

THE HARLOT OR FALSE CHURCH

REVEALED IN REVELATION 17

The apostle John said that there were many “Antichrists” present in his age, and likewise, there are many Antichrists amongst us today that Antichrist uses to establish Satan’s kingdom on earth. Antichrist has developed a highly organised world kingdom, through which he is able to manifest his power through earthly organisations and institutions. Two main ones are shown to us in the Seventeenth Chapter of Revelation. The first is the Harlot, or false Church, and the second is the Ten Kings, who use the inherent power of money to establish their reign over the earth.

Revelation 17 - The Revelation of the Harlot

In the Seventeenth Chapter of Revelation, John first presents us with a figurative description of the Harlot.

“Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, ‘Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters [all the nations of the world], with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication [pay reverence to her exalted position in the world], and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.’ So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness [the climate of spiritual dryness that the Harlot operates in]. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast [the beast being Antichrist] which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns [complete authority and power from Satan]. The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication.” Rev 17:1-4.

Note that the Harlot, which we know is the false church, was sitting on a scarlet beast, the same beast of Revelation 13, who is Antichrist. The fact that the Harlot was sitting on the beast tells us that Antichrist is supporting her and promoting her false doctrines.

The Identity of the Harlot

We are then shown the identity of the false church in Verses 6-9.

“I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marvelled with great amazement. But the angel said to me, “Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns ...Here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains [this can also be translated ‘hills’] on which the woman sits.” Rev 17:6-7 and 9.

We are told, “**the seven heads are seven mountains [or hills] on which the woman sits.**” The ‘seven heads’ is the perfect authority of Antichrist, now invested in the Harlot, and

the ‘seven hills,’ the location where the Harlot sits. The seven hills is reference to the seven hills surrounding Rome, where the complete authority of the Harlot is established in the Vatican, which has become an independent state in Italy, with its own authority and governance. The Harlot is the corrupt governing body of the Roman Catholic Church, which includes the Vatican, the Papacy, the cardinals, and the false ideologies false doctrines, dogmas, and traditions, propagated and declared infallible by successive popes down through the centuries. It is not the body of devotees that make up its membership.

John “**marvelled with great amazement**” because he discerned that the Harlot would be proclaimed as the only true church of all Christendom.

The woman, “**drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus**” is a reference to the martyrdom of millions of Christians who were martyred because they refused to accept her ideology, as for example, in The Spanish Inquisition.

The Image of the Beast

In the Thirteenth Chapter of Revelation, we are told that it was granted to the False Prophet to make an image of the beast, or Antichrist, and that the image would speak and cause those who would not worship the beast to be killed.

“He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.” Rev 13:15.

This image that personifies Antichrist is the office of the Pope, who is the spokesman of the Harlot, or false church. The Vatican and the office of the pope present us with the most obvious evidence of the working of the spirit of Antichrist, who has caused people to believe that the Pope is the head of all Christendom. He is venerated throughout the world, even by heads of countries and non-Catholics. He is invested with spiritual authority to pronounce ‘infallible’ edicts that have led many astray, and caused the demise of millions who have disagreed with them.

We were told that the beast (Antichrist) “**had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon.**” Rev 13:11. The two horns represent sources of power, the spiritual power or the Papacy of the Roman Catholic Church, and as we shall see, the secular power of the Ten Kings.

Throughout history the papacy of the Roman Catholic Church has outwardly expressed the need for love, compassion, peace and well-being for all mankind. On the other hand, its papal decrees have been haughty, and arrogantly domineering in assuming the role of Christ’s headship of the Church.

Christian Salvation

The true Church of Christ is a body of believers not bound by denominational boundaries, who have received righteousness and salvation through Jesus Christ. They have

been given the commission of spreading the gospel of salvation to the whole world, so that all who believe in Jesus Christ are saved. This commission makes the doctrine of salvation a key indicator of the validity of any organisation that calls itself a church. The true doctrine of salvation decrees that to be saved, one must believe in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ that has made us righteous before God, and eternally saved. In true Christianity, receiving salvation is the outcome of the following actions:

- Repentance of past sins.
- Confession of one's belief that Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, bore the punishment for our sins on the cross, so that we are accounted righteous by God, and eternally saved.
- Belief that Jesus was raised from the dead, and is now enthroned with God the Father.
- It follows that we choose to make Jesus Christ the Lord of our lives.

Salvation in the Catholic Church

In salvation in the Roman Catholic Church, the accent is more on upholding the ideology and traditions of Catholicism, rather than belief in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. E.g.

Baptism (even as an infant) and the Sacrament of Confirmation, establishes one into the body of Christ. This must be followed by good works and obeying the ordinances of the Catholic Church. * The bible states, **“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”** Eph 2:8-10.

Catholic doctrine states that salvation can be endangered or lost, and so it must be kept intact by participating in the sacraments, and accepting the ordinances of the Catholic Church, many of which are contrary to the Scriptures. The following are examples of the ordinances, rites and traditions of the Catholic Church, pronounced to be infallible by popes down through the ages.

- Salvation by Catholicism - *‘Whoever refuses to enter and remain in the Catholic Church cannot be saved.’* Vatican 11 Lumen Gentium, 14. This claim that the Catholic Church is the only true church, is based on an erroneous interpretation of the following passage.

“Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter [the actual translation of the name Peter is stone], and on this rock [as foundational rock] I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.” Matt 16:16-18.

The Catholic Church has claimed that Peter was the rock on which the Church was established, but it was Peter's confession that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God, that was the foundational rock on which the Church would be built.

- Receiving the Holy Spirit - *'The Catholic Church alone is the body of Christ. Consequently those who are outside the Church have not the Holy Spirit.'* The Teaching of the Catholic Church - A Summary of Catholic Doctrine. Pg. 666.
- The doctrine of the 'Immaculate Conception' declares that Mary remained a virgin and led a sinless life. It was made infallible and official by Pius IX, on December 8th, 1854. He also stated, *"There is no salvation to those who do not believe this dogma..."* *This reading from Mark states **"Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?"** Mark 6:3.

Other Examples of Roman Catholic False Ideology and Doctrine

- The title of the Pope the 'Vicar of Christ' is interpreted as having all of the authority of Jesus Christ. *"The pope, as the Vicar of Christ on earth, possesses the same full power of jurisdiction that Christ Himself possessed during His human life."* Pope Clement VI, Acta Clementis, c. 1350; cited in the Roman Catholic publication: Granfield, Patrick, The Limits of the Papacy, NY: Crossroad, 1987; p.36.
- Papal Infallibility - *"Papal infallibility is a dogma of the Catholic Church which states that, by action of the Holy Spirit, the Pope is preserved from even the possibility of error when in his official capacity he solemnly declares or promulgates to the universal Church a dogmatic teaching on faith or morals."* This doctrine was defined dogmatically in the First Vatican Council of 1869 - 1870. The infallibility of the Pope is based on the belief that the apostle Peter was the founder of the Christian Church at Rome, and was the first of the line of successive popes ordained by God.

* Peter was appointed by the Church to be the apostle to the Jews, and Paul the apostle to the Gentiles (Gal 2:8). In his letter to the Romans, Paul wrote, **"For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles..."** Rom 11:13. Paul's letter to the Romans is the most comprehensive outline of the doctrine of Christianity in the bible, and so we may safely assume that Paul, and not Peter, was the overseer of the Church at Rome. Some might argue that Peter ministered to the Jews in Rome, but the Jews had been banished from Rome by Claudius. **"After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome ..."** Acts 18:1-2. Others might say that Peter ministered in Rome after Paul's death, but both deaths are said to have occurred in about AD 65-68.

If the apostle Peter was not the head of the Church in Rome, who was the first pope of the Roman Catholic Church? Some researchers point to Simon Magus, who is described in the Eighth Chapter of the Book of Acts. Phillip the evangelist preached the gospel in Samaria, and the people believed and were baptised.

"But there was a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great, to

whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, ‘This man is the great power of God.’”

Simon himself believed, but as we will see, not with his whole heart.

“Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done. And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, ‘Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit.’ But Peter said to him, ‘Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity.’” Acts 8:9-10, 13-23.

History records that Simon travelled to Rome, where he established a church defiled by paganism. Evidently, he resorted to practicing his satanically controlled magic that so mesmerized the Romans that they deified him, and statues have been unearthed with inscriptions honouring him. It was a common practice that pagan gods had the name Peter (pagan meaning - ‘interpreter of mysteries’) inserted into their title. Once deified, Simon Magus may have become Simon Peter. This opens the door to the possibility of assuming that this Simon Peter might have been the first Roman Catholic pope.

- The assumption of Mary - The doctrine of the assumption of Mary states that Mary ascended into heaven in bodily form. It was made infallible and official by Pius XI on November 1st, 1950.
- Mary was adopted as a mediatrix between man and God - The Catholic Church calls Mary, *‘the Mediatrix of all graces,’* and that *‘her prayer is all powerful with her lord, for he will refuse her nothing, who deigned to be called and to be her son.’* *The bible states, **“For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,”** 1 Tim 2:5-6.
- Extreme Unction - end of life baptism to nullify the effect of any remaining sins. There is no Scriptural basis for this practice.
- Transubstantiation - The miraculous turning of the bread and wine into the actual blood and body of Jesus.

In the light of what is presented above, one might ask, Can Catholics be saved?’ No one, Catholics and Protestants, can afford to place their allegiance to their church above their allegiance to Jesus Christ. But everyone who believes that the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ applies to them personally, and have proclaimed Jesus as their Lord and Saviour, **are saved.**

THE TITLES OF THE HARLOT

In Revelation 17, it states, that on the Harlot’s head was written this inscription,

MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

Mystery

This title refers to the multitude of secretive rites and rituals incorporated directly into the Catholic Church. Things that are mysterious are often afforded undue reverence, and so Catholic worship services are shrouded in mysterious rites and practices such as the transubstantiation of the bread and wine, the use of Latin liturgies, genuflecting to the altar, the Stations of the Cross, bells, the smoke of incense, the sprinkling of holy water, and clerical vestments with symbolic adornments.

Babylon the Great

Babylonian religious rites and practices are generally acknowledged as the epitome of godlessness and idolatry. When world domination passed from Babylon to Rome, the Roman Catholic Church incorporated many pagan religious practices of Babylon into her midst, believing that it would attract pagan worshippers into this new religion. By the time of John's writing of Revelation, the Harlot was given the title '**Babylon the Great,**' by which we may assume that the apostasy of the Roman Catholic Church is even greater than the original Babylon. The following are some of the Babylonian rites incorporated into the Catholic Church.

Celibacy - The Babylonian religion had a celibate priesthood.

Nuns - Babylon also had female devotees called vestal virgins, later to be known by the Chaldean name 'NUN.'

Confession to a priest - and penances originated in Babylon. The Catholic Church states that priests have the authority to forgive sins and mete out penances. (Canon Law 870 and 888), and that confessions to a priest should be made at least once a year (Pope Innocent III – Lateran Council).

Cardinals - The Babylonian High Priest was attended by twelve cardinals with scarlet robes.

The sign of the cross - The Babylonians used the letter 'T' in a similar manner to the sign of the cross, to commemorate the death of their god Tammuz.

Purgatory - an intermediate place or state between heaven and hell was of Babylonian origin. Purgatory became an article of faith in 1439 at the Council of Florence, and confirmed by the Council of Trent in 1548. The sale of indulgences to reduce time spent in Purgatory was introduced by the Roman Catholic Church.

The adoption of pagan rites and practices by the Catholic Church has been acknowledged by prominent Catholics, as attested to in the following quotation from Cardinal Newman.

Cardinal Newman wrote; "*temples, incense, oil lamps, votive offerings, holy water, Holidays, and seasons of devotion, processions, blessings of the fields, sacerdotal vestments, the tonsure (of priests, monks and nuns), images, and statues... are all of pagan origin.*" The Development of the Christian Religion. p.359

Cardinal Newman tells us that the reason for adopting pagan worship rites was to appease the many pagans in Rome, "*in order to recommend the new religion to the heathen*".

The Mother of Harlots

The Harlot is also called '**the mother of Harlots,**' because many of her rites and practices have been incorporated into Protestant churches and other religions. E.g.

Early churches were local and autonomous, governed by local elders. Protestant churches have adopted the Catholic model of national or international organisations with a system of hierarchal leadership. Church memberships are separated into the clergy and the laity, with ministry being the province of the clergy. Protestant churches have adopted the Catholic preoccupation with things created by man, like cathedrals with stained glass windows and statues, clerical vestments, titles, rituals, and other things of the world that glorify man rather than God.

