a faithful Catholic to keep track of the repetition of his prayers for the intended purpose of spiritual growth; the Catholics encourage everyone to recite the rosary, for it is a tool for the exaltation of Mary. With the full awareness of the Lord's condemnation of empty repetitions when praying (Matthew 6:7), the Catholics

think that praying the rosary instills an understanding of life, a connection with God, that it sharpens the ability to discern right from wrong, instills peace, and provides a spiritual protection from negativity.⁶⁷ They openly admit that "the rosary is a

⁶³ <http://www.holymary.info/howfatimacametobe.html>

⁶⁴ http://www.ignatiusinsight.com/features2009/fsheen_maryandislam_jun09.asp

⁶⁵ <https://www.firstthings.com/article/2007/02/evangelicals-and-the-mother-of-god>

⁶⁶ <http://islam.about.com/od/prayer/g/Subha.htm>

⁶⁷ <https://www.reference.com/world-view/catholics-pray-rosary-daily-da3f2e18833d28b9>

devotion in honor of the Virgin Mary”;⁶⁸ out of the 81 recitations comprising the rosary, 53 are identified as “Hail Mary’s,” thus placing the focus overwhelmingly on Mary. The “Hail Mary” (*Ave Maria* in Latin) is: “Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.”⁶⁹ The first part of this comes from Luke 1:28 and 42 (bringing together the angel’s and Elisabeth’s greetings of Mary), and the rest of this “prayer” has been added through the tradition of exalting Mary. It was at the Council of Ephesus in AD 431 that it was decided that Mary was the Mother of God (*Theotokos* – God-bearer), making the last part of the “Hail Mary” possible.⁷⁰ Like the Muslims with their *subha*, the Catholics believe that reciting the rosary will provide protection from hell; it expresses their commitment to Mary whom they believe will ensure that their souls will not perish and that they will be delivered from Purgatory (another Catholic invention); the Catholics have even named 15 promises from Mary to those who are committed to the faithful recitation of the rosary.⁷¹

Finally we come to the symbol that has become recognized as being Islamic – the crescent moon that speaks of the moon god, Allah, who was worshipped long before Muhammad made him his only god. This identification is most often denied by Muslims as they seek to have their god, Allah, accepted as the God of the Jews and Christians. Frequently, the crescent moon is accompanied by a star (representing the sun god), and dates back to the ancient Sumerians (c. 2,000 BC) who occupied the lands along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.⁷² Muslims claim that the symbol became linked with Islam when the Ottoman Empire conquered Constantinople in 1453 and assumed the city’s symbol of the crescent moon and star.⁷³ Nevertheless, as we have already noted, the moon god of the ancient Arabians bore a crescent moon on his chest; even though Muhammad may not have used the crescent moon as his symbol, he adopted the god Allah who had been linked to the symbol for many years. Today, the crescent appears on the flags of many Islamic nations as well as on the spires of many of their mosques; efforts by some to distance themselves from the symbol have failed, and it is generally accepted as the symbol of Islam, which is, in fact, a revival of the ancient moon-god cult.⁷⁴

⁶⁸ <https://www.catholic.com/tract/the-rosary>

⁶⁹ <https://www.newadvent.org/images/rosary.pdf>

⁷⁰ <http://catholicism.org/the-council-of-ephesus.html>

⁷¹ <http://www.themostholYROsary.com/15promises.htm>

⁷² <http://symboldictionary.net/?p=2395>

⁷³ http://islam.about.com/od/history/a/crescent_moon.htm

⁷⁴ <http://www.creationstudies.org/Education/moon-god.html>



Diana, displaying two versions of the crescent moon.

moon symbol (which represented the virgin goddess Diana) into association with the Virgin Mary, who, by this time, was already accepted by many as being a virgin forever.⁷⁵ “Support” for this new depiction of Mary was found through an improper understanding of Revelation 12:1, and so, with minimal effort, Catholicism and paganism came together with Mary and the crescent moon. However, within Catholic practice, the crescent moon has found its place elsewhere, although still linked to Mary; in 2008 a new monstrance was unveiled in Chicago, and included in its 9-foot-high design is a portrayal of Mary on top of the Ark of the Covenant, a crescent moon in front of her, and a special 12-inch consecrated host placed in her chest for adoration.⁷⁶ The carving



Mary, with sun's rays, standing upon the moon.



Monstrance located at St. Stanislaus Kostka Church, Chicago

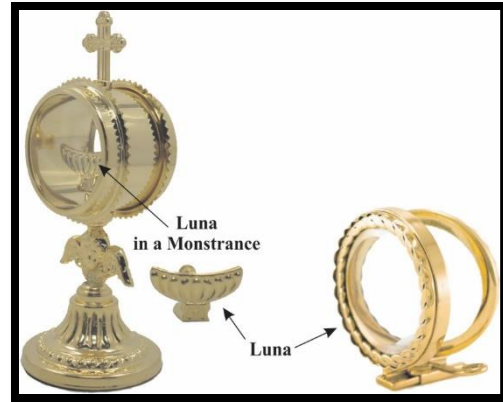
where the presence of Jehovah rested (Psalm 80:1). As a matter of further interest,

⁷⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perpetual_virginity_of_Mary

⁷⁶ <http://www.aggieatholicblog.org/2008/06/nine-foot-monstrance/>

⁷⁷ http://www.newliturgicalmovement.org/2008/05/unique-iconic-monstrance-worlds-largest.html#.WLS5TX_Ntpc

the holder for the host in the monstrance is called a *luna* or *lunette* – it is a crescent-shaped receptacle that holds the consecrated host securely in place;⁷⁸ however, the term can also refer to the entire circular vessel in which the consecrated host is placed.⁷⁹ *Luna* is a Latin word meaning “moon, goddess of the moon”;⁸⁰ within early Roman mythology, Luna was the goddess of the moon, who, as time passed, became less known in favor of Diana, the goddess of the hunt, who came to assume the role of moon goddess.⁸¹ Within Catholic tradition, the consecrated host (wafer) is the very person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Eucharist is considered to be central to all of their sacraments, yet, at the supposedly most sacred point of their liturgies, we find a reference to the moon and the name of a Roman goddess.



Although there are other similarities between Islam and Catholicism (such as the importance of pilgrimages and the historical practice of forced conversions), what we have considered here illustrates that they do have much in common. However, what must not be overlooked is that Evangelicals are increasingly closing ranks with the Catholics through participating in Ecumenical activities, by which they either approve, accommodate, or passively ignore the anti-biblical heresies of Ecumenism and Catholicism.

For our purposes, it should now be evident that a movement to unite all religions is well underway and that the Catholic Church is playing a leading role in making this happen. The Second Vatican Council, which convened from October 1962 through December of 1965, in their Decree on Ecumenism declared: “The restoration of unity among all Christians is one of the principal concerns of the Second Vatican Council.”⁸² When it comes to Ecumenism and the Catholic Church, it is important to understand their perspective, which is that they are the true church that has come from the Apostles of Jesus, and everyone who is not a part of their faith is considered to be a “separated brother.” “Even in the beginnings of this one and only Church of God [the Roman Catholic Church] there arose certain rifts ... in

⁷⁸ <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/luna?s=t>

⁷⁹ <http://catholicsaints.info/luna/>

⁸⁰ http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?l=l&p=34&allowed_in_frame=0

⁸¹ [http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Diana_\(mythology\)](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Diana_(mythology))

⁸² http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19641121_unitatis-redintegratio_en.html

subsequent centuries much more serious dissensions made their appearance and quite large communities came to be **separated from** full communion with the Catholic Church ...” (emphasis added).⁸³ Within their Ecumenical thinking, since all of the *separated brethren* historically broke away from the Catholic Church, then it only follows that Church unity will come about as these separated ones come back into their fellowship. While speaking of the Eastern Orthodox *separated* brethren, Francis declared that “Proselytism is a big sin against ecumenism”; instead, the focus is to be placed upon dialogue.⁸⁴ While speaking in a mosque in Azerbaijan, he said that dialogue is not to be “conciliatory syncretism”; i.e., not an elimination of differences so that everyone believes the same thing; the focus, instead, is upon an open conversation that will lead to a sense of brotherhood (*love*).⁸⁵

As this sense of brotherhood grows between Catholics and Muslims, it would only seem fitting that the Antichrist (whom we suspect will be the Muslim *Mahdi*) and the False Prophet (very possibly the pope of Roman Catholicism) should work together; after all, they both receive their power from the dragon (Revelation 13:4, 12). Do you see it? The work of the Catholics to promote Ecumenism (including their dialogue with the Muslims) is a work of the devil; the real influence behind all forms of Ecumenical thinking is Satan – whether it comes through Rick Warren, Billy Graham, or the local ministerial association! Jesus warned: “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if *it were* possible [*dunatos* (*doo-nat-os*), an adjective meaning able or strong; if the *false Christs* and *prophets* are able], they shall deceive the very elect” (Matthew 24:24).⁸⁶ Unfortunately, the translators of the KJV inserted the words *it were* to make it sound like it is not possible for the elect (those who are in Christ by faith) to be deceived; however, Jesus followed this proclamation with these words: “Behold, I have told you before” (Matthew 24:25), which makes it clear that He has issued the warning in advance so that we can then take heed to ensure that no one should deceive us (Matthew 24:4). Most Evangelicals today, have bought into the idea that they cannot fall away from the Lord, and so they like the words (*it were*) to be inserted into Jesus’ declaration of what will come. However, the writer of Hebrews says: “For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end ...” (Hebrews 3:14); it is obvious from this that it is very possible to lose our *hold* on the basis of hope (*confidence*) that we have in

⁸³ http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19641121_unitatis-redintegratio_en.html.

⁸⁴ <http://www.lastampa.it/2016/10/05/vaticaninsider/eng/the-vatican/ecumenism-and-interreligious-dialogue-francis-and-the-other-popes-M4SJ4kJ36GQLOJRAEPv5IN/pagina.html>

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Friberg Lexicon.

Christ, and, thereby, forfeit our place in Him. We must be alert to the alluring deception of the devil and measure all things against God's Word.

Finally, let us consider the religious system that the False Prophet will lead, and its end. We are not given many details about it, but it is evident that the Antichrist will be the focus of adoration, as well as the dragon who gives both the Antichrist and the False Prophet their great authority (Revelation 13:12). Revelation 17 provides us with an overview of this religious system, followed by the judgment of the Lord that will come upon it (Revelation 18).

THE RELIGION OF THE FALSE PROPHET



1b. I will shew 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. (Revelation 17)

An angel comes to take John to a place where he can witness the Lord's judgment of this end-time religious system, and his first comments to John show us the scope of influence that this religion will have. The angel describes this woman as sitting *upon many waters*; later (verse 15) it is explained that the *waters* are the peoples of this world – this religion will be common on a global scale. This is not to say that everyone will hold to the False Prophet's religious system, but it is clear that it will be dominant.

Why would this religious system be depicted as a woman?

You will recall from our study of chapter 12 that we learned that the kingdom of God is shown to John as a great wonder in heaven – a *woman*. Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, likened the relationship between Christ and the *ekklesia* to that of the husband and wife (Ephesians 5:22-32). After explaining that Jesus, through His sacrifice on the cross, made the Jews and the Gentiles one in Himself (at the cross, the Lord removed the separation caused by the Law of Moses – Ephesians 2:13-16), Paul goes on to explain: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God [members of God's household; there is only ONE *household*, or *flock* (John 10:16)]; And are built upon the foundation [singular] of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the

chief corner *stone*; In whom all the building [singular] fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple [singular] in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation [singular] of God through the Spirit” (Ephesians 2:19-22).⁸⁷ Paul uses the illustration of a building for the kingdom of God; we are being built upon a foundation of the *apostles and prophets*, and we are growing into a holy dwelling place of the Lord. As John is given a glimpse of the New Jerusalem, he describes a city having the glory of God (radiating His holiness), the foundations of its walls bear the names of the twelve Apostles (Revelation 21:11, 14), and its gates bear the names of the twelve tribes of Israel (Revelation 21:12); it is founded upon the New Covenant (the message of the Apostles), and access comes through being made a child of Abraham by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 2:28-29; 4:16). The New Jerusalem is the kingdom of God, *the bride, the Lamb’s wife* (Revelation 21:9) as described in Ephesians 5; there is no temple in the New Jerusalem, for God and the Lamb (God Who came in the flesh of man to pay the price for sin) are dwelling in it – we are the temples of God now (1 Corinthians 3:17), and the magnificence of the eternal, saintly dwelling of God will be beyond earthly comprehension.

Satan, in his ambition to be like unto the Most High, also desires to have a spiritual kingdom among men (after all, he is a spirit being). However, unlike the *great wonder in heaven* (the kingdom of God), Satan’s spiritual kingdom is described as a *great whore (porne)* sitting upon the peoples of the earth.⁸⁸ We must understand this statement within the spiritual context that it is given. Through His prophets, the Lord explained this many times to the people of Israel: “The LORD said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen that which backsliding [*apostate; backslide*, as a word, didn’t come into use until the mid-16th century AD] Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot” (Jeremiah 3:6). When Israel entered the Promised Land, they were told very specifically about the spiritual significance of the *high mountain* and the *green tree* and what they were to do: “Ye shall utterly destroy all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the **high mountains**, and upon the hills, and **under every green tree**: And ye shall overthrow [pull down] their altars, and break their pillars [erected monuments of worship; obelisk], and burn their groves [*Ashera*, a Canaanite goddess] with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images [wooden idols] of their gods, and destroy [blot out] the names of them out of that place” (Deuteronomy 12:2).⁸⁹ Despite this, by the time of Jeremiah, the children of Israel were well

⁸⁷ Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

⁸⁸ Strong’s Online.

⁸⁹ BDB.

entrenched in following the pattern of the pagans of Canaan, and were worshipping stone and wooden idols rather than Jehovah (Jeremiah 3:9) – in reality, they were committing spiritual fornication (they had forsaken their commitment to Jehovah – Exodus 19:8) by joining themselves to the pagan gods. The Lord God is our Creator, and if (like Israel) we place our faith in Him but do not make Him the first priority in our lives, then we are guilty of spiritual fornication, and, unless we quickly repent, we will be lost like Israel before us (Revelation 3:3). Jesus said: “He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth” (Luke 11:23), and “whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:33). In other words, when we make the commitment to be a disciple of the Lord, unless He is lord over everything in our lives, we are guilty of spiritual fornication – we have violated the first Commandment: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:3). For most Evangelicals today, Ecumenism, and its characteristic need for unity, has become their god and has drawn them into spiritual adultery – they claim to belong to the Lord Jesus Christ yet they bow before the god of religious unity. “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend [err, sin] in one *point*, he is guilty of all” (James 2:10);⁹⁰ keeping nine of God’s Ten Commandments is not sufficient. The self-assured ecumenist abides under the condemnation of God because he refuses to heed His first command (Romans 8:1; 1 John 2:3-4) and to separate from what is unclean (2 Corinthians 6:17). The devil is particularly fond of religions; he uses them to appeal to the spiritual dimension of man and to ease the conscience of those who might otherwise desire to pursue true spiritual understanding. The failure of the Ecumenically-minded Evangelical is that he does not hold a proper love for the Truth (John 14:6), which is essential in order to find the saving grace of the Lord (2 Thessalonians 2:10).

What the angel is about to show to John is a religion that defies all boundaries and borders: this satanic, religious system rests upon *peoples*, hosts of peoples (*multitudes*), *nations*, and various languages (*tongues*) (Revelation 17:15).⁹¹ Here is the fulfilled dream of those who are Ecumenically minded: a religion that brings people together from all over the world in spiritual unity – the affirmation is that all spiritual paths lead to the same god. At the very least, the Pope and Warren are both guilty of creating a sense of commonality between Allah and Jehovah, and many times it appears that they have equated the two – not by elevating Allah, but by lowering Jehovah to the level of a pagan god. This is a glimpse into the formative days of this world religion.

⁹⁰ Friberg Lexicon.

⁹¹ Ibid.

Further, the angel reveals that the political leaders (*kings*) of the earth have willingly aligned themselves with this religious system (*committed fornication; idolatry* – active voice, the *kings* have chosen to follow *her*), and the common people (*inhabitants*) of the earth have been fed a steady diet of idolatry (*made drunk*) by this *bride of Satan* who will fill their minds with everything that is in opposition to the God of the Bible.⁹² Historically, the world leaders have followed the pagan religions (there are many, all with idolatry as their common element) of Satan and, looking forward, we can see that this one-world religion will play a significant role in drawing all people together in exaltation of the Antichrist, and the False Prophet will sit at its helm; however, we must never lose sight of the fact that Satan is the power behind both of these men.

John is taken to a desolate place (*wilderness*) where he sees this woman sitting upon a red-colored wild beast; we have just been told by the angel that this woman is sitting upon *many waters*, and now we read that she is sitting on a beast.⁹³ These are not contradictory, but complementary. We've noted (from verse 15) that the *waters* are the peoples of the earth; we have also been reminded that Satan is the *prince of the power of the air* (Ephesians 2:2) – he is the ruler of this world, and has been ever since Adam sinned and relinquished to him the authority over the earth that God had given to man (Genesis 1:28; 1 Corinthians 15:22). We have already learned that Satan is the unseen power behind the numerous kingdoms of the earth (Matthew 4:8-9) and that he will empower both the Antichrist and the False Prophet (Revelation 13:2, 12). The form of this beast is familiar (a wild beast with seven heads); the Antichrist (the first beast) came in this form except that he also bore the traits of previous empires (the leopard, bear and lion of Daniel 7:4-6). The *waters* represent the people over whom Satan is ruling, and the seven-headed monster is Satan who is ruling the people of the world – two perspectives of the spiritual condition of this world. The *woman* is pervasive through all peoples (this is a universal religion) and is empowered by the devil.

Satan's distinguishing seven heads and ten horns are clearly visible (as they were in the Antichrist), and John notes that this beast is full of the *names* of those things that are anti-Christ (*blasphemy*) – anything and everything that is in opposition to God (Revelation 17:3), and we can be sure that *Ecumenism* is one of those names. The influence of Satan is everywhere in those things that are not pleasing to God, and, as Jesus taught, even in those things that might appear to be godly but are not done in obedience to the Lord (Matthew 7:21-23). Everything that is not of God is

⁹² Strong's Online.

⁹³ Ibid.

of the devil; Jesus said: “He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad” (Matthew 12:30). The Ecumenical “good” that we see around us today is the deceptive work of the devil; the teaching and preaching that comes from the Ecumenically minded are the *good words and fair speeches* that are used by the devil to lull the naïve into a false sense of eternal security (Romans 16:18). It is only as we live in faithful obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ that we will be able to identify and avoid the tainted truth that is wielded by the devil – a form of truth that is alongside of God’s truth (Romans 16:17).



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. (Revelation 17)

This woman who promotes spiritual adultery (idolatry; anything but Jehovah), appears on the beast clothed in regal splendor. *Purple* was the most expensive dye



“... arrayed in purple and scarlet ...”

known at the time of John, and so it came to symbolize the power and wealth of royalty; the dye was made by processing thousands of marine snails that produced a very small amount of dye (it took about 12,000 snails to yield less than a

half-ounce of dye).⁹⁴ *Scarlet*, like purple, spoke of wealth, power, and luxury in the ancient world, and, within Roman times, was second only to the purple that was worn by the Emperors.⁹⁵ This satanic religious system presents itself in magnificent finery; she is clothed in all that is deemed to be the finest and the best available. Once again, we can see the ability of Satan to wear a facade that might appear to be godly. When Israel was instructed regarding the construction of the tabernacle, they were told to make curtains of blue, purple, and scarlet (Exodus 26:1). The veil that

⁹⁴ <https://www.clothroads.com/the-ancient-art-of-natural-dye-purple/>;

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tyrian_purple

⁹⁵ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scarlet_\(color\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scarlet_(color))

separated the holy place from the most holy place within the tabernacle was also to be made of blue, purple, and scarlet (Exodus 26:31). As we consider the attire of this woman, we note that she is wearing both purple and scarlet; granted, blue is missing, but a case will undoubtedly be made for how she appears to be so similar to what God ordained for Israel of old. This religious system appears to be very godly; it is acclaimed by many as being the means to God, and so it will take careful discernment to recognize its deception. Beyond that, she has been adorned with gold, a precious (*timios* –very costly, valuable) stone (*lithos* – the word stone is singular), and pearls.⁹⁶ Let's look more carefully at this *stone*.

The central figure within the kingdom of God is the Lord Jesus Christ Who gave His life in order to pay the full price for the sins of mankind; it is through Christ's sacrifice that the kingdom of God is made available to everyone. Isaiah spoke of the coming Messiah Who would be a *stone*, and Peter quotes Isaiah regarding the Lord Jesus: "Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone [*lithos*; singular], elect, precious [*entimos* – held in honor, valued]: and he that believeth [is believing] on him shall [should] not be confounded [brought to shame]" (1 Peter 2:6; Isaiah 28:16).⁹⁷ Notice the difference between the *stone* of the idolatrous religious system and that of the kingdom of God (namely, Jesus Christ): the false religion has an expensive stone, but the kingdom of God has a highly valued Stone. Once again, we see that the devil will make a pretense of fulfilling the Word of God; there will be those who will see the resplendent finery of the one-world religion, and will seek to deceive the unwary by demonstrating how it fulfills Scripture as being the Bride of Christ. The antithesis of the Lord Jesus Christ, within this final, all-encompassing religion, will be none other than the Antichrist; truly an expensive *stone*, for his value to the world will come at great cost – anyone who chooses to oppose him will receive the death sentence (Revelation 13:15), and for everyone else it means complete submission (mind, body, and soul) to him, and to the devil who empowers him (Revelation 13:4).

In the hand of this woman is a *golden cup* that is filled with that which is an abomination to God – the impurity of her spiritual fornication (idolatry). Again, we can see the devil's parallel to the kingdom of God; after His last meal with His disciples, Jesus said: "This cup is the new testament [New Covenant] in my blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:20).⁹⁸ The cup that Jesus took (and which we commemorate in our communion service) contained the fruit of the vine that symbolized 1) the blood that He was about to shed in order to bring cleansing from

⁹⁶ Stephanus 1550 NT; Strong's Online; Vine's "dear."

⁹⁷ Strong's Online; Vine's "dear."

⁹⁸ Strong's Online.

sin to mankind, and 2) the institution of the New Covenant by which the narrow way to life is opened to *whosoever believeth in Him* (John 3:16). The *cup* of the Lord Jesus brings spiritual life to all who place their faith in Him; the *cup* of the woman, by contrast, is filled with spiritual death for everyone who is deceived by her. We must use careful discernment in order to recognize what constitutes the abominations within the woman's cup – it is much **more** than simply the deep sinfulness that is present in the world! Jesus said: “Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matthew 7:22-23). Many today are proclaiming the Word of God, they are casting demons out, and performing miracles (even doing all of these things in Jesus' name), yet they are unknown to the Lord and are destined for the Lake of Fire; we must learn to discern this falsehood (1 John 4:1) and ensure that it is not present within ourselves (2 Corinthians 13:5). The abomination that fills this *cup* is a religion that proclaims *eternal life* to the gullible, even while it really carries God's condemnation. The “gullible” are those who would not accept a love for the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:10), who refuse to be persuaded by the work of the Lord on the cross (John 3:18), and who will not live in obedience to the Lord's commands – “He that believeth [*pisteuo* – is believing (present tense)] on the Son hath [present tense] everlasting life: and he that believeth not [*apeitheo* (*ap-i-theh'-o*) – is being disobedient to (present tense)] the Son shall [absolutely] not see life; but the wrath of God abideth [remains – present tense] on him” (John 3:36).⁹⁹ Sadly, far too many Evangelicals have never been known by the Lord of life, even while they enthusiastically carry out works of *iniquity* (their religious works) in His name. How did this happen?

When we place our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ to be born anew from on high, we are spiritually joined with the Lord, and become one with Him: “he that is joined [*kollao* – to glue together] unto the Lord is one spirit” (1 Corinthians 6:17).¹⁰⁰ This is how a present tense *believing* holds a present tense *eternal life* (John 3:36). Paul uses the illustration of the marriage relationship to describe how we, by faith, relate to the Lord Jesus Christ, and he uses a form of the same Greek word to describe the joining together (*proskollao*) of the husband and wife (Ephesians 5:31). We can readily understand from this physical illustration that, if the husband and/or wife enters into a physical relationship with someone else, they have then committed adultery (fornication is the broad category of which adultery is a specific example).

⁹⁹ Strong's Online.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

However, despite Paul's use of the marriage bond as an illustration of the spiritual unity that we have by faith in Christ, too often there is a refusal, or apparent blindness, to identify spiritual adultery (idolatry) for what it is, and a corresponding reluctance to spiritually separate from it – the example is understood, but the application is refused. Jesus said: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Matthew 10:37); He went on to clarify this further: "If any *man* [anyone] come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26). In essence, Jesus, as the eternal Son of God, states that unless we make Him our top priority in life, we cannot be His disciple; in other words, my love for my wife and family must be subject to my commitment to the Lord. We, by faith, have been spiritually glued to the Lord, and that must be our first consideration!

In a similar manner, the Law of Moses made a much more graphic demand of the children of Israel: "If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which *is* as thine own soul, entice [instigate] thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods ... Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him: But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people" (Deuteronomy 13:6-9).¹⁰¹ Death was the prescribed judgment against those who simply attempted to encourage someone to follow the gods of the nations – even if that person was dear to you. We might be thankful that the Law of Moses ended at the cross of Christ (Ephesians 2:15) but we must not forget that the Ten Commandments are God's Laws for all of time; originally written by the finger of God upon stone, He now writes them upon our hearts when we place our faith in Christ (Hebrews 10:15-17). The first of the Ten Commandments is: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3); **anything** that is placed ahead of the Lord God in our lives (which is idolatry) becomes a violation of this commandment. Jesus unequivocally stated, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15), and, very obviously, that includes the First Commandment!

When Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6), He very clearly eliminated any possibility of there being any other way to God. He declared: "narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14); **He** is that *Narrow Way* to life, and the salvation of our souls can come by no other (Acts 4:12). Therefore, it is our

¹⁰¹ Strong's Online.

spiritual bond with the Lord (entered into by faith) that will bring us to God someday, and we must not permit anything to weaken it. Jesus also said: “ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name’s sake: but he that shall endure [to remain faithful through trials] unto the end, the same [this is the one who] shall be saved [future tense]” (Mark 13:13);¹⁰² it is not sufficient to be faithful to the Lord for part of the time, we must remain faithful unto the very *end* (our death or the Lord’s return) in order to be saved – faithfully keeping **all** of the Lord’s commands. The writer of Hebrews warns us: “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief [faithlessness], in departing from [becoming apostate from] the living God” (Hebrews 3:12);¹⁰³ the Lord will always remain faithful to His spiritual bond with us – it is we who must *take heed* lest a seed of unfaithfulness should be permitted to enter into our hearts and lead to our apostasy.

I have heard it argued that if we can lose the eternal salvation that the Lord provides for His faithful followers, then it was not *eternal*. This reflects a simplistic understanding of what the Lord has done to remove the stain of sin, perhaps due to an unwillingness to relinquish the Evangelical doctrine of eternal security. The problem with this position is really very simple: the salvation that the Lord Jesus offers to everyone under the New Covenant is, indeed, eternal; that is, the **salvation** of the Lord is eternal! However, whether that *eternal salvation* remains ours eternally is dependent upon our faithfulness to the Lord. Jesus made this very clear: “And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name’s sake: but he [in the Greek this is an emphatic pronoun meaning *this one!*] that endureth [*hupomeno* – to remain faithful through trials; active voice – it is something that *he* must do] to the end shall be saved [future tense]” (Matthew 10:22).¹⁰⁴ Jesus is saying that faithfulness to Him will lead to a future salvation; therefore, it must also be understood that being unfaithful to Him will **not** lead to salvation. The one who will be saved in the end (a future date) is the one who remains faithful to the Lord through all of the trials of life; permitting unfaithfulness to enter into our hearts (whether through faith in a wrong teaching, or through disobedience) will lead to becoming apostate (Hebrews 3:12). Without immediate repentance, the elder of Sardis was told by the Lord that He would come against him, even though he had a reputation of being alive (Revelation 3:1-3); evidently, he was doing the right things to deceive the people around him, but his faith in the Lord had been fading to the point of disappearing altogether. Unless we are willing to accept and live by the truths of God’s Word (no

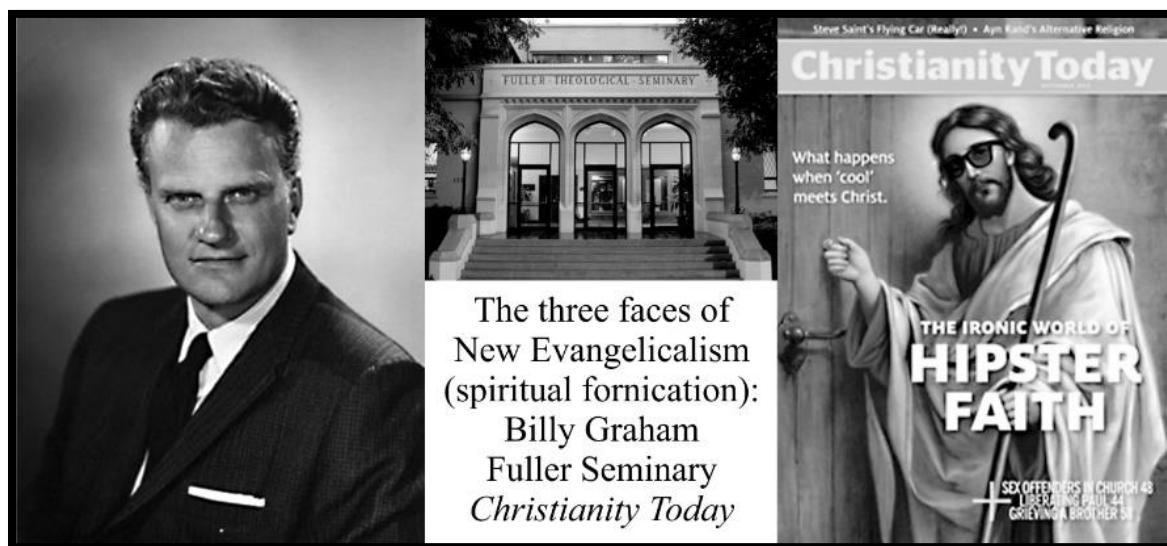
¹⁰² Friberg Lexicon.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Strong’s Online; Friberg Lexicon.

matter how uncomfortable or difficult that it might be), we cannot claim to be His, and we, therefore, remain under His condemnation (Romans 8:1).

Through the ages, what has been perpetually unpopular has been the narrow way that leads to life; right after man sinned, God identified the animosity that would exist between those who desire His way and those of Satan – and there are only two ways (Genesis 3:15). Jesus said that truth and life are exclusively found in Him (John 14:6); His way requires us to walk according to the righteousness and holiness of God (Ephesians 2:10; 4:24), and there will be a cross for each of us to bear (Matthew 16:24). When the father of modern Evangelicalism (Harold Ockenga) pronounced a new way in the spring of 1948, the *new* foundation that he laid was a departure from spiritual separation (undermining God’s *holiness*), and a determined involvement in culture (this is Satan’s domain – parting from God’s *righteousness*) and theological debate with the Liberals (those in fellowship with Satan, and thereby leaving the *cross* behind).¹⁰⁵ The narrow way to life, which Jesus has so clearly pronounced, demands a separation from all that is unholy, and Paul underscored this requirement: “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and



touch not [do not cling to] the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you ...” (2 Corinthians 6:17).¹⁰⁶ It is very clear that if we do not relinquish all that is unclean before the Lord, then He will not receive us to Himself; yet this *Neo-evangelicalism* grew out of embracing that which was unclean, even while Biblical separation unto holiness was being rejected. Despite Ockenga’s adamant claim that he was committed to the theology of fundamentalism, his new emphasis brought many

¹⁰⁵ Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible*, Foreword by Harold J. Ockenga.

¹⁰⁶ Strong’s Online.

Biblical doctrines into question simply because it was now important to dialogue with the Liberals – he proposed a Biblical theory but a worldly practice. He openly admitted that when the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy (meaning that the Bible is free of error) is lost, it is inevitably followed by a departure from sound Biblical theology; yet, at the same time, he realized that this New Evangelicalism would involve re-evaluating the Biblical accounts of the creation, the antiquity of man, and the universality of the flood!¹⁰⁷ This is evidence of just how blind this highly-trained, religious theologian really was; he was willing to question the Bible’s account of the creation and the flood (for the sake of a dialogue with the Liberals), even though doing so immediately brought the inerrancy of the Bible into question (something that he admitted would devastate a Biblical theology) – man’s ability to embrace conflicting arguments knows no bounds! Fuller Seminary (of which Ockenga was a founder) is an illustration of what took place: in 1950, 75% of its student body strongly supported Biblical inerrancy, but by 1985 this was down to a mere 15%.¹⁰⁸ **New Evangelicalism** (where man’s reasoning became the priority) **is spiritual fornication**; through intellectual dialogue with Liberal theologians, Evangelicals were able to discover a new freedom: “thus saith the Lord” could now be understood as: “Yea, hath God said?” Ecumenism flourished in this New Evangelical soil, and those who had once been considered to be Liberal and in error, were now embraced as brothers. Alas, the *Narrow Way* to life eternal had been re-defined in order to permit a much more liberal application. However, God’s Word had not changed (even though a multitude of translations seemed to argue otherwise), Jesus is still the **only** way to eternal glory, and entrance into His glory is only open to those who remain faithful to Him unto the end (Matthew 24:13).

The *woman*, whom John sees riding upon the red dragon is Satan’s one-world religion; she is not an afterthought, but is the culmination of Satan’s religious endeavors beginning in the Garden of Eden – he has always used religion to his advantage. This religion has been clothed with the finest from the very beginning (*arrayed* is in the perfect tense [a past completed action] and passive voice [she has been clothed by another – Satan]), and adorned with costly ornaments;¹⁰⁹ Satan’s religions (and there are many variations of idolatry) will always be externally attractive – he has one for everyone, and, if not, then feel free to modify one to suit your desires. Satan’s very first religion promised Eve that she and Adam would be

¹⁰⁷ Lindsell, *Foreword*.

¹⁰⁸ George M. Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*, p. 302.

¹⁰⁹ Strong’s Online.



as gods (Genesis 3:5), and this has proven to be a strong, central theme through many of the different religions that he has used throughout history.

Moreover, from her inauguration, she (this religion) has also borne a name that requires discernment to understand; *written* is in the perfect tense (a completed action with ongoing results) – her name is described as a *mystery*. The Greek word that is translated as *mystery* (*mysterion*) is neuter, which means that it describes the *name* upon her forehead (*anoma*, also neuter) and not the *woman* (*auths*, *her*, which is feminine).¹¹⁰ The woman bears one name (*name* is singular): *Babylon the Great*. The age-old question is: what's in a name? Why does this end-time religious system bear the name of Babylon? *Babylon* comes from the Akkadian *Bab-ilani*, meaning the gate of the gods.¹¹¹ Akkad was one of the earliest empires to control the entire Mesopotamian region (see map¹¹²); it was centered in its main city Akkad (Genesis 10:10), and its Semitic language, which became dominant during this time, is known as Akkadian. As this empire declined, Babylonia began to exercise control over this fertile region and much of the former Akkadian culture was carried forward.¹¹³ The famous Hammurabi made Babylon (the city) the center for his control;

however, after Hammurabi, Babylon declined and eventually came under Assyrian

¹¹⁰ Stephanus 1550 NT.

¹¹¹ http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?l=b&allowed_in_frame=0

¹¹² <https://www.shorthistory.org/ancient-civilizations/mesopotamia/akkadian-empire/>;
<https://visualunit.me/2016/01/19/assyrian-empire-map/>; <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babylonia>;
<https://dinromerohistory.wordpress.com/2015/06/15/neo-babylonian-empire-612-b-c/>

¹¹³ http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Akkadian_Empire

control (a people located in northern Mesopotamia, with first Ashur, and then Nineveh, as their center of power).¹¹⁴ Initially, the Assyrians continued to use the Akkadian language, but their conquests included Aramaic regions and it was not long before Aramaic replaced Akkadian as the language of choice.¹¹⁵ It was the Assyrians who captured Israel and safeguarded their control through an ingenious program of deportation, which we read about in Scripture (2 Kings 17:24).¹¹⁶ With the decline of Assyria, Babylon once again rose to a place of power; Nebuchadnezzar reigned from the city of Babylon and took many of the residents of Judah to that city as captives (2 Kings 24:10-15).

The religion of Mesopotamia, in general terms, was polytheistic, being a product of Akkad, Babylonia, Assyria, and then New Babylon. All aspects of nature (sun, moon, water, wind, rain, etc.) were considered to be under the control of individual gods or goddesses, and each locality would have their own particular pantheon of deities that they were responsible to please – regardless of the names of the deities that were being appeased, it was, in essence, a religion of works. The people placed no faith in the gods that were being served; it was only their hope that their works would be adequate to protect them from the gods' wrath. This is the cornerstone of the religion (the *woman*, *Babylon the Great*) that is riding the beast: salvation (whatever that might mean) comes through doing certain required things. *Babylon*, as the gate of the gods, expresses the intent of the rituals and traditions that evolved among these people – it was by their deeds that they sought to gain the attention and favor of the gods. The religion of the beast (Satan) has always been centered on what man must do in an effort to gain merit in the eyes of spiritual entities – for Eve, it meant eating the forbidden fruit in order to become a god (according to Satan's lie). What we must not overlook is that when Eve entered the *gate of the gods*, it was through disobedience to the Lord. The essence is to do the prescribed things in order to appease the unknown, unapproachable forces that impact daily living. Satan is the one who is behind all of the religious activities of the world; it matters not how far-fetched they might appear or how close they seem to come to the truth of the Bible.

The *woman* who is riding the beast bears the name *Babylon the Great*; all of the religions of the world find their home here. *Religion* is defined as “a set of beliefs about ... [deity], the universe, purpose, life, death, morality, etc.”¹¹⁷ and these *beliefs* are based upon man's interpretation of what is taking place in the world around him – that is, they are subjective, not objective. *Religion* is man deciding

¹¹⁴ <http://www.penfield.edu/webpages/jgiotto/onlinetextbook.cfm?subpage=1583963>

¹¹⁵ <http://www.ancient.eu/assyria/>

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ <https://carm.org/dictionary-religion>

what he needs to do in order to appease the deities that he recognizes as being important in his life; every religion in the world fits this basic premise. Ancient Babylon, like every major city before it, was very religious and included 50 temples within its boundaries; Marduk (also known as Bel) was their king of gods, accompanied by Ea (god of wisdom), Sin (moon god, known as Allah among the Arabians), Shamash (sun god), Ishtar (goddess of love and war), and numerous other lesser deities.¹¹⁸ Babylon (*the gate of the gods*) provided its citizens with much religion based upon their works to meet the prescribed demands. However, Satan's religious system is also very Ecumenical – it is not exclusive, but inclusive, and, even though the names of the gods might vary from region to region (and religion to religion), they are frequently very similar in nature.

What follows in our text provides further explanation regarding this *woman (Babylon the Great): the mother of harlots (prostitutes) and abominations of the earth*. This is an all-encompassing description that is not particularly flattering. Remember that this woman represents a spiritual entity (a religious movement), and so we must bear this in mind as we consider this description. Jehovah created man in His image so that he might commune with Him (Genesis 1:26; 3:8). Through Adam's sin, that communion was broken, yet God immediately provided a way to restore spiritual communion with Him through the shed blood of animals, thereby foreshadowing the coming promised One Who would forever make a restored relationship possible (Genesis 3:15). Paul writes that "he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit" (1 Corinthians 6:17); our unity with Christ comes through faith in what He has done for us. We have seen that the religion of Babylon is one of works – man is required to keep certain rituals in order to try to appease the gods, and thereby hope to gain some goodness in his life. The Scriptures teach us something very different – our salvation is based upon what God has done for us, not on what we might do for Him (Romans 6:23); it is entirely of God, and our part is to accept the gift that He has prepared for us through Christ (our faith is in God!). "For whosoever shall call [this is quoted from Joel 2:23, where *call* is imperfect, identifying this as a continuous action] upon the name of the Lord shall be [future tense] saved [passive voice – it is not something that we do, but it is done for us by the Lord]" (Romans 10:13).¹¹⁹ We abide in Him through faith; "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). It is through faith that the salvation that God provides brings us into a spiritual relationship with Him. By faith we are serving a living God Whose Spirit is abiding within us (Romans

¹¹⁸ <http://autocww2.colorado.edu/~toldy2/E64ContentFiles/ReligiousGroups/BabylonianReligion.htm>

¹¹⁹ Strong's Online.

8:9); our focus is to be on the Lord (Hebrews 12:2) and not on the things of the world. We do not seek to appease an unknown god, but to love and serve the Creator of all things Who will one day restore the balance of all things (2 Peter 3:13) and bring us to be with Him, **if** we remain faithful to Him in all things (Matthew 24:13).

The religion of Babylon makes demands of men, and their faith is in their ability to comply with the prescribed works so that they might possibly move the gods to be benevolent toward them. The religion of Babylon has always flowed out of that which is contrary to what God has prepared for mankind; it is a religion founded upon man's efforts to appease his own conscience and, thereby, bring a sense of justification in his own eyes. Animism, Spiritism, Buddhism, Hinduism, atheism, humanism, Catholicism, and any other *ism* in the world today, springs from the ancient religion of Babylon – namely, that man is able, through specific works, to attend to the demands of the spirit realm. Each *ism* develops its own peculiar requirements and defines the spiritual entity or entities that must be satisfied (whether vague spirits, Buddha, Allah or God – it matters not); they are diverse, yet all adhere to a system of works. God's Word declares: "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law [keeping the Law of Moses], but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Galatians 2:16); "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them [Israel of old]: but **the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith** in them that heard *it*" (Hebrews 4:2). This is the reason why Israel failed so miserably in their walk with God – they lived according to the requirements of the Law of Moses but failed to exercise faith in God for their salvation. Works, even those prescribed by God (like the Law of Moses), have been of no value unless they were carried out through a living faith in Him (Isaiah 1:11-15; Hebrews 11:6; cp. Matthew 7:21-23). Therefore, it should come as no surprise that each and every *ism* is spiritual fornication (idolatry) before the God to Whom we must all give an account (1 Peter 4:3-5). This is the reality of the woman who is seen riding this beast, whose name is *Babylon the Great*, and who is defined as *the mother of harlots* – every *ism* in the world (being devoid of faith in God) finds its origin in Babylon, *the gate of the gods*. In the same way that Eve is considered to be the mother of mankind, so Babylon is the mother of all that is contrary to God: both religiously (as *the mother of harlots*), and in all that is detestable before God (*abominations of the earth*). This is a brief glimpse into the world-wide religious system over which the False Prophet will preside.



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. ⁹. And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. ¹⁸. And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth. (Revelation 17) ⁹. And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held ... (Revelation 6)

John now records that he saw this *woman*, this one-world religion, *drunken on the blood of the saints*. Within this religion, there is an obsession with killing those who have been made holy through the blood of the Lamb.¹²⁰ We saw that the second horseman will come to remove peace from the earth so that people will become paranoid and kill one another (Revelation 6:4); this will unleash a great slaughter on the earth, which will specifically target those who are a part of the kingdom of God. Remember that Satan, in great wrath, went out to wage war against those who keep the commandments of God and who bear the testimony of Jesus Christ (Revelation 12:17). We have seen, too, that the historic Islamic campaign to conquer the world laid particular destruction upon those who refused to accept their dogma; if, as I have proposed, the Antichrist is a Muslim, then it will not be surprising to see a massive decimation of the Lord's faithful ones, both through apostasy and death (Revelation 13:7). Apostasy (or spiritual death) will come either through falling for the smooth, deceptive words of the Antichrist, or through losing hope because the Lord did not take them out of the world before the time of the Antichrist, as they had been persuaded that He would.

This one-world religion will have no love for the faithful Christian, which is evident, to a much lesser degree, even today. Rick Warren, a prominent Evangelical, is quoted as saying that “fundamentalism, of all varieties, will be ‘one of the big enemies of the 21st century. Muslim fundamentalism, Christian fundamentalism, Jewish fundamentalism, secular fundamentalism –they're all motivated by fear. Fear of each other’”;¹²¹ this is an “Evangelical” declaring *Christian fundamentalism* to be an enemy! Among Ecumenical Evangelicals, there is a strong emphasis upon the love of God, and we are encouraged to “enjoy diversity in all other matters of faith and practice, refusing to let them divide us.”¹²² *Love* for those of like mind becomes

¹²⁰ Friberg Lexicon.

¹²¹ <http://web.archive.org/web/20060116060443/http://www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/living/religion/13573441.htm>

¹²² <http://www.covchurch.ca/identity/>

the bond that holds everyone together, and *unity*, in turn, is the expression of that love. However, should anyone dare to show them that their love actually contradicts the Scriptures (which they might well profess to uphold), they will be quick to discredit him for spreading disunity; in effect, their *love* only extends to those within their unity, or those whom they hope to convince to join their community. When you stand in opposition to their Ecumenical ways, they will express their displeasure toward you; the line that has been crossed, in their minds, is that no one can be dogmatic in their understanding of the Word of God, and he must certainly not express the Gospel as an exclusive message. In keeping with New Age thinking, they are convinced that there are many variations of truth, and anyone who claims to hold to objective truth is deluding themselves. The gospel (small “g”) message has become very inclusive; yet Jesus stated in very **exclusive** terms: “I am ... the truth” (John 14:6), and openly declared that the Word of God is truth (John 17:17; Revelation 19:13). Nevertheless, to stand firmly upon the clear teachings of Scripture will result in falling into disfavor with those of the Ecumenical mindset.

Within the rule of the Antichrist and the False Prophet, tolerance will be expressed to those who submit to them and death will come to those who remain faithful to the Lord. As we have already noted, there will be a great apostasy when the Antichrist goes forth to conquer (2 Thessalonians 2:3). Why will this happen? Within the Evangelical community, there is a broad acceptance of what is termed the *pre-tribulational rapture*; by this they mean that the Lord Jesus will come to catch His “church” away before the difficult days under the Antichrist begin (the *Tribulation*). Yet we read that the Antichrist will “make war with the saints” (Revelation 13:7); the obvious understanding of this is that the saints of God are still on the earth. When these, who have clung to the hope that they will not have to endure tribulation, are suddenly faced with the persecution of the Antichrist, they will be thoroughly discouraged because they were wrong in their understanding. Since there will be so many who will proclaim the False Prophet and the Antichrist as the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy (as being the prophesied Elijah and Messiah), it will be easy for them to rationalize that they are still retaining their Biblical faith even as they accept this new religion, and become apostate.

As the Lord Jesus opened the fifth seal of the book that He had taken from the right of the throne of God, John sees, at the foot of (*under*) the altar in heaven (Revelation 6:9; 8:3), the souls (*psuche*) of those who had given their lives for the Lord.¹²³ The first mention of an altar in Scripture is the one that Noah built after the flood (Genesis 8:20); in broad terms, the altar is a place of sacrifice to God (or the

¹²³ Friberg Lexicon; Strong’s Online.

gods, it is not exclusively Christian), and, in keeping with the sacrifice that God made for Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, it was a place for the shedding of blood for sins committed, which, when accompanied by faith, would lead to a restored relationship with Jehovah. The altar symbolizes our dependence upon the grace of God for cleansing; it is where we bow before the God of heaven in humility – the lesser prostrated before the Greater. The cross upon which Jesus died became the final altar upon earth, for it was there that Jesus shed His blood for the purging of sins for everyone, but the efficacy of His shed blood is only for those who accept this gracious gift of God (Ephesians 2:8-9). At the foot of the altar that is in the presence of God in heaven, are those who have chosen to die rather than renounce their commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. In truth, there has never been a time when a child of God has not faced persecution (2 Timothy 3:12), and many times, remaining faithful to the Lord came at the cost of his life; Abel was the first martyr – killed for being obedient to the Lord (Genesis 4:3-8). However, under the rule of the Antichrist, and with the encouragement of the False Prophet, becoming a martyr for the Lord will reach new heights.

The rider of the red horse (the second seal – Revelation 6:4) takes peace from the earth, and people will freely kill one another; capital punishment will be restored or vigilante justice will be permitted, and the state-approved method of execution will be beheading (Revelation 20:4) – notoriously common within Islam. “Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against *their* parents, and shall cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name’s sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved” (Mark 13:12-13). Paranoia will reign – trust will be gone even within family relationships, but the primary object for the expression of deadly hatred will be the child of God! Through the message of the False Prophet, those who are faithful to the Lord God will be specifically identified as being the reason for the hardships that have come upon the world – if they would simply submit to the Antichrist (the lie will be), then peace and prosperity would flourish. It is their faithfulness to the Word of God that will result in them being numbered among those who will die, rather than denying their Lord.

John sees this *woman*, this one-world religious system, overcome with a drive to eliminate all of the children of God – an intoxication that reflects the devil’s war against the Lord’s faithful ones (Revelation 12:17). Her exhilaration comes from shedding the blood of the *saints* and the *martyrs of Jesus*. *Saints (hagios)* speaks of those who have been made holy before God, those who have been cleansed by the

blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and are faithful to Him (i.e., obedient to the Lord).¹²⁴ *Martyrs of Jesus* are those who are witnesses of what Jesus has done – *martus*, from which we get the word *martyr*, means to testify, to proclaim what is known to be true, and to do so regardless of the cost.¹²⁵ The False Prophet, as the leader of this religion, will target the children of God in an effort to purge them from the world; Satan's goal is to have everyone living in obedience to him so that he will have **complete control** over the world – without the presence of the Holy Spirit of God in the lives of the Lord's faithful children.

We've noted that the woman, who is called a *whore* (Revelation 17:1), speaks of every system of belief that is not the Narrow Way Whom God has provided; in other words, this woman represents every form of *spiritual fornication* (idolatry) in the world – everything that is contrary to or even alongside of the true Gospel. The life of the Gospel message is that Jesus died to pay the debt for sin and rose again as confirmation that the full payment had been made; all of this was in fulfillment of the promise that God made to Satan in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:15). Our response to the Gospel must be one of faith in what the Lord Jesus Christ has accomplished for us; this is a faith that must be expressed through obedience to His Word (Romans 8:1; James 2:17). In Romans 16:17, Paul identified what our response must be to the spiritual fornication of this woman: "Now I beseech [exhort, urge] you, brethren, mark [notice carefully, or watch out for] them which cause divisions [disunity] and offences [that which causes another to stumble] contrary to [alongside of] the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid [turn away from] them."¹²⁶ By way of review, it is important that we understand that the disunity (*divisions*) spoken of here is separation from the Lord Jesus Christ; although the Ecumenist will accuse the child of God of bringing disunity by not entering into their company, it is actually the Ecumenist who has separated from the Lord and brought *division* – anything that is added to, or removed from, the pure Gospel of God destroys the life of the Gospel. Paul was amazed that the Galatians were so quickly accepting a different, perverted gospel; the perversion was that they must retain the Law of Moses as a condition for salvation (Acts 15:5). "If any *man* preach any other [an alongside of, a different] gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be [he is] accursed" (Galatians 1:9; Deuteronomy 12:32).¹²⁷ This seemingly small departure from the message of the Gospel of Christ served to *pervert* it – it changed it into something that was its opposite; i.e., from a Gospel of spiritual life to a gospel

¹²⁴ Friberg Lexicon.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Friberg Lexicon; Strong's Online.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

of death that could only feign life. We are to be alert to those who would seek to undermine our commitment to the truth of Christ.

We are also to watch out for those who *cause offences* (Romans 16:17), those who will lay something down that might cause someone else to stumble. For the faithful child of God, there is probably nothing more tempting today than the enticement of Ecumenical acceptance and unity. Ecumenical Evangelicals might well speak words that sound Biblical and present a case that appears to be both logical and caring; nevertheless, they are speaking the words of Satan, who desires nothing more than to snare the Lord's elect. We are to identify those who proclaim a message that is not completely in keeping with the truths of Scripture and those who would seek to draw us away from the narrow truth of the Gospel; once we have identified them, then we must not only have no part with them (*avoid*), but also expose them so that others can be alerted (2 Timothy 4:14-15). Jesus warned us to be on the alert for *false christs and false prophets* who would, if they were sufficiently skilled, lead the child of God into error (Matthew 24:24); the one who falls victim to their false gospel message has become apostate and is then without hope (Hebrews 6:4-6). This *woman* (this false religion) is intoxicated with the *blood* of the *saints* and *martyrs*; the Lord's elect, through the centuries, have often been called upon to die for their commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. As the Antichrist and False Prophet establish their governance over the world, this test of our faith will find its ultimate expression; Satan's war against God's faithful children will intensify as he seeks to become the only spiritual entity on earth – if he could only remove all of the *ekklesia*, then the earth would be his!

Nevertheless, we have been assured by the King of kings that the devil will not succeed; as in the days of Elijah, we are confident that “at this present time also there is [perfect tense, it has been established in the past] a remnant [minority, small number] according to the election of grace” (Romans 11:5) – God's predetermination is that, before Jesus returns, there will never cease to be a minority who will remain faithful to Him.¹²⁸ It is Jesus Who will remove His people from the earth (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17), not Satan; once the Lord has taken His faithful ones to be with Him forever, He will pour His wrath upon the world that will then be the domain of Satan and those who are his (Revelation 16).

As John saw this woman, drunken with the blood of God's faithful ones, he *wondered with great admiration* (Revelation 17:6). Our word *admiration* no longer carries the meaning that it once did, and so we come away with a wrong impression

¹²⁸ Friberg Lexicon; Strong's Online.

of John's response. The Greek word *thauma* (translated as *admiration*) actually means astonishment, amazement, or surprise – without the modern sense of approval;¹²⁹ in other words, John was deeply shocked by what he saw. This woman, despite wearing lavishly expensive garments and the finest of jewelry, has been actively doing the work of Satan in slaughtering the children of God. However, it would be a mistake to limit her activities against the Lord's people to the time of the Antichrist; in fact, Cain was not only the first son of Adam and Eve (Genesis 4:1), but he was also the first to express this woman's hostility against God's elect (Genesis 4:5, 8). Ever since, Satan always has those who are willing to do his bidding: 1) from Adam to the birth of Jesus, his intent was to prevent the birth of the Anointed One Who would bring about his demise (Genesis 3:15; Revelation 12:4); 2) from the birth of Jesus through His resurrection from the dead, he sought to destroy the earthly mission of the Son of God (Luke 4:5-7); 3) ever since then, he has been fighting against the kingdom of God – namely, those on the earth who are faithful to the commands of the Lord and cling to the narrow message of God's Gospel (Revelation 12:17).

The messenger of the Lord (the *angel*) is showing John the woman and the judgment that she will face (Revelation 17:1). However, it is interesting to notice that the angel begins by referring to the woman as sitting *upon many waters*; then, when John sees the woman, he describes her as sitting upon a *scarlet coloured beast* (Revelation 17:3). As we've already noted, these are two perspectives of the same *woman*: she is sitting upon *many waters* **and** a *beast*. The angel goes on to explain the *many waters* as being people of every part of the earth (Revelation 17:15); the woman's scope of influence is internationally broad – her spiritual fornication (idolatry in many forms) is universally accepted by the peoples of the earth. At the same time, she rides upon the back of a *scarlet beast*, which is none other than Satan himself. We've already noted that Satan is a master of disguises (2 Corinthians 11:14): when he sought to eliminate the Lord Jesus when He was born, he is described as a fiery red dragon (Revelation 12:3), when he appeared in the Antichrist, he came as a leopard (Revelation 13:2), and now he presents himself as a *scarlet* colored beast that blends in perfectly with the attire of this false religion. This spiritually corrupted religion, *Babylon the Great*, comes in the power of Satan; the False Prophet, who will be the leader of this Ecumenical, religious giant, is also empowered by the devil (Revelation 13:12).

As the angel concludes his explanation of the woman to John, he makes this statement: "And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over

¹²⁹ Friberg Lexicon.

the kings of the earth” (Revelation 17:18). After coming to identify the *woman* as a universal, false religious system, the angel now goes on to identify the *woman* as being that *great city* that is ruling (*reigneth*) over *the kings of the earth*. At the time that John wrote the Revelation, the city of Rome was the seat of power within the Roman Empire, which administered its vast holdings through rulers whom it held accountable. Within the Roman context, such rulers carried varying titles: “Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being **governor** of Judaea, and Herod being **tetrarch** of Galilee, and his brother Philip **tetrarch** of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the **tetrarch** of Abilene ...” (Luke 3:1) – each of these individuals was responsible to the ruling power in Rome. The titles that were used revealed the importance of the region being ruled: *king* was reserved for the most important, then *governor*, and finally *tetrarch*;¹³⁰ each was directly responsible to the Emperor, and for administering according to the dictates of Rome. Therefore, we understand that the angel has identified the *woman* as being Rome, the seat of power over a vast empire. So how does this fit with what we have already learned of this woman?

At the time that John wrote this book, the city of Rome was a center of paganism, which exhibited an acceptance of most polytheistic practices, but showed a particular intolerance for Judaism and Christianity.¹³¹ For many years, the high priest within the polytheistic Roman religion (*pontifex maximus* – literally, greatest bridge-builder, referring to the gap between common man and the gods) had been elected to his position, which wielded both political and religious clout, but, by the time that John wrote the Revelation, it was simply held by the Emperor.¹³² Therefore, even for John, it would not have been a stretch to visualize a religious system that would have a very broad influence; however, even the influence of the Emperor of Rome as *Pontifex Maximus* did not extend beyond the borders of his own empire. What John would have struggled to understand is that, within three centuries, a form of Christianity would begin to spread its world-wide influence; he had been confined to Patmos because of his faith in Christ (c. AD 94-95; Revelation 1:9), yet by AD 380, Emperor Theodosius I would make Christianity, based upon the Nicene Creed, the state religion of Rome.¹³³ Earlier in the same century, through the influence of Emperor Constantine I, Christianity had become a tolerated religion like all of the

¹³⁰ http://www.grace4u.org/newtest/history/nth_2.htm#FTNT4

¹³¹ http://www.ancient.eu/Roman_Religion/

¹³² <https://www.britannica.com/topic/pontifex>

¹³³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_church_of_the_Roman_Empire

others within the Roman Empire;¹³⁴ however, Constantine not only legislated an official acceptance of this religion, but also enriched the Bishop of Rome by giving him the Lateran Palace, and, out of the treasury of Rome, began the construction of the first Saint Peter's Basilica.¹³⁵ Even as Constantine sought a more central city from which to rule the Empire, he extended great generosity to the Bishop of Rome, showing himself to be a friend of the organized church; he supported the church from the imperial treasury, granted privileges to the clergy, and promoted "Christians" to high-ranking offices.¹³⁶ It was his goal to unite the Empire under one



Artist's rendering of the original
St. Peter's Basilica

religion, envisioning it as a means of achieving a peaceful and unified control. Through his gifts to the Bishop of Rome, Constantine afforded him a greater prestige than any of the other bishops within his realm, and received his loyalty in return; this was a bishop who was close at hand, and one whom he could use within the developing "Christian" religion to his political advantage. This was a *religion* that was rapidly moving away from the Biblical source that it still claimed; it was quickly taking on the features of the *woman* riding the beast. Indeed, Constantine (perhaps still thinking like the *Pontifex Maximus*) laid the foundation for the exaltation of the Bishop of Rome who would soon become sole bearer of the title of *pope*, a term that, heretofore, had been generally applied to all bishops. *Pope* comes from the Greek *papas*, which is a familiar form of *father* that was applied to bishops or patriarchs (these terms were synonymous among the Eastern churches) during the early centuries AD.¹³⁷ Jesus said: "And [you should] call no *man* your father [*pater*] upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven" (Matthew 23:9); it is evident from the context that Jesus made this statement within a spiritual framework – among those who are His followers, there are to be no levels of importance, and, therefore, no use of the titles *rabbi*, *father*, or *master* (or pastor, reverend, etc.).¹³⁸ Very early on, both the Lord's and Peter's instructions on this matter were ignored (1 Peter 5:1-3).

As time progressed, the city of Rome retained its importance as a center for religious power, even as its significance as a political capital declined; in AD 286,

¹³⁴ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Edict-of-Milan>

¹³⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bishops_of_Rome_under_Constantine_I

¹³⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity_in_the_4th_century

¹³⁷ http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?l=p&p=47&allowed_in_frame=0; <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/patriarch>

¹³⁸ Strong's Online.

Mediolanum (the name that the Romans gave to Milan when they conquered it in 196 BC¹³⁹) became the official capital of the western region of the Roman Empire.¹⁴⁰ Rome was a multicultural city (virtually a microcosm of the Empire) and, with each change in emperor, there also came a shift in the favored religion, whether it was an existing cult or something imported from elsewhere in the Empire; it was the emperor who would ensure the promotion of his favored flavor of religious fervor.¹⁴¹ Therefore, the populace of Rome was quite familiar with changes taking place regarding the preferred religion and the impact that this would have on the calendar of festivities – when it came to religion, nothing remained the same with a change in leadership. The same was true when Constantine gained control of the Empire in the early fourth century AD. With the issuance of the Edict of Milan (AD 313), Constantine enacted a new political tolerance for Christianity, which, in turn, led to his increased involvement in the oversight of the churches within his empire; it seemed that, at least initially, it was his hope to draw the favor of all forms of divinity (both Christian and pagan) by extending his approval to all religions.¹⁴² At this point, it seems that it was not so much a matter of Christianity being preferred but more that it was no longer a target for persecution. It should go without saying that Constantine's influence was not over the *ekklesia* that Jesus was building (Matthew 16:18); rather, it was over the organized churches that were becoming increasingly more loyal to their bishop than to the Word of God; it was among these same bishops (who were tasting the power that came with a political ally) that Constantine's influence grew.



Constantine I

Constantine also saw fit to shift the seat of governance out of Italy altogether, since it was declining both militarily and economically, and so he established New Rome, the old city of Byzantium, or Constantinople (as it came to be called).¹⁴³ In AD 285, Emperor Diocletian had divided the Empire into two (East and West), in order to make the governing of so vast an empire more feasible.¹⁴⁴ Despite Constantine's success at governing the whole Empire, it was not to continue; Theodosius I was the last Emperor to govern the entire Roman Empire and, following his rule in AD 395, the eastern portion of the Empire was governed from Constantinople and the western

¹³⁹ <https://www.introducingmilan.com/history>

¹⁴⁰ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mediolanum>

¹⁴¹ Mary Beard, John North, and Simon Price, *Religions of Rome*, Volume 1, *A History*, p. 252.

¹⁴² <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Edict-of-Milan>

¹⁴³ <http://www.ancient.eu/Constantinople/>

¹⁴⁴ http://www.ancient.eu/Western_Roman_Empire/

from Milan (Mediolanum) – however, even though the administration was divided, the kingdom was still considered to be one.¹⁴⁵ Nevertheless, due to the overall failing strength of Italy, the western rule fell to invading armies from the north in AD 476.¹⁴⁶

Through the guidance of its political leadership (beginning with Constantine), elements of Christianity had spread throughout the Empire so that even the invading Visigoths (Germanic tribes) from the north were accounted as being “Arian Christians” and not pagans – although they believed in God, as Arians they also considered Jesus to be created by God, and, therefore, not truly God.¹⁴⁷ Because of this “Christian” influence, as they conquered the city of Rome in AD 410 they were careful to spare the two basilicas that had been constructed by Constantine and dedicated to the Apostles Peter and Paul.¹⁴⁸ Even as the western region of the Roman Empire began to fade, the “Christian” influence legislated by Rome was sufficient within the invaders to permit the exalted position of the Bishop of Rome to continue. From the time of Damasus, who was the Bishop of Rome from AD 366 to 384, it was vehemently and explicitly argued that this particular office held the authority of the Apostle Peter, and he (the Bishop) was therefore the rightful leader over all of the churches.¹⁴⁹ Paul warned: “avoid [*periistemi* (*per-ee-is’-tay-mee*) – go out of your way to avoid] foolish questions [stupid debates], and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable [harmful] and vain [worthless]” (Titus 3:9); although the *genealogies* that Paul warned of refer specifically to familial ancestry (important within the Jewish culture), the bishops of Rome took a new approach to this and traced their right to be preeminent over all of the other bishops back to the Apostles Peter and Paul.¹⁵⁰ They ascribed to a positional genealogy that served to enhance their authority over their fellow bishops; this is a further eroding of Jesus’ teaching against hierarchical authority among His followers (Matthew 20:25-28).

As Rome experienced a greater isolation from, and neglect by, the ruling Roman government (now located in Constantinople), the role of the Bishop of Rome assumed an ever greater political aspect. Since first becoming tolerated as a religion (on equal footing with all of the pagan religions) and then elevated to becoming the

¹⁴⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_Roman_Empire

¹⁴⁶ <http://www.ancient.eu/article/835/>

¹⁴⁷ <http://www.historytoday.com/richard-cavendish/visigoths-sack-rome;>
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Arianism>

¹⁴⁸ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sack_of_Rome_\(410\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sack_of_Rome_(410))

¹⁴⁹ Michael D. Coogan, ed., *The Oxford History of the Biblical World*, p. 434.

¹⁵⁰ Strong’s Online; Friberg Lexicon; Gingrich Lexicon.

state religion, organized Christianity had not only left its Biblical roots but had also become quite wealthy in terms of gold, silver and property.

Although there is no edict expressly pronouncing the Bishop of Rome as the principal leader of the churches, time and Constantine's benevolence saw this bishop's authority flourish. Jerusalem, the site of the original disciples of the Lord, had been destroyed by Titus in AD 70 and, therefore, was not a contender in this matter. The church in Rome claimed its founders to be Peter, the chief shepherd, and Paul, the authority on doctrine,¹⁵¹ thereby affording them a "Christian" edge. In AD 324, Constantine constructed a basilica over what was considered to be Paul's place of burial; it became known as St. Paul's Outside the Walls, because it was built outside of the Aurelian Walls, which had been constructed as a defense around the core of Rome.¹⁵² As a matter of fact, none of the churches that Constantine built were within the center of Rome (which continued to be occupied by numerous pagan temples and shrines) – a clear indication that it was never his intention to have Christianity replace paganism, but that it would simply occupy a place alongside of the traditional gods and goddesses.¹⁵³ About the same time (AD 324), Constantine also built the Basilica of St. Peter over the traditional burial site of Peter; both of these basilicas were not constructed as meeting places for the "Christians" of Rome, but were meant for funerals and special functions. We've already noted Constantine's gift of the Lateran Palace to the Bishop of Rome (today it is called the Archbasilica of St. John Lateran); for many years this was the bishop's (pope's) residence and, after being rebuilt following a couple of fires and an earthquake, now is the cathedral church of Rome since it contains the *cathedra* (ecclesiastical seat) of the pope.¹⁵⁴ Therefore, by the middle of the fourth century, the Bishop of Rome had a palatial residence and two basilicas (the term came to refer to religious facilities that were fashioned after the pattern used by the Romans for public assemblies¹⁵⁵), which had been provided by the Roman Emperor, Constantine. Very shortly, another significant building was added thereby completing what is now known as the "four major patriarchal basilicas in Rome."¹⁵⁶ We have already noted that at the Council of Ephesus in AD 431, Mary (the mother of Jesus) was declared to be *Theotokos* (mother of God), which was a significant step in elevating the status of Mary within

¹⁵¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Papal_primacy

¹⁵² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basilica_of_Saint_Paul_Outside_the_Walls;
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aurelian_Walls

¹⁵³ Beard, p. 365, 369.

¹⁵⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archbasilica_of_St._John_Lateran

¹⁵⁵ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/basilica>

¹⁵⁶ <http://rometour.org/basilica-santa-maria-maggiore-saint-mary-major-and-its-museum.html>

the budding Roman Catholic Church.¹⁵⁷ Sixtus, who was Bishop of Rome from AD 432-440, celebrated this milestone by constructing a church that was dedicated as Santa Maria Maggiore (Saint Mary Major).¹⁵⁸ Many secular sources state that this church, which was dedicated to the Virgin Mary, was built upon the site of a temple of the goddess Cybele, who was the Magna Mater (Great Mother) of the gods.¹⁵⁹



Santa Maria Maggiore built on the site of a temple to the goddess Cybele, Magna Mater

The irony of this is that, upon the destroyed remains of a holy place to the pagan Great Mother, there arose a church dedicated to Mary, *Theotokos* – mother of God.

This provides a brief overview of the growing influence of the Bishop of Rome beginning in the fourth century AD, and the increasing approval that was extended by the ruling emperors (beginning with Constantine) toward this developing form of the Roman Catholic Church.

Nevertheless, at the time that John wrote the Revelation, the city of Rome was, without a doubt, the seat of power over the entire Empire, and Christianity was not yet held in favor by the ruling emperor (Revelation 1:9). Therefore, when the angel tells John that this Ecumenical religion is “that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth,” there can be no doubt that this is a reference to the city of Rome (Revelation 17:18).

John sees the *woman drunken with the blood of the saints* – intoxicated with a passion for killing faithful Christians.¹⁶⁰ Although persecution of the Christians was prevalent at this time (after all, John was banished to Patmos), it would have been seen as coming from the political leadership, i.e., the Roman Emperor, and not from the pagan religions of Rome. The Emperor Domitian (AD 81-96) has been described by historians as being crazy and unbalanced; Jews were particularly targeted for persecution, and anyone who claimed to be a descendant of King David was sought out and killed.¹⁶¹ At this time, the distinction between Jews and Christians was quite blurred in the minds of most pagans, and the latter were often considered to be Jews hiding under a different façade. Undoubtedly, the blood of Christians flowed, but it

¹⁵⁷ https://orthodoxwiki.org/Sixtus_III_of_Rome

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ <https://www.rome.net/basilica-santa-maria-maggiore>; <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Great-Mother-of-the-Gods>

¹⁶⁰ Liddell-Scott Lexicon.

¹⁶¹ http://madmonarchs.guusbeltman.nl/madmonarchs/domitian/domitian_bio.htm

would hardly seem to be because of this *woman* who has led the world into spiritual fornication and then is identified as being the city of Rome (a political rather than a religious persecution). Our review of the formative years of the Roman Catholic Church has given us a glimpse into the shift of power that took place in Rome; it moved from a political to a religious authority with political support, and the persecution of the faithful in Christ was soon picked up by the dominant religious body, the *megas porne* (*great whore*) of Rome – the maturing Roman Catholic Church.

Spiritual fornication, within the Scriptures, always identifies that which began with Jehovah, the God of creation and spiritual salvation, and ends by replacing Him. Cain knew that the Lord required a blood sacrifice as an acceptable offering, yet he chose to ignore the Lord and brought an offering that was the fruit of his own labors (Genesis 4:3-5). The Lord, through Jeremiah, calls the children of Israel a *harlot* (Jeremiah 3:6), even though some years earlier it was the children of Israel whom the Lord led out of Egypt (a picture of salvation), spoke to them His requirements (provided them with the means to become holy), and the response of Israel was: “All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient” (Exodus 24:7). The children of Israel began *in the Lord* (Exodus 19:8) and ended in apostasy – those who had turned away from the Lord. Therefore, for this *woman* of Revelation 17 to be the queen of spiritual fornication means that she must have attained her present description by corrupting the truth of God; if this were not the case, then she would simply be described as being pagan. The nations of Canaan, whom Israel was to supplant, were not called *apostate* or a *harlot*; they lived out what was abominable before Jehovah (Leviticus 18:27) – they were heathen, or pagan, and followed the gods of their own making (2 Kings 17:29).

We must hold a proper understanding of *apostasy*; a broad dictionary definition is: “abandonment of a previous loyalty.”¹⁶² There’s the key: it is a turning away from a position to which one was formerly committed. The children of Israel had declared their commitment to the Lord (Exodus 19:8), but the Lord now calls them a *harlot*; they have become *apostate* (*backsliding* is a feeble translation of the Hebrew word) – they have turned away from the Lord to follow the gods of the nations (Jeremiah 3:6).¹⁶³ Early in the plunge into apostasy, there is a window of mercy from the Lord for repentance (we see Jesus extending this mercy to the elder of Sardis – Revelation 3:1-3); however, there is also a point of no return after which the Lord’s mercy is no longer available. The Jezebel of Thyatira was given the opportunity to repent of her

¹⁶² <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/apostasy>

¹⁶³ BDB.

spiritual fornication, she refused, and consequently the Lord proclaims that He is now bringing His judgment against her – He is casting (present tense) her into a bed of sickness (Revelation 2:20-22). In this day of flagrant Ecumenism, it is important that we understand that, for those who depart from the narrow truth of God’s Word, it is a rare occasion when they will repent in time to turn back to Him; typically, each step of their departure from Him has been thoroughly rationalized and justified so that the reality of their apostasy remains hidden in the mists of obscurity, at least in their minds. “Beware lest any man spoil [to lead astray] you through philosophy [human wisdom (rationalization)] and vain deceit [empty deception (a false sense of being right)], after [according to*] the tradition of men, after [*] the rudiments of the world, and [absolutely] not after [*] Christ” (Colossians 2:8).¹⁶⁴ We must guard against anyone convincing us of anything that stands outside of the Word of God; notice that they do not need to hold a position that is diametrically opposed to God’s Word, it’s just not quite consistent with it. We are given the example of the Bereans who took the time to measure against the standard of God’s Word the new teaching that they were hearing from Paul (Acts 17:10-11), and we are warned to identify the one who introduces a separation from Christ and avoid him (Romans 16:17).

However, the majority of those involved in Ecumenism today are not apostate; rather, they have never known the narrow truth of God and are persuaded that their lifeless doctrines provide them with eternal life in Christ. Without ever knowing the exclusive message of the Gospel, they have placed their faith, without question, in the ramblings of false teachers. “For the time will come when they will not endure [listen to] sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to [gather around] themselves teachers, having itching ears [craving to hear what you want]; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables [fiction, myths]” (2 Timothy 4:3-4).¹⁶⁵ Not only are they not apostate (which means that they are deluded pagans), but, when they do hear the truth, they are quick to reject it in favor of their own myths (untruths). “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief [faithlessness], in departing [become apostate] from the living God” (Hebrews 3:12); we are *in Christ* by faith (Ephesians 2:8), therefore, to become faithless means that we have lost our place in Christ and have become apostate.

Our fundamental responsibility in this is to have a thorough knowledge of God’s Word, for it is then that we will be able to adequately examine the teachings that come our way in order to determine if they are Biblically accurate or not. Jesus said:

¹⁶⁴ Friberg Lexicon; Strong’s Online.

¹⁶⁵ Friberg Lexicon.

“He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad” (Matthew 12:30); within this framework, there is no room for a teaching that is even 90% Biblically accurate – unless it is supported by the Scriptures in its entirety (100%), we are to avoid it! This is the reason why we must have no spiritual fellowship with those who are Ecumenical, and this includes individuals as well as organizations, colleges, and missions! Permit me to repeat that **everything Ecumenical comes from the devil** (since it is not Biblically accurate, it is not of Christ, and thus must be of Satan); however, this is not to say that every Ecumenist teaches nothing but error (in other words, they are not going to be 100% wrong all of the time); in fact, many of them may well be over 90% Biblically accurate most of the time, but God commands us through His Word that we are to separate ourselves from them (Romans 16:17; 2 Corinthians 6:17). The common argument that I have heard is that it is important to meet together with the Ecumenically minded in an effort to reach them with the truth; the seemingly obvious response to this claim is: you will **never** be able to reach anyone with the truth of God’s Word while you are living in disobedience to it – that is human “wisdom,” which we are to guard against (Colossians 2:8).

If we retain a firm hold on the true meaning of apostasy (and spiritual fornication), then we can understand that this *woman* (the *whore*) of Revelation 17 must have rejected the truth of God at some time. When Eve fell for Satan’s deception, she brought this false religion to earth: it was the promise that if you do something (for Eve this was to eat of the forbidden fruit), then you will become as gods – what could be better than that? Yet Eve knew God’s truth in purity before she fell for Satan’s deception. Cain and Abel both knew the truth of God regarding bringing Him an offering, yet Cain chose to express himself in accordance with Satan’s false religion: human effort. It always comes down to a choice: will we obey the Lord, or not? Like every apostate before them, the early leaders of the Roman Catholic Church began with God’s truth, but quickly left it in favor of teachings that fit with their growing political alliance. We hear from the angel that this *woman* (this false religious system) has not only departed into error herself, but her deadly influence has spread around the world: from the *kings* of the nations all the way down to the common *inhabitants* of the earth (Revelation 17:2).

The earliest days of the Roman Catholic Church began by altering the teachings of the Apostles of the Lord just a little; minor changes to the truth of God or small acts of disobedience to the Lord are often very easily justified and rationalized. Satan will be sure to make all of the excuses available that are needed to do so; the justification that he provided to Eve was that disobedience to the Lord would open

their eyes and make them to be like gods (Genesis 3:5). How could that be a bad thing? Satan's option will always include what seems to be a positive result: it will make you appear to be wise, kind, or benevolent, it will please your family and/or friends, or it will permit you to avoid being ridiculed, shunned, or persecuted. Despite claiming that both Peter and Paul founded the church in Rome, it was not long before this budding organization (in truth it quickly became a lifeless structure rather than being a part of the living Body of Christ) was moving ever further away from the teachings of the Apostles and the Lord Jesus Christ. The city of paganism at the time of John, soon became the *great whore (megas porne)* identified by the angel – the *woman* who is sitting upon the devil, and whose name is *Babylon the Great*.¹⁶⁶ This is not the beginning of this false religious system on earth (it began with Eve), but, with the growth and development of the Roman Catholic Church, it took on a whole new look and a growing international appeal.

There is one other snippet of information that the angel reveals to John about this *woman* who is sitting upon the seven-headed monster: “The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth” (Revelation 17:9b). The *woman* is sitting upon *many waters*, upon the *beast*, and also upon *seven mountains*. Not only are the seven heads of Satan identified with the kingdoms that have ruled over the world (for John, these were past, present, and future), but they also provide further insight as to where this *woman* is located. We have carefully noted that Rome is the city that is identified as being the *woman*; now we need to see if this fits with this additional clue. Was the city of Rome built upon seven mountains or hills?¹⁶⁷ There are many cities around the world that lay claim to resting upon seven hills; however, out of all of them, the phrase *City of Seven Hills* is generally accepted as referring primarily to Rome.¹⁶⁸

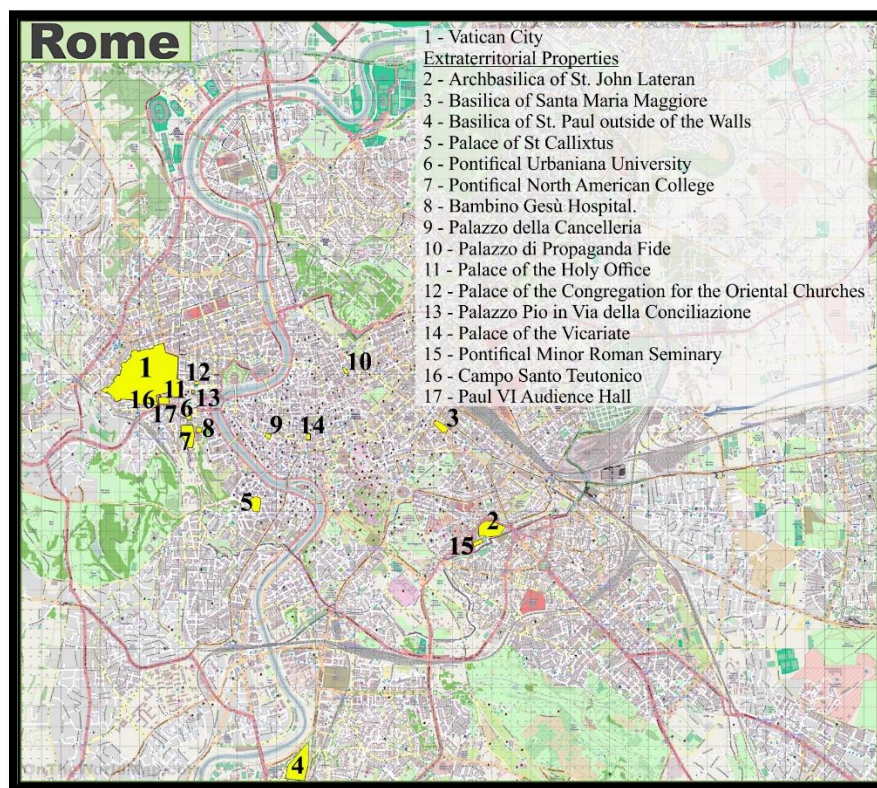
What is the situation today? Does the Roman Catholic Church still lay claim to being the City of Seven Hills (Rome)? After the Roman Catholic faith (as based upon the Nicene Creed) was declared to be the official state religion of the Roman Empire, the Roman Catholic Church, under the leadership of the Bishop of Rome (the pope), continued to exercise dominance in Rome, and this grew to include a significant portion of central Italy (as we know it today). As the western portion of the Roman Empire continued to decline until it was lost in AD 476, the regions around the city of Rome became increasingly dependent upon the pope for protection from invasion, and looked to him for leadership; by the eighth century, this region

¹⁶⁶ Strong's Online.

¹⁶⁷ Friberg Lexicon.

¹⁶⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_cities_claimed_to_be_built_on_seven_hills

became known as the Republic of St. Peter, or the Papal States. The Church maintained control over this area until 1870 when the city of Rome and the Papal States were annexed into the newly defined Kingdom of Italy.¹⁶⁹ Having lost his vast territorial holdings, pope Pius IX retreated to the Catholic compound on Vatican hill (not one of the seven hills of Rome), and he (as well as his papal successors) referred to himself as being a “prisoner in the Vatican”; this time of uncertainty for the pope continued until the Lateran Treaty resolved the conflict between Italy and the papacy.¹⁷⁰ In 1929, this treaty carved 110 acres out of the city of Rome for the Catholic pope and provided the papacy with \$92 million in compensation for the lands that had been lost some 60 years earlier (the Papal States).¹⁷¹ In essence, this became an independent state within the city of Rome.



However, in addition to the Vatican City State, the pope was also granted ownership of many of the properties within Rome that were important to their heritage; these properties (called extraterritorial, in that they are very similar to the State itself) are held by the pope and are exempt from expropriation and taxes.¹⁷² Even

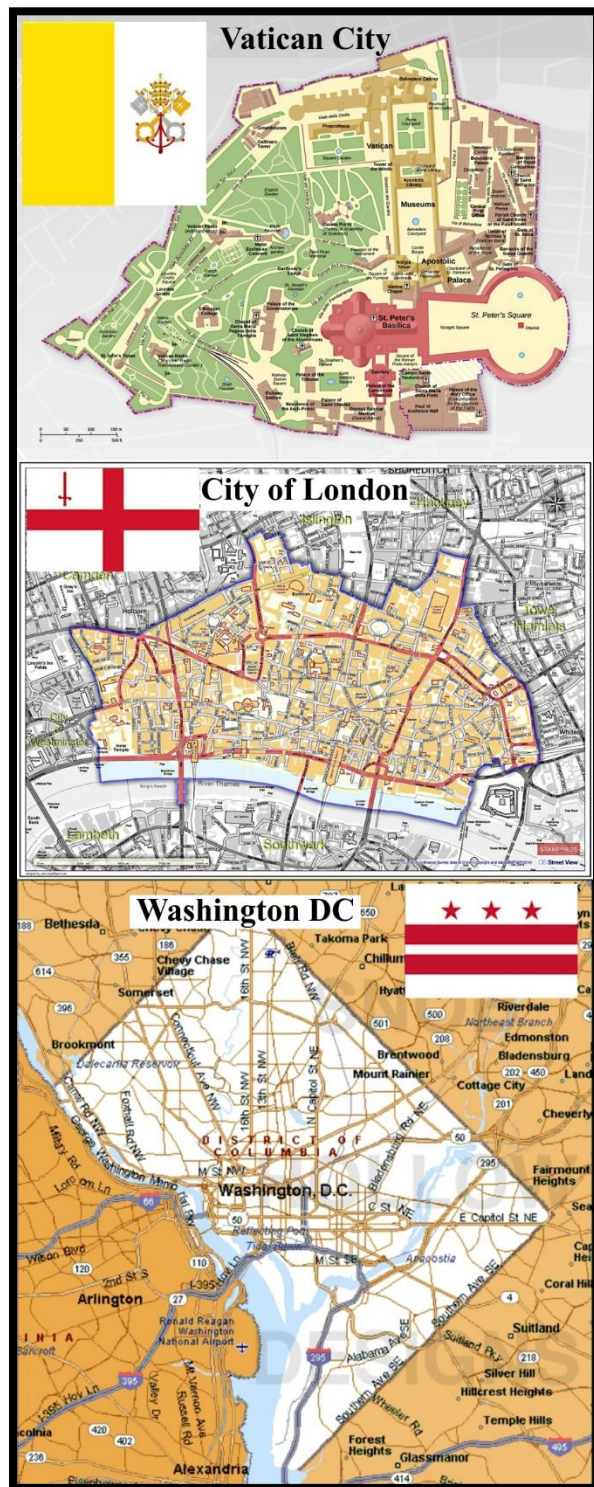
¹⁶⁹ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Papal-States>

¹⁷⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vatican_City

¹⁷¹ <http://www.history.com/news/10-things-you-may-not-know-about-the-vatican>

¹⁷² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lateran_Treaty

though the Roman Catholic Church (through the pope) does not control all of the city of Rome today, being limited to 110 acres and specifically defined



extraterritorial properties has done nothing to curb the world-wide influence and control of this Satanic religious system – it still *sitteth upon many waters*, and it is still sitting upon a *scarlet coloured beast*. Even though it no longer owns all of the city of Rome and no longer sits upon its *seven mountains*, the Roman Catholic Church (through the pope) still owns a property in the heart of Rome, and when we think of Rome, it is the Catholic Church that comes to mind – they still remain somewhat synonymous.

The events that take place in the world today are carefully controlled and orchestrated for the benefit of a few who are committed to the prince of this world; this should not be surprising since we know that it is Satan who controls all of the kingdoms of the earth (Matthew 4:8-9). To facilitate his elusive manipulation, Satan has established three very unique cities within the world that are independent of the countries within which they lie: the City of London, Washington DC, and Vatican City. Within these three cities is the influence (control) of the world's finances (City of London), a superior military might (Washington DC), and a strongly Ecumenical religion (Vatican City). The most visible player of these

three is the City of London, which holds the financial power of the world (including the privately-owned Bank of England and almost 500 branch offices of foreign banks) as well as the headquarters for the world's newspaper and publishing

monopolies, the Freemasons, and the Crown (not to be confused with the British monarchy).¹⁷³ The reality is that the Vatican expresses itself financially through London, and militarily through Washington. The roots of the Vatican go back to the 4th century AD, London heralds from the 17th century, and Washington DC from the 19th century.¹⁷⁴ The accumulated wealth of the Vatican is incalculable, and London serves the Vatican's purposes through its financial and economic influence. We have already seen that the False Prophet (the pope) will exercise economic control over the people of the world through the use of a *mark* (Revelation 13:16-17); we can see that even now, the pope holds the financial leverage to make such a move feasible. Here are three independent city-states with their fingers on three of the key factors for life on earth today: a unifying religion (Vatican City), control of economics (City of London) and the military might to ensure compliance (Washington DC). Satan is preparing the landscape for his final assault against the God of heaven. He is in a quandary knowing that, with the revelation of the Antichrist, the countdown of his days will begin, and yet, at the same time, he has a burning desire to remove the influence of the Lord from the earth, thereby gaining complete control over all of mankind. The promise that we have is that the Lord will be the One Who will remove His people from the earth (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

Even though the Vatican's (the pope's) influence may not be as evident as it once was, there can be no mistaking the significant role that it still plays behind the scenes. The False Prophet (whom I believe to be the head of this apostate, Ecumenical religion, the pope) will be second only to the Antichrist, and will receive power from the devil to carry out his miraculous signs (Revelation 13:12). The Roman Catholic Church has carefully and methodically worked pagan practices into its rituals and dogma so that it will be ready to fill its role as the bride of Satan (the woman riding the beast), and the emblem of spiritual fornication and all that is blasphemy against God.

THE JUDGMENT OF THE FALSE PROPHET'S RELIGION

An angel of God comes to John to show him the judgment that will be brought against Satan's bride – the *great whore* who has the support of the leaders of the world, and has filled the average world-citizen with her blasphemous religion. This provides the child of God with the assurance that God will judge those who are a part of this Ecumenical, religious system. As the angel completes his explanation of

¹⁷³ <https://nicklasarthur.wordpress.com/2013/08/08/the-empire-of-the-city/>

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

the woman and the beast, *another angel* comes to provide additional details regarding the judgment that will be carried out against the woman.



¹ And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. ² And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. ³ For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. (Revelation 18)

We have already learned that the Greek word for *angel* does not necessarily refer to a member of the heavenly hosts that do the bidding of Jehovah, but that it speaks of a *messenger*, or one who is sent, who can be either heavenly or earthly.¹⁷⁵ As we looked into the letters that Jesus sent to the *angel* of each of the seven assemblies in Asia (Revelation 2 and 3), we noted that this actually referred to the elder who bore the oversight of each gathering. Therefore, in this case (as in all cases), when we see the word *angel* in the Scriptures, we must think of a *messenger*, and not specifically a member of the created heavenly beings.

The *angel* who showed John the woman who is riding the beast, might at first be considered to be a member of the heavenly hosts, for we are told that he was one of the seven who came out of the heavenly temple and went forth to pour out God's wrath upon the earth (Revelation 15:6). However, if we look into this a little more closely, we will discover something quite different from what we might expect. The narratives of the Revelation from chapters 17 through 19 take place with John being in the presence of the *angel* who came to show him the woman who is riding the beast; the evidence shows that this *angel* is not from among those hosts of heavenly spirit-beings who were created by God, even though we are told that he came out of the heavenly temple of God (Revelation 15:6). When John fell down before this messenger in worship, he was told: "See *thou do it* not [Don't do that!]: I am **thy fellowservant**, and of **thy brethren that have** [holding] **the testimony of Jesus ...**" (Revelation 19:10).¹⁷⁶ You may recall that those within the kingdom of God who are the targets of Satan on the earth, are identified as being those who "**have the**

¹⁷⁵ Strong's Online.

¹⁷⁶ Friberg Lexicon.

testimony of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 12:17), therefore, it is evident that this *angel*, this messenger of God, is from among those who have been purchased out of sin by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ (i.e., mankind). We have another similar example when John is taken to see the New Jerusalem; again it is an *angel* from among the seven who were chosen to pour the wrath of God upon the earth (Revelation 21:9), and, once again, after seeing the wonders of God, John falls down in worship before this *angel* (Revelation 22:8). The *angel* says: “See *thou do it* not [Don’t do that!]: for I am **thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets**, and of them which **keep the sayings of this book** ...” (Revelation 22:9).¹⁷⁷ The first part of this response is identical to the last time that John did this but, this time, there is some additional information provided. This *angel* identifies himself as being a fellow-prophet with John and includes himself among those who are obedient to (*keep*) the words (*sayings*) of this book (specifically the Revelation).¹⁷⁸ As Jesus closes the Revelation, He says that whoever adds anything to this book, God will add to that person the plagues that are written in it (the plagues fall upon those who are not among the children of God’s kingdom), or should someone take away from the words of this book, then God will remove his name from the Book of Life (Revelation 22:18-19). In other words, if anyone adds to or takes away from the Revelation, he will have no part with the Lord in heaven; it is the one who gives careful heed and lives in obedience to what is written in the Revelation who will abide with the Lord forever – the *angel* identifies himself as belonging to this group.

Now, the question is this: can the *angels* who are given the assignment of pouring out the wrath of God upon the earth actually come from among those who have been purchased out of sin and remained faithful to the Lord unto the end (Matthew 24:13)? Paul wrote that the Thessalonians had abandoned their pagan traditions in order to follow the Lord God, “and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered [to bring out of severe danger] us from the wrath [*orge*] to come” (1 Thessalonians 1:10);¹⁷⁹ the truth that so many miss is that we have been saved from the wrath [*orge*] of God even as we are promised a life of tribulation [*thlipsis*] – two very different things in Scripture (John 16:33; 2 Timothy 3:12).¹⁸⁰ Just before the wrath of God falls upon the earth, the Son of Man comes in the clouds of the air and gathers His own from out of the earth; this is when we (those who are faithfully in Christ) will be changed, our earthly bodies will become heavenly (1 Corinthians 15:51-52), and we will be like unto Christ (1 John 3:2).

¹⁷⁷ Friberg Lexicon.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Friberg Lexicon; Strong’s Online.

¹⁸⁰ Strong’s Online.

Therefore, when God calls for the seven *angels* to pour out His wrath upon the earth, all of the children of the kingdom of God (both BC and AD) will be in heaven in their glorified bodies, and it is certainly not beyond the realm of possibility that God will use His children to carry out His bidding in this way. John, who is being shown things that will take place in the future, very carefully notes for us that he was taken *in the spirit* by these messengers to see what God had to show him (Revelation 17:3; 21:10). Since this took place at the end of the first century AD, are these spirit forms of saints who have died in Christ, or could these be OT saints already in their glorified bodies?

For a more detailed look into this matter, refer to the study on Revelation 14. However, here's a thumbnail sketch by way of review. Matthew noted an event that took place when Jesus was resurrected from the dead: "And the graves were opened; and many [frequently means *all*¹⁸¹] bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many" (Matthew 27:52-53). When Jesus ascended to heaven, He took *captivity captive* (Ephesians 4:8) – He took all of the OT saints in their glorified bodies to heaven with Him. These OT saints make up the 144 thousands who are standing with Jesus on the heavenly Mt. Sion and who are referred to as being the *firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb* (Revelation 14:4). Christ is the *firstfruit* (1 Corinthians 15:23), and these are called the firstfruits unto Him. Therefore, it is very conceivable that the *angel*, in this case, could come from among the OT saints who were in heaven at the time that John was taken there to see what would come *hereafter* (Revelation 4:1).

Returning to Revelation 18, we are told that this is another (*allos* – another of the same kind) angel; that is, another messenger has been sent by God.¹⁸² John provides us with some additional information about this *angel* that helps us to know more about who he is: 1) he is coming down from *heaven*, 2) he has *great* authority (*power* – *exousia*), and 3) the earth is lit up because of his *glory*.¹⁸³

The first confirms that this *angel* is heavenly, for he comes down from heaven. From this we can discern that, although John was taken *in the spirit* into heaven to view things that were yet to come (Revelation 4:2), there are times like this throughout the Revelation when it seems that he is on earth, yet, clearly, still *in the*

¹⁸¹ There are many examples of this; consider these: Hebrews 9:28 "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of **many** ..."; 1 John 2:2 "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and **not for ours only**, but also **for the sins of the whole world**" – *many* in Hebrews, through the support of other Scriptures, clearly means *all*; Matthew 20:16/John 3:16; Romans 5:19a/Romans 3:23.

¹⁸² Strong's Online.

¹⁸³ Friberg Lexicon.

spirit. This heavenly messenger descends to where John is. We are then told that this messenger is holding great authority, and this *authority* is left undefined. In the Scriptures we read of Michael, one of the *chief princes*, who came to the aid of an angel who was struggling against the powers of Satan and who had been sent to bring Daniel understanding of his vision (Daniel 10:13), and this same Michael led a host of angels against Satan and his demons to banish them from heaven at the time that Christ won the victory at Calvary (Revelation 12:7-8); yet, despite his great accomplishments, he does not presume to even bring an accusation against the devil – His authority is from the Lord (Jude 9). We are also told of a heavenly being (*angel*) who comes out of the temple of heaven and has authority over the fire (Revelation 14:18). What we do not find is any reference to an angel (from the created heavenly beings) ever having *great power* (*megas exousia* – great authority); the only other place that we find this particular phrase is when the Antichrist is being given *great authority* (*megas exousia*) by the devil (Revelation 13:2).¹⁸⁴ However, the Antichrist's authority is within the realm of the world, and certainly not beyond that. Clearly, this heavenly messenger, with great authority, is no ordinary being!

Finally, we are told that the earth is illuminated (*lightened*) with *the glory of him*.¹⁸⁵ In Scripture, there is only one mention made of the angels having glory: “For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory [literally, *the glory of Him*], and in his Father's [literally, *and of the Father*], and of the holy angels” (Luke 9:26).¹⁸⁶ The angelic hosts are heavenly beings, and even we will have glorified bodies when we are in heaven with the Lord (Philippians 3:20-21); there is a natural glory to the heavenly bodies (1 Corinthians 15:40). However, if we consider other Scriptures, we can then come to understand the glory of the heavenly beings a little bit better: “And there were in the same country shepherds ... And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and **the glory of the Lord shone round about them** ...” (Luke 2:8-9). Notice that it was not the glory of the angel (the heavenly messenger) that shone around the shepherds, rather, it was the Lord's glory! When Isaiah saw the heavenly beings (*seraphim*), they were proclaiming to one another: “Holy, holy, holy, *is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory* [literally: *the fullness of all the earth is His glory*]” (Isaiah 6:3).¹⁸⁷ Paul explained to the Romans that “the invisible things of him [God] from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power [*dunamis* – ability]

¹⁸⁴ Strong's Online.

¹⁸⁵ Friberg Lexicon; Stephanus 1550 NT.

¹⁸⁶ Stephanus 1550 NT.

¹⁸⁷ Leningrad Hebrew OT.

and Godhead [divine nature]; so that they are without excuse” (Romans 1:20); i.e., the evidence of the glory of God (glory is a part of His divinity) is clearly visible within His creation for those who have eyes to see.¹⁸⁸ What we can begin to comprehend is that the heavenly glory is the Lord's, and that the heavenly beings come, not in their own glory (even though they bear an angelic glory), but in His glory. When Jesus spoke elsewhere of His return for His faithful ones, He said: “And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power [*dunamis*] and glory. And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven” (Mark 13:26-27; cp. Matthew 24:30-31);¹⁸⁹ He will come in *glory*, but, in this case, there is no mention of the angels having any glory.

As we consider these matters very carefully, it becomes apparent that this heavenly being, this *Angel*, is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ coming from heaven (His dwelling place) with great authority (He will ultimately destroy the forces of the Antichrist who is given *great authority* over the earth by the devil [Revelation 19:20]), and it is His glory that fills the earth! It is Jesus Who comes from heaven to tell John that the religious system of the Antichrist is fallen and why it fell; the Victor declares His victory!

How does this fit with what we have just looked at concerning the *angel* who shows John the woman riding the beast? Is Jesus really *another* of the same kind? The *angel* who came to John was a messenger of God chosen from among those who make up the kingdom of God – those who have been purchased out of sin by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and now dwell in the presence of the Lord. We know that Jesus was not purchased out of sin, for He was sinless (2 Corinthians 5:21); He was the One Who paid the price for sin (John 3:17); therefore, this is not the similarity that He holds with John's first messenger. John tells us that “in the beginning was the Word,” that this “Word was made flesh and dwelt among us,” and this *Word* declared Himself to be the Son of Man – not the son of a male, but the son of a human being, Mary (John 1:1, 14, 51; 12:23). Eternal God (the *Word*) took on the form of His created beings in order to bring salvation from sin to all of mankind (Hebrews 2:14); from that point onward and throughout eternity, the second person of the Godhead bears the added names of the Son of Man and the Son of God, thereby identifying both His humanity and deity. From this we can see that it is His humanity that the Lord Jesus Christ holds in common with the messenger who had been sent by God to show John the woman upon the beast.

¹⁸⁸ Strong's Online.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

We know that even in heaven, Jesus bears the marks of having paid the price for sin: “And I beheld ... in the midst of the throne ... a Lamb as it had been slain ...” (Revelation 5:6); we shall be like Him because He identified with us by taking on a physical body (Hebrews 2:16-17). It is because of what Jesus accomplished through His death, burial, and resurrection that we, through faith, can be called the children of God. “Beloved, now are we the sons [children] of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he [Jesus] shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2).¹⁹⁰ Through the incarnation, the eternal Word took on a body of flesh to become the Son of Man; through faith in the accomplished work of the Lord Jesus, we don His righteousness and holiness to become the children of God (Ephesians 4:24). Through this same faith, the Spirit of God abides within us, confirming that we are His (Romans 8:16); “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs [heirs together] with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him* [together], that we may be also glorified [honored] together” (Romans 8:17).¹⁹¹ Our eternal inheritance with God is inseparably linked to the Lord Jesus Christ Who paid our debt of sin; “For we are made [*become*; active voice, *we* initiates the action; perfect tense, as per Ephesians 1:3, we are then in Christ as determined from before creation, plus it means that this *becoming* can only take place once] partakers of [participating in] Christ, if [on the condition that] we hold [should (the subjunctive mood makes this a choice for us) hold fast (active voice)] the beginning of our confidence [the substance of our hope (Christ)] stedfast unto the end” (Hebrews 3:14).¹⁹² Once again, we are clearly told that our eternal destiny with Christ is dependent upon whether we remain faithful (obedient) to Him in this life; the one who is not obedient to the Lord abides under God’s wrath (John 3:36). “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield [present] yourselves servants [slaves] to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey [*slaves you are to whom you are obeying*]; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (Romans 6:16).¹⁹³ “Blessed is the man that endureth [*hupomeno* – remain faithful through trials] temptation: for when he is tried [becomes approved by examination], he shall receive [future tense] the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love [*are loving* (present tense)] him” (James 1:12).¹⁹⁴

The Messenger (the Lord Jesus Christ) delivers His message in a manner so that all might hear; with a great voice and with strength, He makes a loud announcement:

¹⁹⁰ Strong’s Online.

¹⁹¹ Friberg Lexicon.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Friberg Lexicon; Stephanus 1550 NT.

¹⁹⁴ Friberg Lexicon.

“It is fallen, it is fallen, Babylon the great!”¹⁹⁵ The Greek word that is translated as *fallen* (or *fall*), means to descend from a higher to a lower position, or to be ruined.¹⁹⁶ The announcement that Jesus makes with great power is that the religious system of the devil is fallen and is in ruins, and, most interestingly, it has carried out its own destruction (*fallen* is in the active voice). Keep in mind that the first vestige of this false religion on earth came in the Garden of Eden; Eve, being deceived, took of the forbidden fruit believing that, thereby, she (and Adam) would become as gods (Genesis 3:5); she knew God’s requirements (Genesis 2:17), but she **chose** to do what she thought would bring new enlightenment. During the early days when this false religion was being propagated, everyone knew God’s requirements; Cain, for example, understood that God required a blood sacrifice for an offering (his reaction to the Lord’s rejection of his offering makes it clear that he knew exactly where he’d failed – Genesis 4:5), and yet he chose to offer the product of his own labors (Genesis 4:3). Babylon (the *gate of the gods*) the Great (the false religious system of the *woman*) sprang out of man’s rejection of what God requires, which is why she is described as a *great whore*, a purveyor of spiritual fornication (Revelation 17:1-2). Even though this *woman* very definitely includes the dark religions of the world, do not forget that she also includes all that is Ecumenical within modern Christianity. Many “pastors” and “missionaries” who have labored in the name of the Lord are guilty of choosing their own way; they may function under the guise of doing the Lord’s work, but they are workers of wickedness because they have failed to walk in obedience to the Lord (Matthew 7:21-23).

Jesus then goes on to describe what this religious system has become: 1) *the habitation of devils*, 2) *the hold of every foul spirit*, and 3) *a cage of every unclean and hateful bird*. *Become* is in the active voice and means that this religion will turn into these things of its own accord; as man chooses to reject the Lord’s commands, he, by default, is choosing to work for Satan. First of all, this religion becomes the dwelling place of demons (*daimon*); or, to put it another way, it becomes the haunt (*hold*) of every unclean (*foul*) spirit.¹⁹⁷ This should not be at all surprising, after all, John sees that the woman is riding upon the devil himself; an expected result of such a close relationship would be the presence of Satan’s forces – a place where they are welcomed. How did this happen to this religious system?

We’ve already carefully noted that the Roman Catholic Church is a strong advocate for the religious Ecumenical agenda of today (the present-day leader for

¹⁹⁵ Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

¹⁹⁶ Strong’s Online; Friberg Lexicon.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

Babylon the Great); how is it possible for a system of religion, which began with a knowledge of the truth of God, to become a haven for the demonic forces of Satan? Since sin entered into the world, the progression of man has always been from truth into error; a generation that comes to know and love the Lord will be followed by one that is less committed and more inclined to pay lip-service when they're being watched, only to be followed by one that is devoid of His truth. As the pope willfully broadens his Ecumenical reach to include all of the pagan religions of the world (as we have seen him do), it should come as no surprise that this also includes their demonic traits. However, if we narrow our focus further to the "Christian" element of the ecumenical movement, we will see how deeply the tentacles of this movement have impacted what is all around us. Even among conservative Evangelicals, there is a rapidly growing number who hold a favorable view of Catholics – considering them to be their brothers in the Lord. In the minds of most today, Catholics are still rightfully deemed to be Christians – followers of Christ. Ecumenism brings many varied views of life and faith together, and their common thread is that none of them is tolerant of the objective truth of the Scriptures; in light of this, it is defensible to equate the Ecumenical movement with spiritual fornication. A short explanation for this demonic invasion is that if you are not for the Lord Jesus, then you are for Satan (Matthew 12:30); this is the basic reason for this condition and why we must so carefully guard our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus cautioned us that the narrow way to life (namely, the Lord Himself) will only be found by a few (Matthew 7:14; John 14:6), and we are warned against losing our way by being deceived (Matthew 24:24; Hebrews 3:12).

As we have already noted, the first step into becoming a haven for Satan's minions is a rejection of the objective and absolute truth of God and His Word. The deception put forward by the Antichrist will find an open reception among those who have "received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved" (2 Thessalonians 2:10); it is only a *love* for the truth of God that will lead to salvation, and it is only an enduring *love* for His truth that can protect us from being deceived – remember John 14:6 where Jesus said: "I am ... the truth," therefore, our love for the truth is, in reality, a love for the Lord Jesus Christ. God desires "all men to be saved [passive voice – God does the saving], and to come [active voice – *men* must expend their energies *to come*] unto the knowledge [a precise and correct knowledge] of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4);¹⁹⁸ therefore, from this we know that God yearns for everyone to have a love for the truth. However, this is not the bland form of "truth" that we see in the world today, for Jesus made it very clear that He is the

¹⁹⁸ Strong's Online.

only truth that can lead to salvation (John 14:6). Through the influence of existentialists, who place man as the center and beginning of all considerations, truth has become subjective and flexible: “the crucial thing is to find a truth which is truth for me”¹⁹⁹ Within this philosophy, truth becomes a personal matter, not something that characterizes our unchangeable God, and certainly not His requirements for our conduct. Salvation, within this context, is only possible by discovering your own version of what is acceptable as “truth,” which, by definition, excludes God’s objective truth. Within modern Evangelicalism, the deception of the devil runs very deeply, and man’s versions of God’s truth are prolific. By contrast, for the person who comes to salvation through faith in Christ, there is a responsibility to grow in his understanding of the Lord Jesus Christ Who **is** the Truth (2 Peter 3:18). This is a significant difference: faith in Christ brings responsibility to God (Ephesians 2:10); faith in a subjective form of truth makes very few demands, and then only those that are deemed to be reasonable. When our salvation is centered in Christ (Who is **the** Truth), then our focus must remain on Him, and we must live in obedience if we hope to gain the glories of heaven someday (Hebrews 12:1-2; cp. Mark 13:13).

It is important that we understand that an acceptance of, or a tolerance for, the principles of the Ecumenical movement, in and of itself, excludes a full acceptance of God’s Truth. Therefore, such a person cannot be saved (2 Thessalonians 2:10), nor will they be received by the Lord for they are clinging to that which is unclean (2 Corinthians 6:17). An ignorance of what the ecumenical community really stands for is no excuse, for we are commanded to continually test all things against the Scriptures (1 John 4:1) and to expend our energies so that we might be accepted by God (2 Timothy 2:15). Jesus explained this very clearly: “Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them ... is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock” (Luke 6:47-48); it is through hearing and obeying His commands that we establish our protection against the waves of false teaching that will come our way (Ephesians 4:14). For this end-time religion to have become a haunt for devils, it all began with a failure to attend carefully to the commands of the Lord; Eve’s failure to obey the Lord’s commandment opened the door for the devil. Jesus explained: “He that hath [is holding fast to] my commandments, and keepeth [is obeying] them, he it is that loveth me [the Truth]: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father,

¹⁹⁹ Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855); <http://www.azquotes.com/quote/891882>

and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him” (John 14:21).²⁰⁰ “He that saith, I know [have known] him [God], and keepeth [is obeying] not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him [literally: *in this one the truth is not*]” (1 John 2:4).²⁰¹ When we place our faith in Christ for salvation, God writes His Laws (all Ten of them) upon our minds (Hebrews 10:16-17); therefore, it is not a matter of if we have God’s commands, but whether we are living in obedience to them.

Today, the majority of Evangelicals are thoroughly convinced that they have been saved by the Lord, yet they also remain completely Ecumenical. How can these, who would adamantly argue that they are “born-again Christians” destined for the glories of heaven, become a harbor for the demonic forces of Satan? Once again, the short answer is that since they are not **for** Christ (being Ecumenically minded), then they are, by default, in the camp of the devil (Matthew 12:30) – there are no other options available. Nevertheless, it would still seem to be inconceivable that these professing Christians would accept an open invitation from the devil to commune with his demonic forces; therefore, it is obviously necessary for Satan to put a very subtle deception forward in order to get them to open their hearts to him. Those who are a part of this end-time religious system (and this includes all who are Ecumenical, even staunch Evangelicals) will willingly participate with *devils* and every form of *foul spirit*. How could such a wholesale deception take place, particularly among those who use the Scriptures to contend that they are destined for glory?

Satan loves all forms of religion and is particularly fond of using any adapted form of God’s truth to seduce and deceive those who should know better. Jesus warned: “For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce [cause to believe what is not true], if *it were* possible [what is possible], even the elect [those who are chosen *in Christ* – Ephesians 1:4]. But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things” (Mark 13:22-23).²⁰² All of these false prophets will proclaim the doctrines of Satan – there will be a multitude of conflicting variations, yet all will be equally acceptable; many will include much from the truths of Scripture, yet each will depart from it in some critical way, no matter how small it might seem to be. As Evangelicals have become careless with God’s Word, they have also become casual about understanding what they believe about it – most will simply defer to their favored theology, theologian or eloquent preacher. Consequently, it now only takes a few influential preachers to lead many gullible Evangelicals down a pathway that is not God’s truth. This has been the tactic

²⁰⁰ Vine’s “have”; Friberg Lexicon.

²⁰¹ Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

²⁰² Friberg Lexicon.

that the devil has used to lure untold millions of Christians into apostasy and self-professed Christians deeper into heresies that reflect their desires (Romans 16:18; 2 Timothy 3:13; 4:3-4).

Ecumenical thinking (always presenting itself in love and unity) has kept many professing “Christians” away from walking faithfully with the Lord, but Satan has, in the last few decades, used a product of the Ecumenical movement to draw many into direct contact with his spirits (demons); Jesus describes Babylon as being the *habitation of devils*, and it is important that we understand how the devil is working to make this a reality within the Evangelical community. Out of the easygoing and broad tolerance of Ecumenical practices by most Evangelicals, has come a desire for an even greater expression of “love” for others – *love* is the principle building block of the Ecumenical movement, but this is a love that is contrary to what God has commanded. Jesus made it very clear to a lawyer of the Pharisees that the most important commandment was for him to love the Lord with all of his heart, soul, and strength, and then his neighbor as himself (Matthew 22:35-40). However, within the Ecumenical mind, this is reversed, and the primary emphasis (whether stated or not) is placed upon being loving to those about us; i.e., we must be accepting of all that they believe (judge not!) and not do or say anything that might contradict what they accept as being true, for that would be unloving. The reality is that the Ecumenist makes his love of God subject to his love for his fellow man. This is the reason why the Ecumenical Evangelical is willing to be joined together with those who do not keep God’s Word (they are showing “love” to them, which is the second command), whereas Jesus said that, unless **He** occupies first place in our lives (the most important commandment), we cannot claim to belong to Him (Matthew 10:37-38; John 8:31).

Within Ecumenical Evangelicalism (with its misplaced emphasis on love), Satan has raised up those who have stressed the need to **experience** God and **communicate** with Him, even while they still make some use of the Bible (hence, the subtlety of the deception). Along with the New Evangelicalism that Ockenga introduced in 1948, came a questioning of the truths of Scripture; New Evangelicals were given a new freedom to re-evaluate their own position on Biblical truths in order to hold a meaningful dialogue with the Liberals on spiritual matters.²⁰³ A natural product



Harold J. Ockenga

²⁰³ Ockenga introduced his *Neo-Evangelicalism* with a full understanding that such a re-evaluation would be necessary to carry out a dialogue with the Liberals (*Foreword to The Battle for the Bible* by Harold Lindsell).

of this softened, more-open approach to Scripture was a new significance being placed upon one's personal understanding and experience, and, hence, a perceived need to view God's truth through the lens of life (instead of life being viewed through the lens of God's truth). Since human wisdom (which was an integral part of the New Evangelical philosophy) requires that natural logic must take priority, it was now justifiable to rethink historical, Biblical doctrines. This experiential approach to God's Word, which has spread like a prairie fire among Evangelicals, is known as the Emergent Church, or the emerging church, and is, in truth, a "variant of ecumenism."²⁰⁴ It is not a new denomination, but a philosophy that, like Ecumenism, has infiltrated all denominations; there is no identifiable leader and no organization, only a common thinking that deviates from historical, Biblical Christianity. Its existential philosophy is this: it is absolutely true that no one can know absolute truth.²⁰⁵ However, this is not new, for even the pioneers of the Evangelical Free Church in the 19th century felt justified to embrace such heresy: "if Scripture alone is the rule, and Scripture is open to various interpretations, and believers are free in conscience to interpret it as they feel 'led' by the Holy Spirit, it follows that they may be led to different views."²⁰⁶ Such an inclusive view reveals the influence of spiritual existentialism, denies that there is absolute truth in God, and blasphemously attributes the diversity of conflicting doctrine to the work of the Holy Spirit! The groundwork for New Evangelical and Emergent philosophy, with its openness to error, had been carefully laid by the devil many years before Harold Ockenga arrived on the scene.

The early proponents of the Emergent Church looked for ways to enhance the spiritual experience of their followers, and, for guidance in doing so, they turned to the ancient church fathers. The phrase, *ancient church fathers*, is generally accepted to refer to those first generations of "Christians" who either had direct access to the Apostolic teachings (whether in person or through their original writings) or, at least, were within a generation, or so, of the Apostles; however, some have gone so far as to extend the time frame to as late as AD 800.²⁰⁷ One modern writer has even admitted that if you want to avoid becoming a Catholic, then simply do not read the writings of the early church fathers;²⁰⁸ in other words, he openly reveals that within the writings of the men from those first generations AD are the seeds of Catholic doctrine (i.e., heresy). In our study, we have referred to some of these writings in

²⁰⁴ Doug Gay, *Remixing the Church*, p. 93.

²⁰⁵ <https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/1473-emerging-church-movement-the-new-face-of-heresy-the>

²⁰⁶ David V. Martin, *Trinity International University 1897-1997*, p. 19.

²⁰⁷ <https://www.crossroadsinitiative.com/media/articles/early-church-fathers-overview-snapshot-of-the-fathers-of-the-church/>

²⁰⁸ <https://churchpop.com/2015/07/13/early-church-fathers-catholic/>

order to provide a glimpse into the error that very quickly entered the teachings of these “church fathers”; even within the Scriptures we can easily recognize the errors that Paul addressed in many of his epistles, and those that Jesus dealt with in His letters to the elders of the seven assemblies in Asia. Despite these evidences, those within the Emergent Church movement willingly accept the teachings of the early “Christian” writers as presenting the truth of how to live Biblically; their premise is that, since they were so near to the teachings of the Apostles, they would have understood that which we have lost through the passing years – revealing their denial that God has promised to preserve His Word (Psalm 119:89; Isaiah 40:8; 1 Peter 1:23). Additionally, this demonstrates their emphasis on human reasoning (older is better), which is the very same philosophy that the higher critics used concerning the Greek texts of the NT (the older the manuscript, the more trustworthy it must be), which has led to a profusion of translations based upon corrupted texts, which are now being custom designed to meet the desires of their target audiences.

Coupled with their infatuation with the early church fathers is their emphasis on experiencing with the senses that which they believe. For them, it is insufficient to have the Word of God through which we can come to understand the Lord Jesus Christ and what He desires of and for us (through our submission to the Spirit of God Who is abiding within us). In the words of a strong advocate of this philosophy, “**man** [this is *man* generally, not specifically someone who is born-again by the Spirit of God] is meant to live in an intermittent but ongoing **conversation with God**” (emphasis added).²⁰⁹ There is an emphasis placed upon the “still small voice” as being God’s **preferred** method of addressing the individual; this is part of the *conversation* that they want you to have with God.²¹⁰ It is “I talk with God” and “God talks with me,” but NOT through the Bible, His Word! The explanation is made that it is “*somehow* right to look for guidance in circumstances, the Bible, and inner impulses. And all will know that these three *somehow* serve to correct each other” (*italics in the original*).²¹¹ In other words, the author is saying that *circumstances* and *inner impulses* can somehow serve to correct our understanding of the Bible! Consider this for a moment. With regard to *circumstances*, which are external to us, we are told explicitly in the Bible that Satan is the prince of this world and is working through the disobedient (John 12:31; Ephesians 2:2); therefore, if we look to our environment for guidance, we are opening the door to being guided by Satan – something that is not particularly “Christian.” The *still small voice* (which they believe to be from God) is part of the guidance of the *inner impulses*, which

²⁰⁹ Dallas Willard, *In Search of Guidance*, p. 14.

²¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 106.

²¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 200.

comes from our hearts; Jeremiah described our hearts as being *deceitful* and *desperately wicked* (Jeremiah 17:9), and Jesus taught that out of the “heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies” (Matthew 15:19). Even as committed disciples of Jesus Christ, we are commanded to examine our hearts to ensure that we are genuine in the light of Scripture (2 Corinthians 13:5); from this we must conclude that our only truly reliable form of guidance is God’s Word, to which His Spirit will open our understanding if we are living faithfully in Christ (Romans 8:1-4). As a result, we must recognize the fundamental flaw in their philosophy that exposes them to all sorts of error; the Bible (God’s Word) must be central to our spiritual walk.

Nevertheless, the emergent philosophy, with its emphasis upon activating the senses, continues to include our environment and our inner-nudgings in their forms of spiritual guidance. In their quest to have God speak directly to them, they have taken on some of the traditions of the ancient fathers, particularly their meditative



Chuck Swindoll

practices. Held in high esteem are the monks of the early centuries AD who left everything behind and went into the deserts in their search for solitude and God – they found solitude, but not God! Dallas Willard, whom we have already heard from, is quoted as saying that “practicing solitude with silence are the most important spiritual disciplines for people today ...”;²¹² he defines solitude as “choosing to be alone and **to dwell on our experience** of isolation from other human beings” (emphasis added).²¹³ Such *spiritual disciplines*, of which solitude and silence are considered to be the *most important*, are essential for someone to become a follower of Christ (**not** a Christian, but someone who endeavors to live like Christ did); the philosophy is that “if you want to be like Christ, then practice certain disciplines and you can be *like Him*” (italics in the original) – there is no concern for being born from above (John 3:3); this forms the basis for being rejected by the Lord (Matthew 7:22-23) – it is all about being like Jesus externally.²¹⁴ Even the ever-popular Evangelical, Chuck Swindoll, has entered this mystical realm: “I do not believe anyone can ever become a deep person [which he defines as someone “whose intimacy with the Almighty transcends the need for an answer to every question”] without stillness and silence. If **silence** has a mate, it must be **solitude**” (emphasis added).²¹⁵ Therefore, it simply becomes

²¹² <http://www.soulshpherd.org/2005/08/solitude-and-silence/>

²¹³ Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, p. 160 (pdf version).

²¹⁴ Roger Oakland, *Faith Undone*, p. 168.

²¹⁵ Chuck Swindoll, *So You Want to be Like Christ?*, p. 65.

a matter of learning how to enter into this all-important place of *silence*. “Contemplative spirituality ... uses ancient mystical meditative practices to induce altered states of consciousness (the silence)”;²¹⁶ it teaches “that spiritual growth and true spirituality occur by contemplation ... of God through emptying your mind.”²¹⁷ From this we come to understand that this all-important *silence* is attained when our minds are empty. “The quiet repetition of a single word can help us to descend with the mind into the heart ... This way of simple prayer ... opens us to **God’s active presence**” (emphasis added).²¹⁸ It is claimed that “such a simple, repeated prayer can slowly empty out our crowded interior life and create the quiet space where we can dwell with God.”²¹⁹ The underlying assumption, in all of this, is that when we arrive at that place of silence (the mind being emptied of all thoughts – an altered state of consciousness), then we are in God’s presence and can hear Him speak to us. Through the use of a mantra (the *repetition of a single word* or phrase; “Christian” suggestions include: “Jesus,” or “the Lord is my Shepherd”²²⁰) comes the *silence*, which, as we have noted, is actually an altered state of consciousness – you are, quite literally, out of your mind! However, the use of a mantra is not a benign exercise (as it is often portrayed), rather, it is “an instrument of the mind – a powerful sound or vibration that you can use to enter a deep state of meditation”; “getting to the ancient root of it all [it originated in Hinduism²²¹], mantra, at its core, is the basis of all religious traditions, scriptures, and prayers.”²²² Do you see it? The mantra is foundational to the false religious system, Babylon the Great! What characterizes Babylon the Great? It is a works-oriented religion where doing certain things will open the world of the “gods”; in this case, the mantra is assumed to bring us into *God’s active presence*. Jesus warned us against being like the ungodly who use *vain repetitions* (a mantra) in an effort to be heard (Matthew 6:7). Within the religions of Satan, the mantra is important to open the way into the presence of spirit beings who might initially present themselves as being benevolent (the deception is that they are perceived to be God); “and no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness” (2 Corinthians 11:14-15).

Therefore, the modern “Christian” practice of meditating with the use of a mantra harkens back to paganism; it leads to an altered state of mind, which, in turn,

²¹⁶ Oakland, p. 81.

²¹⁷ <https://faithalone.org/journal/1997ii/Caddock.html>

²¹⁸ Henri Nouwen, *The Way of the Heart*, p.81; <http://religiopoliticaltalk.com/tag/desert-fathersmothers/>

²¹⁹ Nouwen, *Way*, p. 86; <http://www.unionlife.com/JulianMedNov05.html>

²²⁰ <http://herescope.blogspot.ca/2012/02/mantra-scriptura.html>

²²¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mantra>

²²² Tris Thorp; <http://www.chopra.com/articles/what-is-a-mantra#sm.00003fn0bs5s7dy8vuw2h0nf55u3p>

establishes contact with the spirit world. However, such a practice is not of God; as we have seen, Jesus specifically warned against it. God also said: “Come now, and let us reason together,” which is a call for us to think something through with Him – a call to activate our minds, not empty them (Isaiah 1:18). In essence, through the mantra and the ensuing silence, we can be assured that we will never hear from the God of heaven, yet that is exactly what the emerging philosophers are claiming. When we are told that the mantra forms the *basis of all religious traditions*, it is essential that we recognize this to be the tradition of Babylon the Great (the false religion that began with Satan in the Garden of Eden) – it is truly an ancient practice, it bears the spirit of antichrist and has no part within Biblical Christianity. The claim is made that “mantras offer an incomparable path that merges our intentions, energies, and connection with the Divine ...”;²²³ this is simply a re-phrasing of Satan’s enticing words to Eve: “... in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3:5). The *Divine* that will be encountered is not the God of the Bible but, rather, Satan disguised as a messenger of good and light (2 Corinthians 11:14).

Returning to our passage (Revelation 18:2), Jesus identified Babylon the Great as being the *habitation of devils*; we have shown that the Ecumenical religion of today is a key element within this false religious system, and now we can see how this false religion (which includes Ecumenical Evangelicals) can be described in such terms. Not only is this religion anti-Christian, but even the “Christian” faction is now actively promoting communication with Satan and his devils as being a *conversation with God*.²²⁴ An Ecumenical Evangelical might well deny that he holds to such deviant activities, yet, as someone who is Ecumenical, he participates in their sins. Every Christian has been called by God to put on the garment of righteousness and holiness (Ephesians 4:24), as well as to turn away from everything that is not Biblically accurate (Romans 16:17), and to have no part with anything that is unclean before the Lord (2 Corinthians 6:17). Jesus said: “Enter [a command] ye in at the strait [narrow, exacting] gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad [spacious] *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction [utter ruin], and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow [restricted] *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few [only a small number] there be that find it” (Matthew 7:13-14).²²⁵ Jesus’ call is diametrically opposed to Ecumenical thinking; the Ecumenist desires a broad

²²³ <http://www.soundstrue.com/store/the-spirit-of-mantra-with-deva-premal-miten.html>

²²⁴ Willard, *Search*, p. 14.

²²⁵ Friberg Lexicon.

fellowship, while Jesus requires us to dwell in an exclusive relationship with Him through His Word and His Spirit (John 14:6; 16:13; 2 Timothy 2:15).

Jesus also states that Babylon the Great will be a *cage* [a place inhabited by demons, same as *hold*] of every unclean and hateful bird (Revelation 18:2).²²⁶ We might well wonder at this description. However, Isaiah prophesied concerning the ancient city: “And Babylon ... shall never be inhabited ... But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures [jackals, i.e., howling creatures]; and owls [literally, daughters of an owl (an unclean bird)] shall dwell there, and satyrs [demons] shall dance there” (Isaiah 13:19-21).²²⁷ Isaiah describes a time when physical Babylon would be devoid of all favorable life; it would be occupied by desert animals, howling creatures, unclean birds, and demons. The spiritual devastation that is characteristic of spiritual Babylon parallels the physical destruction that was brought against the ancient city of Babylon.

The *woman* was identified by the angel as being Rome (Revelation 17:18) – a false religious system that flowed out of *Babylon*, the gate of the gods, into all of the world, whose center was in the city of Rome (at the time of John), and whose Ecumenical (world-wide) agenda is now being directed by the Roman Catholic Church. The city of Rome, and the broader Papal States region of Italy, functioned under papal control for many centuries, but it ended in 1870 when the Kingdom of Italy gained control over the entire region.²²⁸ Thus Pope Pius IX became restricted to the area of the Vatican (of which the government claimed ownership but agreed to let the pope occupy it); finding this arrangement unacceptable, he, and subsequent popes, refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of the Italian government and considered themselves to be prisoners in the Vatican.²²⁹ In 1929, the Lateran Treaty was signed between the pope and the Italian government, which, among other things, granted the Vatican to the pope as his property.²³⁰ With this agreement, the false religious system (the *woman*, *Babylon the Great*, led by the pope) became confined to a small portion of the city, yet, even in this, it remains at the heart of Rome. Despite having her center of power reduced to a mere 110 acres within Rome (about .035% of the total city area),²³¹ she is ranked as one of the wealthiest organizations in the world today.²³² Even though, in Rome, she has been limited to a very small

²²⁶ Friberg Lexicon.

²²⁷ BDB; Strong's Online.

²²⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lateran_Treaty

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vatican_City; <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rome>

²³² <http://nationalpost.com/news/wealth-of-roman-catholic-church-impossible-to-calculate>

area, the Roman Catholic Church owns property around the world estimated at over 716,000 km² (about 178 million acres), has tens of billions of dollars invested in banking, insurance, chemicals, steel, construction and real estate, and owns numerous priceless treasures.²³³ Nonetheless, everything that this *woman* owns will be destroyed just as surely as the false religion, which she embodies, is fallen.

Along with the pronouncement of the fallen state of Babylon the Great comes an explanation as to why this has taken place; the Lord provides three reasons for this false religion, Babylon, being a hold for demonic forces: 1) all peoples (*nations*) have participated in her spiritual fornication, they have chosen to follow her passionate (*thumos*) lead, and, thereby, have also fallen under the wrath (*orge* – God's anger against sin) of God (Revelation 14:8; John 3:36; Ephesians 5:6), 2) the rulers of this world have supported her ungodly activities (Revelation 17:2), and 3) the traders of the world (*merchants* – wholesale, not retail) have been made rich through the power (*abundance* – unrestrained use) of her wealth (*delicacies*).²³⁴ In essence, the influence of this *woman* has permeated all of the religions of all of the peoples of the earth, she has gained influence over the nations' leaders, and she controls the economy of the world through those who are committed to her hedonism. The will of Satan is being worked out through this false religious system of works, which, from its very beginning, has been carried by him, and all of those who are Ecumenical are a part of it.

This *woman* has also proven to be an aggressor; she is strongly passionate about spreading her message, beginning with Cain (Genesis 4:8). Truly, “your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour [destroy, or overpower] ...” (1 Peter 5:8).²³⁵ Satan uses this false religion in his efforts to overwhelm the child of God with his subtle deception. The disciple of the Lord has always faced the temptations and deceit of the devil, and, as the end-time events unfold, that aggression will only increase. “And it was given unto him [Antichrist, who is the incarnation of Satan] to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations” (Revelation 13:7). Nevertheless, Jesus not only affirmed that this would take place, but also instructed us as to our responsibility: “ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that shall endure [remain faithful through trials] unto the end, the same [an emphatic pronoun meaning, this one!] shall be saved” (Mark 13:13).²³⁶ The Lord's faithful ones have always been a persecuted minority (2 Timothy 3:12), and

²³³ <http://nationalpost.com/news/wealth-of-roman-catholic-church-impossible-to-calculate>.

²³⁴ Friberg Lexicon.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Ibid.

this does not change when *Babylon the Great* becomes exceedingly powerful under the leadership of the False Prophet.

We've seen that when the Antichrist goes forth into the world, he will conquer (Revelation 6:2), and the whole earth will look upon him in wonder (Revelation 13:3b). The False Prophet will join him, will enhance the religious side of the Antichrist (making him to appear to be the Messiah of the Jews and the Mahdi of the Muslims – Revelation 13:13), and will link the worship of the Antichrist with one's personal welfare (Revelation 13:16-17). The False Prophet will be the head of this vast false religious system that will infiltrate all levels of society, and he will have his finger on the pulse of the financial world – something that is already in place. Both the Antichrist and the False Prophet are empowered by Satan (Revelation 13:2, 12), making his role as the prince of this world more widely accepted (Revelation 13:3) and his aggression against the Lord's faithful ones more intense (Revelation 13:7).



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. ⁵ For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. (Revelation 18)

After hearing of the fallen state of Babylon, John hears a voice similar to (*allos* – another of the same kind) that of the Lord Jesus, except that this one is coming from heaven, warning *my people to come out of her*.²³⁷ In order to fully understand this call for separation, it is helpful, first of all, to consider the situation of Israel and Judah during the times of Isaiah and Jeremiah (respectively). When Assyria took Israel captive, they replaced them with people from the east (Babylon, Cuthah and Ava) and the north (Hamath and Sepharvaim), with the understanding that the captives of Israel also replaced the people from these regions; by scattering them among their own people (2 Kings 17:24), they reduced the possibility of rebellion. Isaiah, who was a prophet during the time when Israel was taken into captivity, declared: “The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean *thing*; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD” (Isaiah 52:10-11). Isaiah is prophesying of the day when the Lord will bring salvation to Israel and open the way for her to return

²³⁷ Friberg Lexicon.

to her own land; in that day of salvation, they are to remove themselves from their captivity and not reach out for what is unclean.²³⁸ Jeremiah had a similar message for the captivity of Judah: “Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity ...” (Jeremiah 51:6); in other words, in the day of deliverance, do not hang back. The Lord does not change; Paul wrote these words: “... come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you” (2 Corinthians 6:17).

When the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah had reached the limit of God's patience, Lot was warned to remove himself and his family from Sodom (Genesis 18:20-21; 19:12-13). Peter tells us that righteous (*just*) Lot was worn down (*vexed*, v.7) and distressed (*vexed*, v.8) by the debauchery of the Sodomites (2 Peter 2:7-8), yet, clearly, he tolerated their sinfulness for he remained among them – it bothered him, but not enough to leave. Even when Lot was told by the heavenly messengers to flee with his wife and two daughters (the rest of his family gave no heed when he tried to warn them), he hesitated (Genesis 19:15-16) – after all, this was his home, part of his family was still out there in the city, and his financial security, his associates, and his friends were all there. In mercy, the Lord's messengers took Lot, his wife, and his two daughters (who were still at home), led them by the hand out of the city and gave them this warning: “Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed” (Genesis 19:17). However, even in this, Lot was not willing to accept the heavenly counsel; he requested permission to enter a neighboring city because he feared the mountain. After the Lord destroyed the cities of the plain (including Sodom and Gomorrah), Lot had a greater fear of the city and left it for the mountain (Genesis 19:30). In Lot, we have an example of someone who knew of the Lord (he had lived with Abraham), recognized that he dwelt in the midst of sinfulness (Genesis 19:6-7), and yet was comfortable there, having neither a positive influence among his fellow Sodomites nor the ability to protect his family from becoming a part of the evil (Genesis 19:14). As a result of the choices that Lot made, two nations were formed who became the enemies of Abraham's children of promise (Israel): Moab and Ammon (Genesis 19:37-38).

When Israel came to the Moabites and Ammonites, after coming out of Egypt, they were told not to disturb them because the Lord had given these lands to the children of Lot. However, even though Israel did not bother them, the Moabites and the Ammonites proved to be a problem to them; first, they hired Balaam to come and pronounce a curse upon Israel (Deuteronomy 23:4), and then the Moabites

²³⁸ Strong's Online.

deliberately enticed the people of Israel into sin (Numbers 25:1; Revelation 2:14). Both peoples (the Ammonites and Moabites) served gods of their own making (after the tradition of Babylon), which were a snare to Israel (Judges 10:6), and both were also used by the Lord to discipline His wayward children of Israel (Judges 3:12; 10:7). Beyond this, Lot's descendants were not permitted to have any part with the Israelites: "An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD [they could not participate in the worship of Jehovah with Israel even though they were related to the family of Abraham]; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD **for ever**" (Deuteronomy 23:3). By contrast, Ruth, a Moabitess, came into Israel as a proselyte (just like any other pagan): she proclaimed, "thy people *shall be* my people, and thy God my God" (Ruth 1:16) – she willingly left her people and religion, and wholeheartedly became a member of the children of promise.

In the lives of these two (Lot and Ruth) we have two very different responses to the Lord God. Lot, despite the evidence that he was somewhat bothered by the debauchery that was all around him, chose to remain among the ungodly, and left only when constrained to do so; Ruth willingly forsook her heritage and embraced the God of Israel. Lot is recorded as the father of those who became the enemies of God's people; Ruth, on the other hand, despite being a descendant of Lot, became an ancestor of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:5). The call that John hears from heaven is for the people of God to separate from *Babylon* and have no association with (*partakers of*) her sins so that they will not, as a result, also receive the calamity that God will bring upon her. This is God's warning to those who know Him, that they must remove themselves from every close association with that which is unclean in order to find refuge in the Lord (2 Corinthians 6:17). Jesus petitioned His Father: "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (John 17:15); we are **in** the world, which is completely permeated with the influence of religious Babylon, yet we must remain spiritually separated from her – anything less will lead to our own destruction!

We might readily agree that the world is *unclean*, but we must also be able to identify that which is *unclean* within the "Christian" realm. It is important for us to understand this separation within the Biblical context lest we should be deceived into remaining in the midst of Babylon to our own spiritual demise. Paul explained the matter more thoroughly to the Corinthians: "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with [associate with] fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world ... for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother [anyone who is

considered to be a Christian, or considers himself to be one] be a fornicator [sexually immoral], or covetous [always wanting more, thus breaking the Tenth Commandment], or an idolater [a violator of the First Commandment], or a railer [verbally abusive], or a drunkard, or an extortioner [a robber or swindler, who breaks the Eighth Commandment]; with such an one no not [not even] to eat” (1 Corinthians 5:9-11).²³⁹ In essence, Paul’s warning to the Corinthians was that they should not associate with anyone who might be called a Christian (either by himself or by others) who is living contrary to God’s Word. As he came to the end of his letter of reproof, Paul stated: “Be not deceived [led astray]: evil [that which is not good] communications [companionship, associations] corrupt [ruin, destroy] good manners [character]” (1 Corinthians 15:33).²⁴⁰ In other words, it matters with whom we form close relationships. I have often said that a key clue to identifying those who are Ecumenical is to carefully consider their associations; an individual, or an organization, who might appear to be Biblical, may in fact join with those who are definitely not Biblical – to the discerning, this is a sign of spiritual failure. Paul’s warning is that should someone who is living Biblically develop a close association with someone who is not (*evil*), the result will be the ruination (*corrupt*) of the former. Most of us have seen this worked out in the marriage of a Christian and a non-Christian; if the marriage survives, the Christian will become less so over the years. In the beginning, God separated the light from the darkness (Genesis 1:4); man’s violation of God’s law will never result in His blessing, but will lead to His rejection (2 Corinthians 6:14-17)!

The difficulty today is that many who claim to be Christians are also Ecumenical – they are joined together with Babylon the Great (*evil*) and most refuse to acknowledge the danger that they are in. They have chosen to disregard Paul’s warning to the Corinthians, and the longer that they stay in this relationship, the less Biblical they will become. “Blessed *is* the man that walketh not in the counsel [advice] of the ungodly [guilty of sin, wicked], nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night” (Psalm 1:1-2).²⁴¹ This warning is against a progressive involvement with the ungodly (and Babylon the Great is *ungodly*!): *walketh*, giving casual attention to the unforgiven before God (they might be morally upright, religiously astute, and speak like a child of God – Matthew 7:22-23), *standeth*, stopping and giving particular attention to those who are living in sin (e.g., identifying with the Ecumenical), and *sitteth*, joining with those who are arrogant

²³⁹ Friberg Lexicon.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ BDB.

before God (showing disdain for those who are walking the narrow pathway to life); the contrast to this is someone who takes pleasure in the Word of God. What must not be overlooked is that, for the child of God, there is no place for any close ties with the world, and that extends to the Ecumenical community. If we refuse to separate, then we will be caught in the calamities that the Lord will bring upon this ungodly religious force.

Like Sodom of old, the sins of Babylon the Great (the false religious system) will reach the end of the patience of God, and, like Sodom, she is about to come to an end. This voice from heaven gives a final call to separate from the evil of this Babylon, because the Lord's judgment will fall upon all that is hers. We must be like Ruth, who committed herself whole-heartedly to the Lord, and unlike Lot, who tolerated evil and only left when led out by the Lord – only to have his descendants become enemies to God's people. We must willingly separate from the uncleanness of the Ecumenical; anything less is spiritual fornication, and will lead to being caught in the destruction of Babylon the Great.



16. And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. 17. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will ... (Revelation 17)

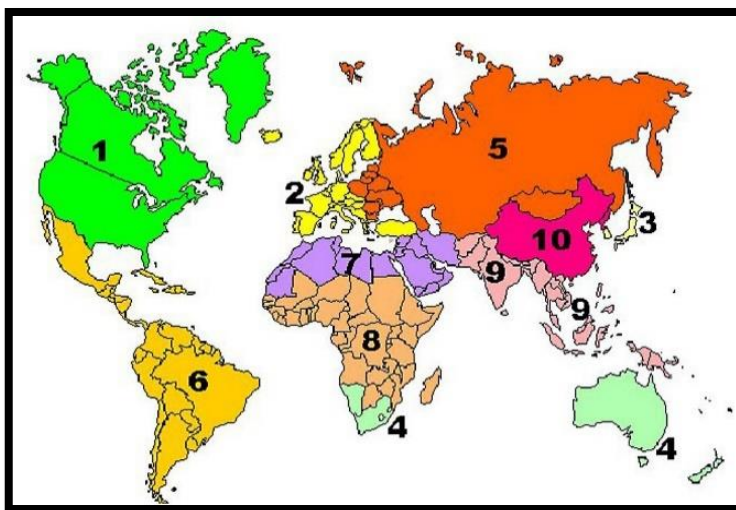
It is important to understand that the fallen state of the false religion, Babylon the Great, is not the same as the destruction that is pronounced against her. The fallen condition of Babylon is due to her departure from God's ways; her destruction will be God's judgment of her sins.

We are told of the opulence of this religious system that will operate under the guidance of the False Prophet. She is arrayed in clothing of purple and scarlet (two of the most expensive dyes known at the time) and covered with gold, pearls, and an expensive stone (Revelation 17:4). She is described as living *deliciously* (Revelation 18:7), which means to live without restraint – anything that brings gratification and pleasure, she gets. We have already noted that the Roman Catholic Church has its finger on the financial pulse of the world, and that the False Prophet (a pope) will, through the mark, exercise control over the world's economy. The buyers and sellers of the world are those who will drive the economic engine for the False Prophet, and thereby gain great wealth for themselves (Revelation 18:3). However, we are also told that the leaders (*kings*) of the world will become wealthy through their

allegiance to this religious system (Revelation 18:9); these are the kings who have willingly united with Babylon the Great and have participated in her spiritual fornication (Revelation 17:2).

The *ten horns* that will do the Lord's bidding regarding Babylon the Great are identified as being "ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power [*exousia* – authority] as kings one hour with the beast [Satan]" (Revelation 17:12).²⁴² Clearly, these ten "non-kings" (since they do not have a kingdom) are different from the *kings of the earth* who have declared their allegiance to the False Prophet's religious system. The *kings of the earth* are the world rulers who are already in place at this time; the world will be brought under the control of the Antichrist and False Prophet, and these *kings* will do their part to be sure that this takes place. We have seen that the Antichrist will hold authority over the world for 42 months (Revelation 13:5), yet these ten kings (the *ten horns*) will have authority over their kingdoms for only one hour. Their rule will take place at the end of the Antichrist's rule, for they "will make war with the Lamb" (Revelation 17:14), which is also the last act of the Antichrist (Revelation 19:19-20). Despite being called *kings*, they will only function as figureheads for they "have one mind [purpose], and shall give their power [*dunamis* – ability, strength] and strength [*exousia* – authority] unto the beast [Satan]" (Revelation 17:13).²⁴³ They will be there to do Satan's bidding.

Interestingly, in 1942, just before the US became involved in World War II, Maurice Gomberg of Philadelphia developed a map of a "New World" that was divided into 14 sovereign states and three "quarantined" states (Germany, Italy and Japan – reflecting the political climate of the day).²⁴⁴ Indications are that this was simply a personal project and does not appear to have been part of a larger global-thinking group; however, it does



Ten Regions presented by the Club of Rome

²⁴² Strong's Online.

²⁴³ Friberg Lexicon.

²⁴⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Outline_of_the_Post-War_New_World_Map

provide evidence of a growing global view of the world. The Club of Rome (formally organized in 1968) began as a group of very influential global thinkers who felt that the world needed someone to think in longer terms and about deeper issues than is possible for any one government; in essence, they perceived that their role was to provide a global perspective to world struggles that, even though they might be common to many nations, were voiced differently. While governments look for ways to resolve their concerns within the short-term, the Club of Rome members endeavor to place the world's problems (not just a single country's problems) within a macro perspective that will permit them to see both the bigger picture and the broader solution (so the thinking goes). By 1973, the Club had divided the world into ten economic regions, and was considering these in light of the "future development of the world system" and a broad view for conflict resolution through "cooperation rather than confrontation."²⁴⁵ From their lofty perspective, they identified the new enemies requiring our attention as: "pollution, the threat of global warming, water shortages, famine and the like"; flowing out of this, they made the point that humanity is the common element in each of these newly branded enemies, which led to a discussion on how to reduce the world's population (something that is a part of the work of the rider of the pale horse – Revelation 6:8).²⁴⁶ In 2000, the United Nations, not to be outdone, signed a document that expressed their pledge to work on what they called their Millennium Development Goals, of which there were eight²⁴⁷ that they hoped to accomplish by 2015 (time has proven that this was not to take place).²⁴⁸ However, along with the development of these lofty, unattainable goals came two maps of the world (one in 2009, the other in 2014²⁴⁹) that are quite similar and also very interesting in light of our present topic. Perhaps following the lead of the Club of Rome (for the similarities are undeniable), the UN also divided the world into ten regions. What would seem evident is that there are powers at work to prepare the world for ten kings to be placed over ten defined areas of the world; it would seem that the Antichrist (who is controlled by Satan) will be the catalyst to see this come to fruition. These ten kings, being of one mind, will seek to draw the

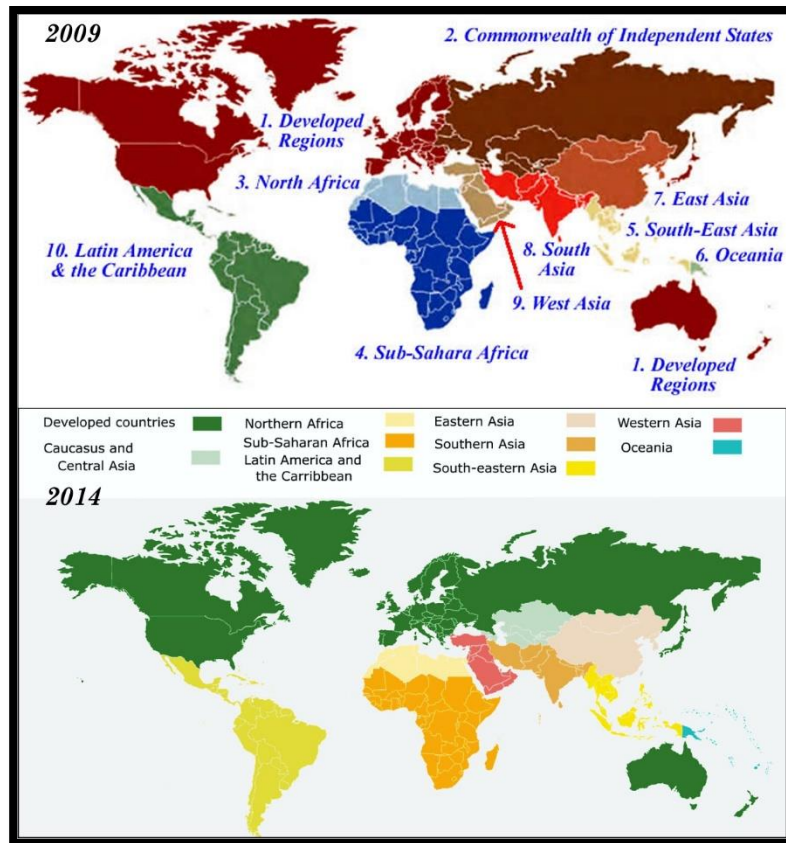
²⁴⁵ Mihajlo Mesarovic and Eduard Pestel, "Regionalized and Adaptive Model of ... The Global World System," p. 1.

²⁴⁶ Alexander King and Bertrand Schneider, *The First Global Revolution*, p. 75.

²⁴⁷ Their eight goals: 1) eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, 2) achieve universal primary education, 3) promote gender equality and empower women, 4) reduce child mortality, 5) improve maternal health, 6) combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, 7) ensure environmental sustainability, and 8) global partnership for development.

²⁴⁸ http://www.who.int/topics/millennium_development_goals/about/en/

²⁴⁹ <http://nuclearsuntan.blogspot.ca/2011/11/un-divides-world-into-10-regional.html>;
<https://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Host.aspx?Content=Data/RegionalGroupings.htm>



Maps drafted for the U.N. Millennium Development Goals ²⁴⁶

Luke 4:5-6); therefore, it is only reasonable for the leaders of these kingdoms to embrace the false religions that Satan promotes (there are many variations to the devil's religion, but all are based upon a works-oriented "salvation"). As we have already seen, these are not the *kings* who are referred to as being the ten horns of the beast upon which the *woman* is riding. As the Antichrist and False Prophet function under the power of Satan (Revelation 13:2, 12), it seems apparent that Satan's presence in them will become increasingly evident so that he is ultimately described as being the *eighth* ruler (Revelation 17:11). This is not altogether surprising, for when the Antichrist rises in fame, we are told that *all the world ... worshipped the dragon* (Revelation 13:3-4); there will be general amazement at the authority of the Antichrist, and it will become common practice to openly worship Satan as the one who is giving him his tremendous charisma. The way for the open worship of Satan is already being prepared. In December 2015, the first "state-sanctioned Satanic Ceremony" in the US was held at the capitol building in Lansing, Michigan.²⁵⁰ The spokesman for Detroit's Satanic Temple said that "it is time for us to put aside our differences ... we are not anti-Christian, and we are not anti-religion."²⁵¹ The

world together in their adulation of Satan; this is additional evidence that Satan is working his utmost to gain control over the whole world.

We've already noted the fact that the *kings of the earth* are committed to the false religious system (the *woman*), and this has been true for all of the kingdoms of history (Revelation 17:2). You'll recall that Satan is the prince of this world and that all of the kingdoms of the earth function under his authority (Ephesians 2:2;

²⁵⁰ <https://www.metrotimes.com/the-scene/archives/2015/12/22/heres-the-video-from-the-satanic-temples-state-sanctioned-capitol-ceremony>

²⁵¹ Ibid.

deception is already being publicly displayed – the adulation of Satan is being characterized as normal, mainstream, and positive. Rest assured, this is only the beginning.



Detroit's Satanic Temple:
approved gathering on the steps of the state Capitol

How do the ten horns of the beast in Revelation 17 compare with the ten horns of the fourth beast of Daniel 7? Both are referred to as being ten kings (Daniel 7:24; Revelation 17:12), but I would contend that the similarity ends there. As Daniel's vision is explained to him, he is told that the fourth, world-dominating kingdom (*beast*) will have ten kings (*horns*). We've already identified this fourth kingdom as the Islamic Caliphate that held power over the lands surrounding the Mediterranean Sea for many years; this reign came to an end with the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 (*wounded to death*), but there are strong indications in the world today that an Islamic Caliphate is about to arise from the ashes (*his deadly wound was healed* – Revelation 13:3). However, as we draw insight from Nebuchadnezzar's vision (Daniel 2), this revived Islamic Caliphate will be the feet and toes of iron and clay; the original Islamic Caliphate (the fourth beast of Daniel 7) is described as being *strong as iron* (Daniel 2:40), but the restored kingdom will be *divided* because they will have become mixed with the general population of the world (Daniel 2:41-43). Whereas the first rise of Islamic power was achieved through open fighting and domination, the modern tactic has become somewhat more benign (at least at first) and geared more toward gaining global control. Four stages have been identified that confirm the construction of the feet and toes of Daniel 2 (the iron and the clay): 1) **infiltration**, and we can see this taking place today through the massive migration of Muslims into Europe and, to a lesser degree, around the world (this results in the Muslims mixing with the general population); 2) **consolidation of power**, which will come through the increasing Muslim populations in traditionally non-Muslim, democratic countries coupled with a protectionist stance by the authorities of those countries toward the Islamic faith (everything negative is deemed to be Islamophobia, thereby granting them special protection so that they will flourish and gain increasing influence); 3) **open war** will become possible when the effects of #1 and #2 have been sufficiently established; 4) **totalitarian Islamic control** (Sharia Law), which is the ultimate goal that has been voiced by many Muslim leaders

around the world.²⁵² As never before, we are seeing the formation of the feet and toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image; many countries are already beginning to feel the iron fist of Islamic oppression (stage 3 above) even while other Muslims enjoy their freedom as they work through stage one (infiltration). Consequently, we have two faces of Islam being lived out today: 1) the oppressive face that stands against every freedom that is held dear in the west (ISIS is the most pronounced example of this), and 2) the peace-loving face that seeks to portray Islam as a religion of tolerance and brotherhood (the propaganda that is being pedaled in the west). However, when the Antichrist arrives on the world stage, he will unite all Muslims into one – and this will lead to everyone being under a form of sharia law; the False Prophet will display his miraculous signs in order to deceive those who do not have a love for the truth so as to be saved (Revelation 13:13-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:10), and will use his Ecumenical leadership to unite all faiths into supporting the Antichrist.

In his vision, Daniel saw another little horn (king) arise, one who is very different (*diverse*) from the previous ten, and who will humble (*subdue*, or bring low) three of them (Daniel 7:8, 24); although coming up last, clearly this ruler will exercise great power and authority.²⁵³ Daniel is told that he will “speak ... words against the most High, and shall wear out [constantly harass] the saints of the most High ... and they [the saints] shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time [3½ years or 42 months]” (Daniel 7:25).²⁵⁴ If we compare this to the revelation that John received, we can see that this little horn is the Antichrist who will have authority for 42 months, who will *blaspheme* against the Lord God and *make war with the saints, and ... overcome them* (Revelation 13:5-7). What will make the Antichrist so very different from the first rulers of this seventh empire is that he will be completely filled with the power of Satan; Satan will so possess him that we are told that he (Satan) is called the eighth king (Revelation 17:11). Satan has **influenced** all of the world empires but, through the Antichrist, he will hold increasing **control** over this revived last empire so that he will be identified as being its ruler (the eighth king). The Antichrist will come into power **after** the ten kings of the Islamic Caliphate referred to in Daniel. By contrast, the ten horns of Revelation 17 are ten kings who will receive authority for only *one hour* (a very short time) toward the end of the Antichrist's rule, and they will, with one mind, commit themselves entirely unto Satan.

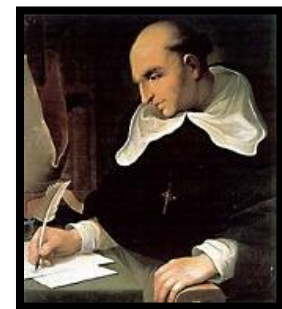
²⁵² <https://civilusdefendus.wordpress.com/2010/01/10/4-stages-of-islamic-conquest/>

²⁵³ BDB.

²⁵⁴ Strong's Online.

Even though there are ten kings, they will function in unity, and the focus of that unity will be the devil (even as the world worships Satan because of the Antichrist, so these ten will also be focused on him). These ten kings will do two things that are carefully noted for us: 1) they will make war with the Lord Jesus Christ (Revelation 17:14), and 2) they will be used by God to bring about the destruction of the false religious system (v. 16). The latter of these will take place first since the war that will be waged against the Lord Jesus Christ will be followed immediately by the destruction of the Antichrist's armies and the establishment of His millennial reign (Revelation 19:19-20:4).

Why would these ten rulers hate the *woman*, the false religious system that Satan has put into place? Since they are committed to Satan, wouldn't it seem reasonable that they would also be equally committed to his religion? We've seen that the kingdoms of the world have been under the influence of this *woman* (Revelation 17:2), that she is wealthy beyond words (v. 4), and that, through the leadership of the False Prophet, she will gain control over the world's economy (Revelation 13:16-17; 18:3, 9). Whereas, historically, she influenced the kings of the earth, it seems that during the time of the False Prophet she will actually control much of what takes place in the world, and all of this will serve to further increase her riches. We are told that the *merchants*, those who travel the world plying their trade, become *rich* in material possessions through working with this very powerful *woman* (Revelation 18:3).²⁵⁵ Interestingly, we are given a list of commodities in which these world traders have dealt: precious metals, gems, the most expensive fabrics, and generally everything that would be desired by those who live in extravagance; last on this list are the *bodies (slaves) and souls of men* (Revelation 18:12-13).²⁵⁶ The Roman Catholic Church (as the Ecumenical leader), from its earliest days, either justified slavery or appeared to be ambiguous on the matter when anti-slavery sentiments grew. The Transatlantic slave trade, which saw the transportation of an estimated 12-15 million Africans into slavery, was triggered by Catholic Bishop Las Casas who proposed importing African slaves to replace the declining native workforce in the New World.²⁵⁷ Even though Las Casas came to regret what he had started, four of the five primary nations involved in the booming slave trade were



Bishop Las Casas

²⁵⁵ Friberg Lexicon.

²⁵⁶ Strong's Online.

²⁵⁷ http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=3&psid=52;
[http://www.understandingslavery.com/index.php-](http://www.understandingslavery.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=369&Itemid=145.html)
[option=com_content&view=article&id=369&Itemid=145.html](http://www.understandingslavery.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=369&Itemid=145.html)

Catholic (Spain, Portugal, France, and the Netherlands were predominately Catholic; England, the fifth nation, was primarily Church of England).²⁵⁸ To say that the Roman Catholic Church was not a beneficiary of this trade would be to ignore the facts of history; its complicity with slavery is evidenced by numerous popes and bishops through the years who were slave owners.

We are explicitly told why these ten kings, who are committed to Satan, turn against the false religious system (Babylon the Great) and seek its demise: “God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will [purpose], and to agree [form one purpose], and give their kingdom unto the beast [Satan], until the words of God shall be fulfilled” (Revelation 17:17).²⁵⁹ The Lord is sovereign over the affairs of this world; Jesus is described as the ruler (*archon* – *prince*) of the kings of the earth (Revelation 1:5), and, particularly as these events unfold, Satan will have little control over what happens. Satan is called the *prince* (*archon* – ruler) of this world (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11) and the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2); when Adam sinned, he relinquished his God-given authority over the earth to Satan (Genesis 1:28; 3:17-19), and ever since then, Satan has worked through the leaders of the kingdoms of the earth. However, Jesus bears the title of *prince* over the *kings* of the earth, which places Him above those whom Satan is influencing. Truly, “The king’s heart *is* in the hand of the LORD, *as* the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will” (Proverbs 21:1). Therefore, despite having one purpose (*mind* – Revelation 17:13) that is wholly committed to Satan, God has instilled within these ten kings a united goal (*agree*) to complete His will regarding this false religious system – namely, its destruction. Inasmuch as these kings have given themselves to the agenda of the Antichrist, it would be reasonable to conclude that the Antichrist is aware of their hatred for the *woman*, the religious system that has assisted him in gaining the support of most of those who are living in the world. Could it be that the influence and power of this system is perceived by the Antichrist to be a threat? Its control over the finances of the world, and its trade (both through its world-wide wholesale network [by the *merchants*], and at the retail level through the imposed mark [Revelation 13:16-17]), has made it extremely wealthy and powerful on a global scale. Or, perhaps the Antichrist is sufficiently secure in his position that he no longer needs this religious crutch that could so easily steal his spotlight, and so, through these ten kings, he destroys all that made Babylon (the false religion) great. Another possibility is that the ten kings destroy her suddenly out of envy for her tremendous wealth, and take it for themselves, leaving her *desolate and naked*

²⁵⁸ <http://www.globalblackhistory.com/2015/11/the-role-of-the-roman-catholic-church-in-slavery.html>

²⁵⁹ Friberg Lexicon.

(Revelation 17:16). Whatever the reason, it is evident that the False Prophet survives this destruction, for the Lord deals with him (along with the Antichrist) when He comes from heaven to establish His millennial reign (Revelation 19:20).



7. ... she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. 8. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her. (Revelation 18)

Babylon the Great, the woman who is sitting upon the beast, rests there in pride and self-assurance during the days of her prosperity. Satan is supporting this false religious system, and, in her haughty confidence, she imagines herself as being his bride (*queen*) with the arrogant thought that all things will continue as they are. Through the guidance of the False Prophet, this religious system has accumulated great wealth and has become a powerful global influence (via the mark) – what could possibly go wrong?

Isaiah's prophecy against Babylon (the historical city) parallels the pronouncement made here: "And thou saidst, I shall be a lady [queen] for ever ... Therefore hear now this, *thou that art* given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly [securely], that sayest in thine heart, I *am*, and none else beside me; I shall not sit *as* a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children: But these two *things* shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection [fullness] for [in spite of] the multitude of thy sorceries [power gained through evil spirits], *and* for [in spite of] the great abundance of thine enchantments [spells or magic]" (Isaiah 47:7-9).²⁶⁰ Babylon of old stood in great majestic splendor; the city was notorious for being impregnable, yet, the same night that its leaders lounged in a lavish feast, the enemy gained control of this virtually unguarded city (Daniel 5:1, 30). In one day, the majesty of Babylon changed hands; in similar fashion, this equally arrogant false religion will be destroyed.

As the angel speaks to John about the beast upon which the woman is sitting, he says: "And the beast [Satan] ... even he is the eighth [king], and is of the seven [*out of the seven he is*], and goeth [is going] into perdition [destruction]" (Revelation 17:11).²⁶¹ The seven heads have all been identified: *five are fallen* (Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece), *one is* (Rome), and *one is not yet come* (the

²⁶⁰ Strong's Online; BDB.

²⁶¹ Friberg Lexicon; Stephanus 1550 NT.

Islamic Caliphate that sprang up in the seventh century AD), but now Satan is identified as being the eighth. When we looked at the heads (empires) earlier, we noted that Satan was the underlying influence in all of them (being the body with seven heads); as the prince of this world, he has always done his utmost to orchestrate events to his advantage. However, it seems to be evident that he will enter into the last head (the Islamic Caliphate that will be restored under the rule of the Antichrist) and will rule directly through the Antichrist. The angel affirms that Satan, as this eighth ruler, comes out of the seven; even though his influence has been consistently there throughout the times of the seven heads, he will no longer simply influence, but he will have full expression through the Antichrist. It will be during this time that the ten kings (horns) will receive their authority over ten regions by Antichrist-Satan, for they “receive power as kings one hour with the beast [Satan]” (Revelation 17:12).

These ten kings are not only totally committed to Satan, but they are also united in their hatred of his false religious system. Despite holding complete allegiance to the devil, they will also accomplish what the Lord desires concerning this false religious system (Revelation 17:17). In essence, what is taking place at this time is a division within the forces of Satan. You will recall that both the Antichrist and the False Prophet are indwelt by the devil: “...the dragon gave him [the first beast, Antichrist] his power, and his seat, and great authority” (Revelation 13:2); “... he [the second beast, the False Prophet] exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him ...” (Revelation 13:12). The False Prophet deceives all of the world into worshipping the Antichrist; as the head of this end-time, Ecumenical false-religion, his focus is to unite the world around the Antichrist using the *mark* to be sure that everyone demonstrates their allegiance to him. It would appear that everything is going well for Satan; however, as the Lord begins to unfold the events of the last days according to His schedule, He puts it into the hearts of these final ten kings to destroy the Ecumenical religious power that the False Prophet has brought to great heights of strength. The God of all truth will destroy this religion of lies that wears many faces (even forms of Christianity) and has been on the earth since Eve was deceived and Adam sinned. However, even though God will destroy this powerful Ecumenical force, that does not mean that sin has been removed from the hearts of men or from the earth; as the Lord orchestrates end-time events, the *woman* is destroyed because it is His purpose to remove her at this time. This is another clear indication that Satan’s authority is subject to what the Lord permits.

These ten kings will strip the *woman* bare (*desolate and naked*), which means that they will take the woman’s opulence for themselves: they will now be clothed

in her *purple* and *scarlet* and *decked with gold, pearls*, and a priceless stone (Revelation 17:4).²⁶² They will consume (*eat her flesh*) all that the False Prophet has accumulated through his Ecumenical religion, and whatever does not suit them will be burned. The False Prophet will have lost everything that he has built in his zeal to acclaim the Antichrist before the world; the power that remains will be without the trappings of Ecumenical religion – the sole focus during this time will be on Satan (the Antichrist and False Prophet are still present, but Satan will now be more evident through them along with his ten kings). “And they [the world] worshipped the dragon [Satan] which gave power unto the beast [the Antichrist]: and they worshipped the beast ...” (Revelation 13:4); the work of the False Prophet will be largely complete. The utter destruction of this false religious system fulfills God’s desires for it; it has been the *great whore* who has kept the world immersed in everything that stands against God and His truth. Now, the only thing left for the world to pander after is Satan (the force behind Babylon the Great); with the arrival of the Antichrist, the world begins to worship Satan more openly and, after the work of the Antichrist and False Prophet is completed, he will no longer have to hide behind the benevolent face of the Antichrist – he will drop his angelic façade and the Antichrist will now reveal the true colors of the devil. The world is now ready to follow Satan.



13. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. 16. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. (Revelation 16) 19. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. (Revelation 19)

As John witnesses the seven messengers of the Lord pouring their bowls (*vials*) containing the wrath (passionate expression of anger) of God upon the earth, when the sixth vessel is emptied he sees the Euphrates River dried up followed by the emergence of three demonic spirits (*unclean spirits*) from the three main players during the earth’s final days (Revelation 16:12-13). Satan (*dragon*), the Antichrist (*beast*), and the False Prophet each release a demon (*devils – daimon*, in Greek) that

²⁶² Liddell-Scott Lexicon.

go to the kings of the earth and to all of the people in the world in order to convince them, by way of miraculous signs, that the armies of the world need to gather together in a battle against the Lord God. Considering how far this is into the unfolding of end-time events, these *kings of the earth* are the *ten horns* who will rule with Satan for a very short time. The spiritual forces of Satan (demons) are responsible for convincing everyone to come together against the Lord Jesus Christ. You will recall that when the heavenly lights are darkened and the earth quakes (Revelation 6:12-13), that all of the mighty and influential men of the earth will seek hiding places in the mountains and plead to be hidden from the *wrath of the Lamb* (v.16). It would seem apparent that a change has taken place within the minds of those who are on earth. By this time, five *vials* of God's wrath have already been poured out upon the earth and, with the fourth and fifth vials, we are told that the people *blasphemed* God (Revelation 16:8-11); they may have understood that God's wrath was coming, and recognized it when it came, yet they railed against Him. Into this volatile atmosphere, the demons of Satan go forth to gather these blasphemers together against the God Whom they are reviling.



Valley of Armageddon

event, we are told that John sees the *beast* (the Antichrist) and his ten kings leading the armies that have been gathered against the Lord (Revelation 19:19); in this case, *gathered* is in the passive voice, which means that someone other than the Antichrist or his kings brought all of these armies together.²⁶⁴ Based upon this, I would suggest that it is the Lord Who oversees bringing the armies of the world together. The demons of Satan, the Antichrist, and the False Prophet may go out into the world in order to convince everyone to come together, but it is God Who ensures that this is accomplished according to His will, and He makes sure that they come together into the valley of Armageddon.

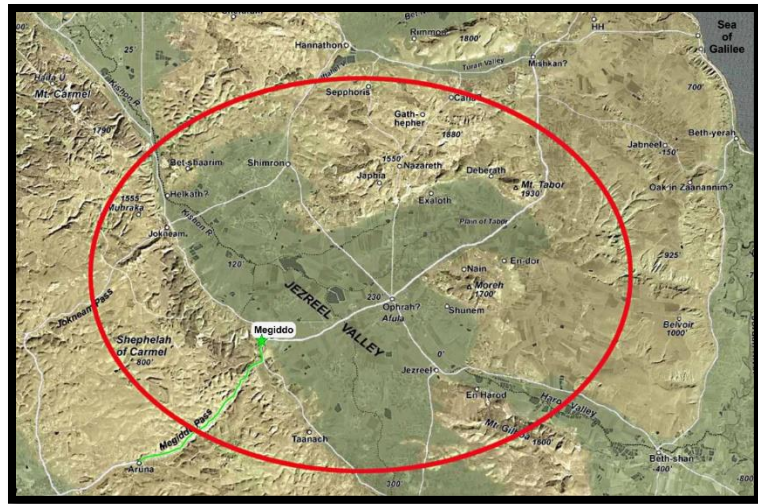
We are told that *he gathered* the armies together in Armageddon (Revelation 16:16); within our English translation, there seems to be a bit of ambiguity as to whom this refers. *Gathered*, as it appears here, is in the active voice, which means that *he* (whoever this might be) is carrying out the gathering of these armies of the world.²⁶³ In a parallel passage of this

²⁶³ Strong's Online.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

Armageddon gets its name from the Hebrew *Har Megiddo*, or Hill of Megiddo (meaning a place of crowds).²⁶⁵ Megiddo has always occupied a place of importance throughout history because it sits on the edge of the fertile Jezreel (*God sows*) Valley and, probably more importantly, it stands at the entrance to a narrow pass through the Carmel Ridge.²⁶⁶

It was a prosperous settlement, no matter which empire controlled the region, because of its strategic location along a key trade route from the Fertile Crescent and Asia Minor down to Egypt; excavations have revealed 26 settlements on this location, which have resulted in it becoming a *hill*.²⁶⁷ The continual rebuilding throughout the years is a reflection of the battles that were fought at Megiddo and in this valley, which is the only level area in the region. It was in this valley that Gideon and his 300 men defeated the armies of the Midianites and Amalekites (Judges 6:33), and this is where the armies of the world will be gathered against the Lord.



It is interesting to note that, despite Satan being identified as the eighth ruler (Revelation 17:11) and ruling the world through his ten kings (*horns*), when the armies of the world are gathered into the valley of Armageddon it is the Antichrist (*the beast*) who is leading them. We have seen that *the beast* is used to refer to Satan (Revelation 17:8 – *shall ascend out of the bottomless pit*), the Antichrist (Revelation 13:2), and the False Prophet (Revelation 13:11-12). Both the Antichrist and the False Prophet are **men** who are completely committed to Satan – he is the one who is empowering them throughout all of their deceptive activities among the peoples of the world. Satan is a spirit being and, as such, needs to work through a physical body in order to be visible to the world. When the Antichrist appears on the world scene, we noted that he would come in the guise of being the Messiah to the Jews, and the Mahdi to the Muslims – he will appear to be the answer to the world's problems and will be acclaimed as the savior of the world. However, by the time that he gets to the

²⁶⁵ Strong's Online.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tel_Megiddo; <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armageddon>

end of his 42-month reign over the world, his kindly façade will no longer be needed and he will openly reflect his Satanic character – he will be the personification of Satan.



20. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh. (Revelation 19)

In our study of the Antichrist, we did not look at his end, but we will do so now since it is inextricably linked to that of the False Prophet.

As the armies of the earth gather in Armageddon under the leadership of the Satan-filled Antichrist and his ten kings, they have come together to make war against the Lord Jesus Christ Who is coming from heaven riding a white horse, followed by the armies of heaven also riding white horses (Revelation 19:11, 14). As the battle is set in array in the valley of Armageddon, the Antichrist (*the beast*) and his right-hand man (the *false prophet*) are taken and thrown (*cast*) into the Lake of Fire. These two, being filled with the spirit of Satan, are sent directly to their eternal fate. This is an interesting development since we read in Scripture: “it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27). The rest of the people, who are in the armies that came against the Lord, are *slain* by the sword that is proceeding out of the mouth of the Lord (Revelation 19:21); they are killed, which means that their souls will enter into Hades pending the day when they will stand before the Lord to be judged at *the great white throne* judgment (Revelation 20:11-12). Here are two men, the Antichrist and the False Prophet, who will miss death, Hades, and standing before God as the Judge of all men; they go straight from the battlefield to the Lake of Fire, a place that has been prepared specifically for the devil and his angels: “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41). We understand a lake to be a body of water that is surrounded by land, and it is understood that from its surface to its very depths that it is water. Therefore, this *Lake of Fire* is a body that is fire from its surface to the very bottom, which will burn for all of eternity.

We are not told exactly why the Antichrist and False Prophet are sent directly to the Lake of Fire. However, you will recall that when the sixth angel poured out his

vial of the wrath of God upon the Euphrates River, three spirits of devils came onto the scene – the dragon (Satan), the Antichrist (*the beast*), and the False Prophet each produced a demonic spirit in exactly the same manner (Revelation 16:13-14). Also, each of these leading end-time characters, who are active in the events on the earth, is described as being a *wild beast (therion)*:²⁶⁸ Satan (also called *dragon, old serpent, devil*) – “And the beast ... even he is the eighth, and is of the seven [Satan is the common element within all of the historical world empires], and goeth into perdition” (Revelation 17:11); the Antichrist – “And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast ...” (Revelation 13:4); the False Prophet – “And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon” (Revelation 13:11). It seems evident that these three *wild beasts* form a Satanic trinity, a counterfeit of the Holy Trinity of God, where the Antichrist and the False Prophet are equal with Satan in carrying out his evil intents. It would be safe to say that there has never been anyone in history who has been as closely identified with the devil as these two – in essence, they are a part of Satan. Because of their identity as part of Satan’s trinity, it is only fitting that they go directly to the place that has been prepared for the devil and those who are his – the Lake of Fire.

²⁶⁸ As noted before, the *beasts* of Revelation 4 are *living creatures*, from the Greek *zoon* (*dzo'-on*); Strong's Online.