

# "More Tolerable than Sodom"

By

Elder Enoch Ofori Jnr

(Sabbath School, 5<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2011 – 28<sup>th</sup> Jan. 2012)

## Salvation, a Privilege without Equal

As believers, we have every reason to rejoice that we have been saved from “the wrath to come” (Luke 3:7; Matt. 3:7). We are among the luckiest among humanity. On the day of God’s wrath revealed in judgment, mighty men will wail, “the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” (Rev. 6:17; cp Isa. 2:10-17).

On this day, while the unrepentant nations will be judged and destroyed, we will be rewarded (Rev. 11:18). But let’s take care not to ascribe glory to ourselves. We should be thankful to God not because we were ‘smart’ enough to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ but because He qualified us to be “partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (Col. 1:12. Yes, He qualified us as fit for repentance on His very own terms.

This is the secret of salvation we need to appreciate or we will get lost like the rest of the world.

Humility and an intense hunger for God are predispositions the unrepentant lack but are found in us because God planted them in us so we would be among those receptive to the revelation of His will. Meanwhile, the mystery of salvation is hidden from the elites of this world because of their pride—and their fate is sealed! Their deeds call for doom, not the lengthening of grace!

In the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians we read: “... the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (vv. 7-8).

What an apt description of the state of our world today! By their words and actions, the godless men and women of power and wealth who lead the world has taken humanity down a path which increasingly alienates it from God and the Gospel of Christ.

But beloved in Christ, remain faithful to the end, and you will receive “the crown of life” (Jam. 1:12; Rev. 2:10). “Behold, the Judge stands at the door” (Jam. 5:9).

**When Greater Grace is Spurned, Terrible Doom is Embraced!**

In Matthew 11 Christ utters a terrible denunciation against three cities in first-century Israel for failing to repent after witnessing the mighty move of God in their midst. In His denunciation Christ hammers home the point that God's "mighty works" accompanying the preaching of the Gospel demand the positive response of repentance, or one stands to incur a severer judgment from God than those who had no such privilege. Thus spiritual privileges should ideally inspire repentance and a deep sense of awe towards God, otherwise what is in store is greater doom! (See Rom. 2:4-8).

The lesson for us today is that it's always a tragic sequel when the grace of God is rejected by people because they are addicted to evil and love not righteousness. Are we living in such times? Sure, we are, but don't despair; the earth has never been without those ordained to salvation.

An incident that took place during Paul and Barnabas' (first) joint missionary journey illustrates this mysterious truth of salvation. When the unbelieving Jews in Antioch, consumed by jealousy on seeing the massive crowd listening to the preaching of Paul, began to contradict and insult him, Paul and Barnabas spoke even more boldly and pointed out to them their rejection of the Gospel meant they had considered themselves "unworthy of eternal life" and that they would henceforth turn to the Gentiles. On hearing this, the Gentiles "were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (Acts 13:46-48; see also Acts 2:47).

Noticed the contrast? While the opposing Jews by their rejection of the truth judged themselves "unworthy of eternal life", it's said that as many of the Gentiles (most of them presumably proselytes and God-fearers, vv. 14-16) "as were appointed to eternal life" (ESV) believed! The question is, are you one of those appointed to eternal life? Your disposition and attitude towards the truth will tell.

In the selected passage under discussion (Matt. 11:20-30), Christ makes it clear that this will always be so: One of two reactions will always greet the preaching of the Gospel accompanied by the "mighty works of God" (v.1-2). It's either repentance or obstinacy (v. 20-21). Unfortunately, repentance is the rare response and obstinacy the typical, a reality which rudely confronted Jesus in Nazareth where the townspeople "marveled at the gracious words that were coming from His mouth" (Luke 4:16-22 ESV), but strangely rejected Him (vv. 23-24, 28-29)! Only Christ could make sense of it all with His knowledge of the spiritual dynamics involved. He accordingly declared, "Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country" (Luke 4:24).

Because of the response of either repentance or obstinacy, one leading to life and the other leading to death, the Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Cor. 2:15-16: "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one *we are* the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who *is* sufficient for these things?"

The refusal to repent despite witnessing "mighty works" of God has dire consequences. First, it attracts Divine denunciation of the eyewitnesses and then incurs a punishment greater in severity than previously meted out to sinners who comparatively witnessed lesser works and hence had poorer opportunities to repent (Matt. 11:20-24).

But why such 'inappropriate' response to God's "mighty works"? The truth is, the ability to repent does not lie with man.

Christ reveals the secret of repentance (while thanking and praising the Father in an exultant, audible spiritual communication with Him, hence "Jesus answered and said", v. 25; cp Luke 10:21-24): It's God who either hides from or grants to people the light of His truth. In exercising this power, He chooses to hide the truth from the "wise" and "prudent" of this world, but chooses to reveal it to

spiritual "babes" --the lowly (in society) and the humble (in spirit) because it pleases Him so (v. 26; cp Matt. 18:3-4; 1 Cor. 1:26-28). The reason why God does this is simply stated in Jam 4:6: "God [who gives more grace] resists the proud, but He gives grace to the humble". David says in Ps 138:6: "Though the LORD *be* high, yet hath He respect unto the lowly: but the proud He knoweth afar off" (cp. Ps. 18:27; Prov. 16:5).

And what does this divinely generated repentance Christ discusses entail? The divinely generated repentance consists in gaining a comprehensive knowledge of the otherwise 'unknowable' relationship between the Father and the Son, which knowledge they alone shared exclusively and mutually, v. 27; cp Prov. 30:4). It's this knowledge that leads to eternal life: "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" (John 17:3). For believers qualified to have this knowledge, "our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1John 1:3).

Like the Father, the knowledge of eternal life is fully centred in Christ, and He equally has the prerogative to reveal the knowledge to whoever He so wishes (v. 27; see Acts 5:31; cp Acts 11:18 & 2 Tim. 2:24-26). He exercises that prerogative by calling on those whom He qualifies to have the knowledge to "come to" Him. These are the ones "that labour and are heavy laden" (v. 28). (This clearly excludes "the wise and prudent" of this world, although strictly speaking they too, like all mankind, are weighed down with sins, especially pride, but sadly don't see themselves as such). The reward for heeding His call is "rest" (cp Isa. 55).

Christ then clarifies how people "come to Him": they must take upon themselves His "yoke" and lifestyle ("learn of Me") of meekness, which is an inward attitude manifested in one's external relations (v. 29; see Phil. 2:3-5). That's all the responsibility ('yoke') He lays on us, and we "shall" (a certainty) find rest for our souls.

As to the nature of His promised reward of rest, it is spiritual rest (for the soul). Hence "ye shall find rest unto your souls" (see Isa. 28:12 & Rev. 22:17).

The comparative advantage of Christ's 'yoke' (duty or responsibility) is that it's easier and lighter, especially in its effects. Thus, although the doing of righteousness is a "strait gate" and a "narrow way" (Matt. 7:13-14) because it restrains the flesh (Rom. 7:14-16, 8:7; Gal. 5:16-17), its effect is nevertheless one of peace and assurance forever: "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever" (Isa. 32:17; cp Prov. 13:15).

Putting it all together, then, could Christ be implying that the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum where He preached with "mighty works" accompanying His message had large portions of its people belonging to the "wise and prudent" category from whom the Father typically withholds the saving knowledge? This meant, of course, that they were not spiritual "babies" and so tended to despise the lowly preachers and by extension the Lord Jesus and His Father who sent them, as also strongly implied in the parallel passage in Luke 10:12-16.

Note especially that Christ describes Capernaum as "exalted to heaven". It's a description that has two probable explanations. The first had to do with social status. Capernaum was no 'mere' village but an economic centre important enough to require a customs station (which Matthew manned, Matt. 9:1-9). Its high social status is further evidenced by the fact the city boasted of high imperial officials (Matt. 9:9; John 4:46) and a Roman military base under the command of a centurion (Matt. 8:5). The commander of the Roman base there was the centurion who besought Jesus to heal his

sick servant by "speaking the word only" (Matt. 8:5-10, 13; Luke 7:1-10). According to Luke 7:5, he had built a synagogue for the Jews there.

Social status aside, which would have been a source of pride for its inhabitants, Capernaum was also "exalted" in another sense. It was spiritually "exalted" by serving as the centre or headquarters of Jesus' ministry after He left Nazareth (Luke 4:16-31). As a matter of fact, Capernaum eventually became Jesus' "home" or "own city" (Mark 2:1; Matt. 9:1).

Naturally, Capernaum was the scene of many of Christ's activities and works, including His demonstration of divine power over demons in the synagogue on the Sabbath (Mark 1:27), His healing of Peter's sick mother-in-law and other sick folks (vv. 30-34), the calling of Matthew, the tax collector (Matt. 9:1-9), the healing of the nobleman's son by distant prayer of command (John 4:46-53) as well as the healing of the woman with the "issue of blood" and the raising of the synagogue ruler's dead daughter. As the focal point of many of Jesus' teachings and miracles, Capernaum accurately fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy that the city, located in the vicinity of Zebulun and Naphtali by the sea, had seen a "great light" in the Person of the Messiah and His work of salvation (Matt. 4:13-16; Isa. 9:1-2).

Thus, the 'exaltation of Capernaum to heaven' could well have referred to the disproportionately great exposure the city had to the mighty deeds of Christ showcasing the power and glory of heaven. The sad anticlimax is that many of the city's residents, despite witnessing many of the "mighty works" Christ performed, refused to repent.

In advance of the final judgment, "the woe spoken against it by the Lord has been fulfilled to the uttermost. So completely has it perished that the very site is a matter of dispute today" (*ISBE*).

Like Capernaum, Bethsaida was also a scene of great works of the Lord including the feeding of 5000 people with five loaves of bread and two small fish (Luke 9:10-17; Mark 6:31-45). With Chorazin, they are no recorded instances of great works there by Christ (except His allusions to it as such in Matt. 11:21 and Luke 10:13), but could easily be part of the unreported accomplishments of Christ left out for being too numerous to be possibly recorded (John 21:25).

The story of the three cities sadly epitomizes the tendency of men to prefer darkness to light, even where they have encountered greater divine light (John 3:19). It was a phenomenon Paul witnessed as he ministered in the nations compelling him to quote Habakkuk: "'Look, you scoffers, be astounded and perish; for I am doing a work in your days, a work that you will not believe, even if one tells it to you'" (Acts 13:41 *ESV*). What about you: Are you in rebellion against the light God has beamed into your life? How grateful are you for His goodness? How reverent are you towards Him for the mercy He showered on you by saving you from that deadly motor accident?

### **The Kingdom of God Suffers Violence**

Nearly 2000 years have passed since Christ uttered His denunciations against the three cities for 'neglected spiritual privileges'. But have people learnt any lessons? What do they mean for today's world which has largely rejected Christ's 2000-year-old light?

The context of Matt. 11 shows it's more typical of people to reject God's special favour shown them in their generation than to embrace it--and with the flimsiest of excuses! John the Baptist and Christ Himself are prime Embodiments of such divine favour neglected by the people of their generation. Even though he was the greatest prophet of all in his capacity as the immediate harbinger of the Messiah, the people dismissed John as demon possessed because he ate and drank little. Yet when the reverse was the case with the Lord Jesus, they wouldn't forbear to badmouth Him; they still found a reason to fault Him. They accused Him of being a friend of sinners and a glutton because He ate and drank publicly. But it was all divine wisdom at work meant to prove the stupidity of human excuses (vv. 16-19). Hence Christ's statement: "Wisdom is vindicated by her actions" (v. 19b *Weymouth New Testament*).

Ironically, being human, John himself was, at some point, nearly a victim of such unfounded doubts. Shut up in prison, he sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus, whom He had earlier testified as "the true Light" (John 1:6-9), if He was indeed the Expected One (vv. 2-3). To this Christ calmly responded: "Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me" vv. 4-6.

Are all condemned to disbelieve then? Not at all! There are glorious exceptions. These are the people who vehemently or forcefully enter the Kingdom unmindful of the insults and false charges others level against it. Christ speaks of them in verse 12: "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force".

Adam Clarke observes in his commentary on Matt. 11:12:

"The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence" -

"The tax-gatherers and heathens, whom the scribes and Pharisees think have no right to the kingdom of the Messiah, filled with holy zeal and earnestness, seize at once on the proffered mercy of the Gospel, and so take the kingdom as by force from those learned doctors who claimed for themselves the chiefest places in that kingdom. Christ himself said, The tax-gatherers and harlots go before you into the kingdom of God. See the parallel place, Luke 7:28-30 [cp Matt. 21:32]. He that will take, get possession of the kingdom of righteousness, peace, and spiritual joy, must be in earnest: all hell will oppose him in every step he takes; and if a man be not absolutely determined to give up his sins and evil companions, and have his soul saved at all hazards, and at every expense, he will surely perish everlastingly. This requires a violent earnestness".

Thus it's the low in society, the 'riff-raff', the 'rabble', those with no titles to their names, who violently rush at the kingdom (1 Cor. 1:26-28) as if it were a fallen city they were plundering. *Vincent Word Studies* further explains: "The word *take by force* means literally to snatch away, carry off. It is often used in the classics of plundering. Meyer renders, Those who use violent efforts, drag it to themselves. So Tynd., They that make violence pull it unto them. Christ speaks of believers. They seize upon the kingdom and make it their own".

In the parallel scripture in Luke 16:16 Christ says: "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it" (*KJV*). The *English*

*Standard Version (ESV)* renders it "and everyone forces his way into it", the *Bible in Basic English (BBE)* "and everyone makes his way into it by force", the *Contemporary English Version (CEV)* "and everyone is trying hard to get in", the *Weymouth New Testament (WNT)* "and all classes have been forcing their way into it", the AMP, the *New International Version (NIV)* and the *New American Standard Bible-Update (NASU)* "and everyone is forcing his way into it".

The idea is one of forceful or violent entry; it evokes an image of a disorderly mass of people crowding at a doorway and cramming into it, forcing their way en masse into the building. In such a scramble to enter 'the house of life' (the Kingdom of God), it's only the truly 'violent', the deadly serious, who makes it. It's he who does not give up the struggle to enter; even though people stamp on his feet, tweak and tug at his clothes and insult him, he presses on forcing his way in determinedly! He refuses to back away; the very thought of it repels him. He shudders to think of the consequences of turning back: the Law of God is as valid and solid as an impregnable rock and remains so as long as heaven and earth remain (vv. 17-18). Should he turn back, he's sure to end up in hell like the unkind rich man who lived and dined ostentatiously everyday while poor Lazarus lay at his gate starving and covered with sores. As he found out belatedly in hell, the crime of the rich man, like that of his living siblings, was that he failed to obey the Law (Moses) and the Prophets (vv. 19-31) which enjoin loving concern and care for one's neighbour (Lev. 19:9-18; Deut. 14:28-29; Amos 2:6-8; Mic. 6:8; Zech. 7:9), as Christ also does in His gospel on a higher spiritual plane (Matt. 5:7, 16-20, 43-48, 7:12, 25:34-40; opp. vv. 41-46; cp Gal. 6:9-10; Rom. 12:13; Heb. 13:3; Jam. 2:14-17; 1 Pet. 4:9; 1 John 3:16-17).

So then, Christ's statement that "the Law and the prophets were proclaimed until John" does not mean the Law of God has been abolished in the Gospel Age (in which the Kingdom is proclaimed), but rather that it has been subsumed under the Gospel. That is to say, "the Law and the Prophets" *solely* proclaimed up to the time of John the Baptist has since been incorporated into the Gospel of the kingdom of God evidenced by the fact that, under the Gospel, "it is easier for the heaven and earth to pass than for one tittle of the Law to fail", an example being the seventh commandment against adultery (Luke 16:16-18; cp Acts 24:14; Rom. 3:21). Does this sound like the Law of God has been abolished?

As a believer, you had better hold your ground forcefully and earnestly (Prov. 4:13) and not allow present bitter experiences to shake your faith as happened to John (see Acts 14:22; Rom. 8:18). Vehemently hold on to your faith or you will be swept away by the tide of evil swamping all nations as if they have never known God.

### **A Self-condemned World**

As in the past, the majority of people continue to reject the light of the Gospel of Christ, though it has been preached for nearly 2000 years. Today, which nation hasn't heard of the gospel? Thanks to modern telecommunications and the translation of the Bible into nearly every known language on earth, the Gospel has indeed reached the "uttermost ends of the earth".

Ironically, however, it's at this time that the Gospel has met its most insidious, yet systematic, opposition yet! Basic tenets of the Gospel, such as abstinence from sexual perversions, have been thrown overboard by the finest of the "wise and prudent" of this present evil age-- our modern-day

global elites! Today, homosexuality has received enthusiastic approval in the highest corridors of world power, and so-called 'homophobic' nations are being penalized for refusing to fall in line.

Incredible as it sounds, the UK government has announced a 'funding fine' against mainly African nations which retain anti-gay laws on their statute books. In an article headlined "We'll cut your aid if persecute gays, Britain warns African nations", the Daily Mail newspaper of London reported in its online edition of 8th October, 2011 that "Poor African countries which persecute homosexuals will have their aid slashed by the Government in a bid by David Cameron to take his gay rights crusade to the Third World.

"International Development Secretary Andrew Mitchell has already cut aid to Malawi by £19million after two gay men were sentenced to 14 years hard labour.

And he has warned the country's leaders to scrap plans to introduce draconian new anti-lesbian laws. Mr Mitchell, one of Mr Cameron's closest allies, is also threatening to impose further aid 'fines' against Uganda and Ghana for hardline anti-gay and lesbian measures.

The policy was disclosed after Mr Cameron defended his decision to legalise gay weddings when he addressed last week's Conservative Party conference.



**UK Prime Minister, David Cameron**

Now he wants to persuade those countries where homosexuality is still taboo to follow his lead – and he is ready to reduce aid to some of the world's poorest people to do so.

The cut in aid to Malawi came after two gay men were convicted last year under the country's rigidly imposed ban on homosexuality.

Pop stars Elton John and Madonna joined an international outcry when Tiwonge Chimbalanga, 26, and Steven Monjeza, 20, received a 14-year sentence for getting engaged.

A judge in Malawi told them: 'I will give you a scaring sentence so that the public will be protected from people like you, so that we are not tempted to emulate this horrendous example.

'Malawi is not ready to see its sons getting married to its sons.'

The British Government described their jailing as 'shocking and disturbing'. The two men were later freed, but Malawi's defiant President Bingu wa Mutharika went ahead with new anti-lesbian laws, prompting a sharp rebuke from Mr Mitchell.

It is not the first time Britain has punished President Mutharika. The Labour Government reduced aid to Malawi by £3million after he spent £8million on a presidential jet.

However, Malawi has still received more than £200million from Britain in the past three years.

Uganda faces the threat of an aid 'fine' by the UK unless it abandons plans to extend the death penalty to homosexuality.

Three weeks ago, Mr Mitchell protested to Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni, who has claimed 'European homosexuals are recruiting in Africa' and who believes gay relationships are 'against God's will'.

Uganda is due to receive £70million from British taxpayers in 2011. During a visit to Ghana earlier this year, Stephen O'Brien – Mr Mitchell's deputy – told President John Evans Atta Mills that Britain would cut its aid unless he stopped persecuting gays.

However, it appeared to have little effect, even though Ghana gets £36million a year from the UK, as weeks later the president vowed to 'institute measures to check the menace of homosexuality and lesbianism'. And one of his regional ministers called for the 'immediate arrest of all homosexuals'.

A spokesman for Mr Mitchell said: 'The Government is committed to combating violence and discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in all circumstances, in this country and abroad. We take action where we have concerns.

'We now allocate funds every three months, rather than every year, so that we can review a country's performance, for example on human rights, and take swift action when governments fall short. We only provide aid directly to governments when we are satisfied that they share our commitments to reduce poverty and respect human rights.' (<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2046965/Well-cut-aid-persecute-gays-Britain-warns-African-nations.html>).

Surely, hell would applaud! Britain is on a new 'enlightenment crusade' to poor Third World countries to embrace and endorse the despicable practice of homosexuality or they will have the financial aid the British government gives them drastically cut.

For some time now, it has been unfashionable to advocate and practice righteousness in a world that increasingly sides with the devil, its unseen 'prince' (John 12:31, 14:30; 2 Cor. 4:4), but now it's becoming economically and politically suicidal for nations with a modicum of godly fear to choose to enforce God's will which is righteousness.

The whole thing stinks, is shocking and only reveals Satan's unseen hand directing policies at the heart of world governments as "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2-3).

The idea of God as the ultimate moral Authority whose will ranks supreme is absolutely laughable and scandalous to today's 'enlightened, liberal western leaders and their stooges elsewhere! Like the Pharaoh of old, they ask 'who is God that I should obey Him...' And worse they are determined to use all the resources at their disposal to compel all nations to believe in and live by their devilish, abominable 'values'.



God's hand of judgment cannot be stayed any longer. His wrath must be revealed and will be "revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:18-20 *ESV*).

### **The Last Anti-God Babylonian World System is Here!**

Many are sadly unaware, but the last Babylonian world government of the Antichrist is on the rise and is triumphing menacingly. This Babylonian world system is actually an amalgam of all the pagan empires that have ruled the earth, particularly Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome.

The famous King of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, had a snapshot of the entire history of this system and its 'succession plan' in his dream of the giant statute with a golden head. In interpreting the dream, the details of which the king had entirely forgotten, Daniel made it clear to him that "there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days" (Dan. 2:28 *NKJV*).

He then proceeded to narrate the dream and to interpret it to the king:

"You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor [was] excellent, stood before you; and its form [was] awesome.

"This image's head [was] of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.

"You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces.

"Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

"This [is] the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king.

"You, O king, [are] a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory;

"and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given [them] into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all--you [are] this head of gold.

"But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth.

"And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, [that kingdom] will break in pieces and crush all the others.

"Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay.

"And [as] the toes of the feet [were] partly of iron and partly of clay, [so] the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile.

"As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay.

"And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

"Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold--the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure" (vv. 31-45 *NKJV*).

No forecast of world history has been more accurate than this! There has been no deviation so far from this course of history as revealed in Nebuchadnezzar's dream and interpreted by Daniel. And that certainly tells us the 'fifth' Kingdom of the Messiah of Yahweh, which will sweep away all Gentile Babylonian kingdoms, will surely be set up as foretold.

However, the 'succession plan' would not be a smooth affair, with successor empires stepping into the shoes of waning powers without a struggle! Beyond man's grandiose dreams of attaining fame and glory by himself and for himself (which the great statute of Nebuchadnezzar's dream represents), God sees the rapacious, brute spirit of unregenerate man as the main driving force behind his empire-building ambitions. It's these animalistic instincts at work in human history in relation to the four world empires that God uses beasts of prey to symbolize in a subsequent vision revealed to the prophet Daniel in Daniel chapter 7:

"In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel saw a dream and visions of his head as he lay in his bed. Then he wrote down the dream and told the sum of the matter.

"Daniel declared, 'I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea.

"And four great beasts came up out of the sea, different from one another'.

"The first was like a lion and had eagles' wings. Then as I looked its wings were plucked off, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man, and the mind of a man was given to it.

"And behold, another beast, a second one, like a bear. It was raised up on one side. It had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth; and it was told, 'Arise, devour much flesh.'

"After this I looked, and behold, another, like a leopard, with four wings of a bird on its back. And the beast had four heads, and dominion was given to it.

"After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong. It had great iron teeth; it devoured and broke in pieces and stamped what was left with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.

"I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another horn, a little one, before which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots. And behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things" (vv. 1-8 *ESV*).

Again, no variation to the order in which the four empires would rise and fall. But then, they will come to power in succession as the "four winds of heaven strove upon the great sea" (*KJV*). Since in Bible prophecy "sea" represents "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" (Rev. 17:15) and "winds" represent 'war' (Jer. 25:31-32), the image of winds lashing at the sea from four different directions simply denotes that each of the empires would come to power (and fall) through political upheaval and armed struggle.

What is more, each of the four Gentile empires would have its unique nature and characteristics (v.4). Babylon symbolized by a lion had "eagles' wings" to denote the rapidity with which the kingdom will be acquired and its extensive reach (Jer. 4:13; Lam. 4:19; Hab. 1:6; Jer. 48:40). Medo-Persia represented by a bear had "three ribs in its mouth between its teeth" to denote their cruelty

and notoriety as avaricious plunderers (Isa. 13:17-18; Dan. 6:24; Esth. 3:1-15 & 8:1-14; Jer. 51:48, 56). That the bear was "raised up on one side" meant it was a combined kingdom with one united sovereignty, Media being the more ancient kingdom and Persia the dominating power. 'Leopard' Greece had "four wings of a bird" to signify speed of conquest. The fourth kingdom, the Roman Empire, was a beast all right, but couldn't be described in one word. Daniel scratched his head in vain for an apt description; he simply couldn't put it in any category. Rome was "different from all the beasts before it", but the helpful clue was that it had "ten horns" three of which were displaced by "a little horn" which came up late, and it was particularly boastful!

This same beast with its identity tag of "ten horns" resurfaces in Rev. 13:1-2, and we know realize it's a composite beast having the body of a leopard, the feet of a bear and the mouth of a lion, "and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority" (cp Rev. 17:1-3, 7-8). The Roman Empire combines the power, glory, cruelty, flaws and foibles of all three world empires that had preceded her including, of course, their inevitable fall!

So, how have these worldly empires impacted our world which is essentially Babylonian?

### **Babylon Promotes one-world Religion**

While all the empires shared a common pagan worldview, each empire made its own unique contribution to the Babylonian system in its present form. Babylon, which originated with Nimrod, "a mighty hunter before the LORD" and the world's first emperor (Gen. 10:8-10), constitutes the bedrock of the system with its many seminal contributions to 'modern civilization'. From astronomy (Isa. 47:13) to arithmetic, Babylon laid the foundation for much of the body of knowledge in science and learning today.

But the greatest contribution of Babylon, by far, was in the field of religion. The Babylonian religion was developed by the founders of the Babylonian civilization themselves, Nimrod and his mother/wife Semiramis. The main object of worship was the sun. However, Nimrod did not live long enough to see the flowering of his pagan sun worship that came into being four generations from the generation of the patriarch Noah, "a just and perfect man" who "walked with God" (Gen. 6:9). Ancient history has it that Nimrod was slain by Noah's son Seth for his arrant wickedness and rebellion against God. Semiramis, Nimrod's mother whom he also married, was now left with the responsibility of perpetuating his son/husband's Babylonian religion of sun-worship.

The ploy Semiramis used to retain the loyalty of their followers and maintain the allure of their pagan religion was to declare that the dead Nimrod had been reborn and the mystical sign of his rebirth was that a full-grown evergreen tree had sprung up overnight from the stump of a dead tree. In effect, Nimrod had become a god and the sun was his symbol. His 'rebirth' was annually marked in December. During the winter solstice as the sun reached its lowest point in the sky resulting in shorter days, Nimrod (who also became known as Tammuz, Baal, Horus, Apollo among other aliases) was said to have died. As the sun returned in its strength, he was then said to have been reborn. This is the true origin of the winter festival celebrated yearly on 25<sup>th</sup> December in which evergreen trees feature most prominently in the festivities to date. (Request our article: "Christmas, Babylon's Mark of Power).

As for Semiramis herself, she was the “queen of heaven” (Jer. 17:8) and her symbol was the moon. The cult of ‘mother and child’ would eventually spread to virtually all parts of the world under different names. In Egypt it was Isis and Osiris. In Asia, Cybele and Deouius. In Phoenicia, Ashterah and Tammuz; in Greece, Aphrodite and Eros; in Rome, Venus and Cupid, and in China, Mother Shing Moo and her child. Even in Japan and Tibet are to be found counterparts of this mother and child cult represented by an image in which a mother would be holding a male child in her arms or on her knees.

Semiramis was knee-deep in the occult and magic, and she went to great lengths to develop an elaborate religious system characterized by image-worship and grand ceremonies in which the *Mysteries* dominated (see Isa. 47:9, 12). The book the *Two Babylons* reveals: "Now, as the Babylon of the Apocalypse is characterised by the name of 'MYSTERY', so the grand distinguishing feature of the ancient Babylonian system was the Chaldean 'MYSTERIES', that formed so essential a part of that system. And to these mysteries, the very language of the Hebrew prophet, symbolical though of course it is, distinctly alludes, when he speaks of Babylon as a 'golden cup'. To drink of 'mysterious beverages', says Salverte, was indispensable on the part of all who sought initiation in these Mysteries. These 'mysterious beverages' were composed of 'wine, honey, water, and flour'. From the ingredients avowedly used, there can be no doubt that they were of an intoxicating nature; and till the aspirants had come under their power, till their understandings had been dimmed, and their passions excited by the medicated draught, they were not duly prepared for what they were either to hear or to see" ( Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, pp. 4-5 Second American Edition 1959).

Little wonder, all the nations that came under the rule or influence of the Babylonian Empire were so helplessly taken in by her idolatrous Mystery Religion (Isa. 46:1; Jer. 50:3) that they completely lost their senses as to the right and proper way. The prophet Jeremiah said it loud and clear: "Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD'S hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad" (Jer. 51:7; cp 50:38; Dan. 3:1-7). A similar cry of woe roars from the Book of Revelation: "And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication" (Rev. 14:18; cp 17:5, 18:2-3, 23). The doom of Babylon is inevitable and so are the nations that have drunk of "the wine of the wrath of her fornication" (her veneration of multiple gods). The LORD issues a warning message from heaven:

“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.

“For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

“Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.

“How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

“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” (Rev. 18:4-8; cp Jer. 51:6, 45; Isa. 48:20; 2 Cor. 6:17; Matt. 23:29-37).

In fulfilment of the divine prophecies concerning the just punishment and destruction of ancient (historical) Babylon (Jer. 50:35-37, 51:11; Isa. 13:17-22; 45:1-2), the Medes and Persians led by Cyrus defeated and overthrew the Babylonian Empire in 539 BC (Dan. 5:25-31; 6:28) in startling fulfilment

of Isaiah's prophecy in Isa. 45:1 that the gates of Babylon would be left open to the ready admission of Cyrus' invading troops. History documents how this happened:

"All the streets of Babylon, leading on each [walled] side to the river [Euphrates], were secured by two leaved brazen gates [said to be 100 in all], and these were providentially left open when Cyrus's forces entered the city in the night, through the channel of the river, in the general disorder occasioned by the great feast which was then celebrated; otherwise, says Herodotus, the Persians would have been shut up in the bed of the river, as in a net, and all destroyed. The gates of the palace were also imprudently opened to ascertain the occasion of the tumult; when the two parties under Gobrias and Gadatas rushed in, got possession of the palace, and slew the king" (*Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; see Ps 107:16; Dan. 5:6; Jer. 51:12-15; Nah. 2:6).

Thus was mighty Babylon brought down in one night in the stupor of her drunkenness, and Medo-Persia replaced her as the new world empire. In a vision of Daniel showing the *armed conflict* that would characterize the rise and fall of the four kingdoms, Medo-Persia is pictured as a two-horned ram standing before the Ulai canal and was "charging westward and northward and southward. No beast could stand before him, and there was no one who could rescue from his power. He did as he pleased and became great" (Dan. 8:3-4, 20 *ESV*).

When Babylon fell to the Medes and the Persians in 539 BC, the Babylonian pagan priests transferred their base of operations from Babylon to Alexandria and Pergamum but chiefly to Pergamum which Christ would later describe as the place where "Satan's throne is" (Rev. 2:12-13). Four hundred years later, around 129 BC, the Babylonian priests were on another move, this time to Rome. Babylonian sun-worship associated with the cult of mother and child had come to its final home base.

### **Medo-Persia Promotes one-World Government and Economy**

While the Medo-Persians were used by God to fulfill His purpose in restoring the Jewish exiles in Babylon to their land (Isa. 44:28, 45:4-5, 11-13; Ezra 1:1-11, 7:11-27; Neh. 2), they didn't uproot the Babylonian system; they built on it. Like Babylon before her, the Persian Empire contributed significantly to the development of civilization; its greatest impact, however, was in politics:

"Politically the Persian Empire was the best organized the world had ever seen. By the time of Darius I, 522-486 B.C., the empire was divided into 20 satrapies (political units of varying size and population). The satrapies were subdivided into provinces. ... governed by Persians who were directly responsible to the emperor. Good administration required good communications that called for good roads. These roads did more than speed administration, though. They encouraged contacts between peoples within the empire. Ideas and goods could move hundreds of miles with little restriction. The empire became wealthy and also gave its inhabitants a sense that they were part of a larger world. A kind of 'universal awareness' developed. The use of minted coins and the development of a money economy aided this identification with a larger world. The emperor's coins were handy reminders of the power and privileges of being part of the empire" (*Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, pp. 1279-1280; see Dan. 6:1-3; Esth. 1:1-3; 3:13; 8:10).

Here, you have globalization in crude form being implemented by the Persians complete with a global currency! Surely, there is nothing new under the sun (Eccl. 1:9)!

## Greece Promotes a Unified World Culture

Two hundred years later, it was time for Medo-Persia to leave the world political stage. The new superpower on the stage was the Greek Empire—symbolized by the "he goat" in Daniel's 'war scene' vision of chapter 8 which "came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power. And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns: and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand" (Dan. 8:5-7; cp v. 21; 11:2-3).

It was a furious confrontation which saw the army of Alexander the Great, the "notable horn", advancing rapidly and with great force against the mammoth Persian army of Emperor Darius III and securing stunning victories in a series of battles at the Granicus River, Issus, and Arbela. By 331 B.C., Alexander had subjugated the whole Medo-Persian Empire (see Dan. 8:5, 11:4). At the time of his death in 323 B.C. at age 33, his empire stretched from Macedonia in the west to India in the east—and that after he had wept for the lack of another world to conquer after conquering peoples and armies, one after the other, in less than 12 years!

The Greek Empire was the largest empire the contemporary world had ever seen, but the abrupt death of its founder plunged it into a tangled power struggle that resulted in four of his generals (the "four notable ones") sharing the empire among themselves, just as Daniel had prophesied (Dan. 8:8, 22; 11:4; 7:6): "**Seleucus**, in the east, obtained Syria, Babylonia, Media, etc.; **Cassander**, in the west, Macedon Thessaly, Greece; **Ptolemy**, in the south, Egypt, Cyprus, etc.; **Lysimachus**, in the north, Thrace, Cappadocia, and the north parts of Asia Minor" (*Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary*).

Be that as it may, Alexander the Great realized his vision of a unified 'world culture' to a considerable extent. Accordingly, he "encouraged the mixing of Greek culture with the cultures of the ancient Middle East. For example, he married a Persian princess and arranged a huge ceremony in which thousands of his soldiers married Persian women. He hoped children from these marriages would help unite the empire. In addition, he worshipped Persian as well as Greek gods and adopted Persian customs and dress. Although Alexander thought of himself as Greek, he gained the support of his new subjects by adopting some of their practices.

"After Alexander's death, a rich new culture known as Hellenistic civilization gradually developed in Greece and in the other lands he had conquered. Hellenistic civilization was a blend of eastern and western influences. Greek settlers in Persia, Egypt, and India were influenced by the cultures of these lands. In turn, the conquered peoples were influenced by Greek language, art, architecture, and traditions" (Dr. Burton F. Beers, "The Spread of Greek Civilization", *World History Patterns of Civilization*, p. 105).

There, you have the Greeks, the new masters of the world, emphasizing 'the globalization of culture'—as we will call it today—as their main contribution to the Babylonian civilization inherited from Medo-Persia, whose administrative structure they retained. The goal was to unite the different peoples of the empire around a single universal culture known as Hellenism. This was the same goal

that inspired the Tower of Babel project which was mankind's first attempt to build a universal empire—or a 'Paradise on earth'—to the glory of human ingenuity (Gen. 11:1-4). The ideological principle underlying Hellenism was, of course, Greek philosophy centred on faith in human reason, the roots of modern-day humanism and existentialism.

Another legacy of the Greeks, perhaps most palpable of all, is the institutionalized world of games, notably the Olympic Games, the international sports competition held every four years. In ancient Greece the Olympic Games were held in honour of Zeus, the king of the Greek gods who lived with the other gods of the Greek pantheon on mount Olympus (*New Encyclopedia Britannica* Vol. 8 Micropedia, p. 943, Fifteenth Edition 1994; *World Book Encyclopedia* Vol. 14, p. 567, 1974).

Yet another 'thriving' legacy of the Greeks is homosexuality, a modern scourge of morality. Granted, the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah might have been more ancient hotbeds of homosexuality for which God incinerated them (Gen. 13:13, 19), but the first known society outside the Bible to openly condone, encourage and practise homosexuality almost as an elite subculture were the ancient Greeks.

According to Wikipedia, the online free encyclopedia, "In [classical antiquity](#), writers such as [Herodotus](#),<sup>[1]</sup> [Plato](#),<sup>[2]</sup> [Xenophon](#),<sup>[3]</sup> [Athenaeus](#)<sup>[4]</sup> and many others explored aspects of **same-sex love in ancient Greece**. The most widespread and socially significant form of same-sex sexual relations in ancient Greece was between adult men and pubescent or adolescent boys, known as [pederasty](#). Though homosexual relationships between adult men did exist, at least one member of each of these relationships flouted social conventions by assuming a passive sexual role. It is unclear how such relations between women were regarded in the general society, but examples do exist as far back as the time of [Sappho](#).<sup>[5]</sup>".

Ancient Greek homosexuality had all the characteristics of modern homosexuality: adult men with adult men and adult women with adult women (lesbianism). But the absolute shocker is that homosexuality was practiced between adult men and male teenagers as a rite of passage for boys entering manhood: "The most common form of same-sex relationships between males in Greece was "*paiderastia*" meaning "*boy love*". It was a relationship between an older male and an adolescent youth. A boy was considered a "boy" until he was able to grow a full beard. In Athens the older man was called [erastes](#), he was to educate, protect, love, and provide a role model for his [eromenos](#), whose reward for him lay in his beauty, youth, and promise" ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homosexuality\\_in\\_ancient\\_Greece](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homosexuality_in_ancient_Greece)).

The ancient Greeks called the most popular form of their homosexual expression "boy love", but by today's standards that could easily pass for child molestation, if not pedophilia. However, the more remarkable phenomenon is that the penchant for male teens among ancient Greek homosexuals is also true of many of today's homosexual men. The devilish plot is 'spoil them young' and thereby perpetuate the canker of homosexuality.

For law-enforcers in Ghana and elsewhere in this hell-bound Babylonian world, the abuse of teenage boys and even younger by adult homosexual men is a growing headache that has already reached alarming proportions. Under the headline "Sodomy increasing at JHS—DOVVSU Worried", *Ghanaweb*, a Ghanaian online news portal, reported in its General News of Monday, 21st November, 2011 that "More teenage boys in the Junior High School are becoming victims of sexual abuse, according to the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU).

"The Unit says it discovered the alarming trend during its outreach programmes to sensitize the public on domestic violence.

“Many of these young boys and their families are reluctant to report such cases to the police, and according to the unit, that poses serious implications for the health of these boys.

“Most of them are being lured by adults...in their own locality who are deceiving them [into the act]. Some of them are even paying them money to have sex with them...these are some of the cases that are coming to our attention,’ DSP Freeman Tettey, National Public Relations Officer of DOVVSU, told Joy News.

“It will amaze [you] that some of these boys are actually in pampers, some of them are actually having problems with their genitals, especially their anus, it is actually posing a health threat to them” (“Sodomy at JHS increasing – DOVVSU worried”

<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=224011>).

Subsequent to the above news item, *Ghanaweb* again reported in its General News of Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2011 on the increasing sexual abuse of male children by adult homosexual men in a story headlined, “Police arrests prison officer for sodomy”:

“Koforidua, Nov. 22, GNA - The Eastern Regional Police Command, has arrested and detained a Prisons Officer, Lance Corporal Raymond Ametepey 27, for allegedly sodomising three boys, who are all 14 years old and resident at Akuse in the Eastern Region.

“The boys who are friends and lived in the same neighborhood of Lance Corporal Ametepey, stationed at Akuse Prisons, mentioned his name when one of the victim’s parents detected that his son was not walking well and interrogated him.

“According to Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Kwabena Gyamera Yeboah, Regional Police Commander, who briefed Ghana News Agency, said one of the victims father, noticed a change in the way his son was walking and inspected his anus and found that he had been sodomised.

“He said upon interrogation, the boy mentioned the name of Lance Corporal Ametepey as the culprit and based on that the other two other boys also informed their parents of their ordeal from the prison officer.

“The parents then reported the matter to the police and the prison officer was arrested on Sunday on the charge of having unnatural carnal knowledge of the boys and had since been detained for investigations.

“Meanwhile, the police have issued the parents of the boys with medical forms to send them to hospital for medical attention and report back for further action.

(“Police arrests prison officer for sodomy”

<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=224143&comment=0#com>).

Who says there’s a new ‘civilization’ under the sun? King Solomon tells us in Eccl. 1:9: “That which has been *is* that which shall be; and that which has been done *is* that which shall be done; and *there is* nothing new under the sun”.

Contributing to the recent debate on homosexual issues in Ghana online, a Dr Kwame Osei similarly pointed out the Greek origins of homosexuality as a form of popular culture and called for its criminalization in the country: “Homosexuality had its origins in the Greek empire. Greece being the



first civilization from the West/Europe as Afrikan civilizations like Ethiopia had predated Greece by at least 5,000 years.

“Most of the Greek scholars like Plato, Socrates and Aristotle were homosexual as they had a profound loathing for women and engaged in homosexual activity with other men to fulfill their sexual fantasies” (Dr. Kwame Osei, “Why homosexuality should be outlawed in Ghana”, 13/6/2011, <http://www.modernghana.com/newsp/333922/1/pagenum/why-homosexuality-should-be-outlawed-in-ghana.html#continue>).

Again, isn't it a fact that in the 'advanced countries' of Europe and America many of their intelligentsia are 'proud gays' like the Greek intelligentsia of old? This explains why the gay lobby in Europe and America is such a well funded, powerful body and has succeeded in getting not only homosexuality legalized but also same-sex marriage in those countries.

Because homosexuality was actively practiced in the Greco-Roman world of his day, the Apostle Paul wrote, among a catalogue of evil practices the Gentiles do to spite the plain evidence of the Creator's existence:

“Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves,  
“because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.  
“For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature;  
“and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.  
“And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done” (Rom. 1:24-28 *ESV*).

Note that Paul does not speak in a prophetic tone of the future; he speaks of an ongoing evil activity dating to sometime in the past. Having willfully ignored the clear evidence of the Creator's existence in His works of creation, Gentile nations like the Greeks and the Romans who considered themselves to be “wise” proved to be “fools”, in that they replaced the worship of the true Creator God with the worship of lifelike statues, like those of the Greek and Roman gods [Acts 17:29], and, more degrading, images of animals and reptiles, like those of the Egyptians (vv. 18-23). But they did not stop there; they further debased themselves—because God withdrew His restraining grace from them—by the sexual perversion of men sleeping with fellow men and women doing likewise with fellow women among a host of wicked acts (vv. 24-31)!

Thus homosexuality, as we know it today, was widely practised in the first-century Greco-Roman world of the Apostle Paul. The Apostle, in fact, refers to it 1 Corinthians as one of the evil deeds indulged in by some of the brethren in the Greek city of Corinth before they converted and became believers:

“Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate [usu. passive boy lovers of older men], nor homosexuals,  
“nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.

“Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:9-11 *NASB*).

In this scripture, Paul makes it plain that damnation awaits all homosexuals and other unrighteous people who refuse to repent: “the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God. DO NOT BE DECEIVED” about this, as many churchgoing homosexuals now delude themselves in their headlong descent into eternal destruction! (See Eph. 5:3-6).

The basic factor behind Gentile deviance from the godly and righteous way was disclosed by the same Apostle Paul in a warning to Gentile converts to Israel’s Messiah not to live as they used to do formerly as Gentiles:

“This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

“Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

“Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

“But ye have not so learned Christ” (Eph. 4:17-20).

The Gentile life of unbridled sensuality, depravity and uncleanness stems from their puerile, worthless thoughts conceived in the darkness of their minds as a result of their separation from the life that comes from God. This only betrays the ignorance that is in them due to their hard-heartedness. But in Christ it’s a different ball game! The Gentile life of indiscipline and unrestrained lusts has no place in Him. Hence “ye have not so learned Christ”!

Christ does not endorse the Gentile culture of homosexuality, idolatry, bestiality and lawlessness so prevalent in the days of the early apostles and has now staged a comeback with a vengeance! Thanks to the enduring cultural foundation of Hellenism such modern abominations as sex change have also gained acceptance in the so-called advanced countries of the West and are accorded official recognition and ‘rights’ as granted to homosexuals. The umbrella name for this queer grouping of homosexuals and other sex perverts is **LGBT**, initials for Lesbians, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender persons.

The true Church must cry out louder than ever at this time, calling out to those salvation seekers still enmeshed in the falsehoods and lifestyles of the Babylonian system: “Come out of her”! The time will soon arrive when end-time Babylon will turn on us true believers because we will not conform to her syncretistic universal religion and culture, and it will be too late to cry out.

When the Greek Empire broke up into four kingdoms, the division that took up the Greek policy of acculturation with great zeal was the Seleucid dynasty who "saw themselves as the heirs of Alexander the Great, entrusted with his vision of uniting all peoples within the framework of Greek culture" (Reader's Digest *Atlas of the Bible*, p. 155, 1981). The Seleucid ruler who came to personify the renewed Hellenization campaign within their domain was Antiochus IV (Epiphanes). Before he came to power, previous Seleucid rulers, having wrested Judah from the control of the Ptolemies, had granted the Jews some form of limited self-government while reserving the right to appoint the High Priest as head of the community. But in 167 B.C., Antiochus tried to force the Jews to adopt Hellenistic religious practices in his bid to promote an empire-wide religion meant to foster greater unity in his kingdom. Burning with ruthless zeal, Antiochus forbade the Jews from keeping the Sabbath, abstaining from unclean food and from circumcising their children—all being practices

(commandments) that set them apart as the holy people of God (Ex. 31:13, 16-17; Lev.11:43-45, 20:24-26; Deut. 14:2-3; Gen. 17:9-13; Ex. 12:48; cp Rom. 2:25-29). What is worse, Antiochus forbade even the possession and reading of the Torah (the O.T. scriptures). And the penalty for refusal to comply was death! Next, "He dedicated the temple to the Olympian Zeus, and desecrated it with a sacrifice of swine on the altar. Worship of heathen gods became compulsory" (Howard F. Vos, *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Manners And Customs*, p. 373).

Just as Antiochus had zealously tried to impose his Hellenistic 'universal' religion on the Jews, so some of the devout Jews zealously and bravely rose to the defence of their holy faith. The result was the successful Maccabean revolt led by the priest Mattathias and his five sons which saw the back of Antiochus' brutal rule and Hellenization programme in Judah after a three-and-half year war. Subsequently, the temple was cleansed and the altar rebuilt. On 25th Kislev (December) 164 B.C., the eight-day Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah) (see John 10:22-25) was instituted to commemorate the rededication of the Temple and the great victory won over the Seleucids and their Jewish collaborators.

For many Bible scholars, Antiochus 1V prefigured the last Antichrist in virtually all aspects. Although Nebuchadnezzar also threatened punishment against his subjects, including Jews, who wouldn't accept his Babylonian religion of image-worship (Dan. 3:1-7), Antiochus was the first Gentile ruler to launch a full-scale systematic campaign against the Jews for mainly religious reasons. In proscribing the Sabbath and abstinence from unclean meats, not to mention his desecration of the holy place and banning of the scriptures, Antiochus enacted in advance, albeit on a smaller scale, all that the last antichrist is prophesied to do. A comparative analysis of the activities of Antiochus IV and the work of the prophetic last antichrist easily brings this out:

1. Like Antiochus, the last antichrist will ban the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath in an effort to enforce the historical change of the Sabbath from the seventh day of the week (Saturday) to the first day of the week (Sunday) by the Apostate Mother Church as prophesied in Daniel 7:25: "And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time". At a Conference of the Union of Churches in Nairobi, Kenya in 1985, which was attended by the late Pope John Paul II, article 12 of a 16-point resolution adopted by the conference stated: "UNIFICATION OF ALL CHURCHES: The members of the Churches all over the world will worship on only one day--that is Sunday". Subsequent to the publication of this resolution, the conference had already agreed to replace all mentions of "the Sabbath" in the Bible with "Sunday" among other changes to the Bible. Fast forward to May 31, 1998, and the same Pope John Paul II issued an encyclical (pastoral letter) titled *Dies Domini* (The Day of the Lord), calling for proper respect for Sunday as a day of worship by both the Church and the state. He wrote: "*The Lord's Day has structured the history of the Church through two thousand years: how could we think that it will not continue to shape the future? In the particular circumstances of our own time, Christians will naturally strive to ensure that civil legislation respects their duty to keep Sunday holy.*" Believe it or not, but the latter sentence is a direct exhortation to world leaders to enforce Sunday laws--as Constantine did way back in 321 AD when he joined the Roman Catholic Church:"*On the venerable Day of the Sun*", he decreed, "*let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed*". Dear Sabbath keeper, now that in the name of Religious Freedom, graciously allowed by God, you are free to worship on the seventh-day Sabbath, how precious does the Sabbath seem to you? How

jealously do you guard against its becoming a dreary, joyless ritual you perform week after week as a perfunctory duty to God? Keep the Sabbath wholeheartedly with all joy now; a time is coming when the open observance of the Sabbath will be a thing of the past, as the remnant Church that observes the commandments of God is once again driven underground (Rev. 12:17). At that time, as the Lord Jesus warns us in John 16, "whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor Me" (vv. 2-3).

2. The last antichrist, in imitation of Antiochus, will seek to compel all persons to eat scripturally forbidden abominations indicated by the abominations-filled "golden cup" in the hands of the woman on the scarlet-coloured beast (the Apostate Mother Church of Babylon), which generally speaking symbolizes her false teachings (Rev. 17:4-5; cp Isa. 65:1-6; 4:1). Nebuchadnezzar, the first head of the Babylonian world empire, did the same via his instructions to his chief-of-staff to feed the Jewish captives of noble birth the same (unclean) food he ate (Dan. 1-3-5). However, of all the Jewish captives in the palace, Daniel and his three close associates Hananiah (renamed Shadrack), Mishael (renamed Meshach), and Azariah (renamed Abednego) resolved not to defile themselves with the king's food. God rewarded their faith when the officer in charge of their affairs granted their request to be put on a diet of vegetables for a trial period of ten days at the end of which they were healthier and better looking than all the young men who had feasted on the king's abominable delicacies (vv. 8-16)! Moreover, "God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams" (v. 17). In the very last days leading up to Christ's return, the antichrist, as part of his policy of mass destruction, would want all people to eat abominations knowing full well that God's fiery judgment awaits all those who defile themselves with foods classified as abominable in the scriptures (Isa. 66:15-17). Abomination eaters liable to divine punishment by fire are clearly among those who "know not God" because they do not keep His commandments nor obey the gospel of Christ ( 2 Thess. 1:7-10; 1 John 2:3-4; Rev. 21:8, 2:14-16).
3. The antichrist, like Antiochus, will desecrate the rebuilt temple of God in Jerusalem when, at the peak of his power, he goes to sit in the temple proclaiming himself to be God (2 Thess. 2:2-4). Prophetically known as "the abomination of desolation" (Dan. 9:27; Matt. 24:15), this impious gesture of the antichrist will be the third such desecration of the holy temple of Jerusalem by 'megalomaniacs' possessed of the Satanic spirit of arrogance! The first desecration was by Antiochus himself (Dan. 8:11-12; 11:31, 36), the second in 70 AD when invading Roman soldiers placed their flags, which bore images of their gods (such as Jupiter) and emperors, in the holy place of the Jerusalem temple and there sacrificed to those gods (Dan. 9:26; Matt. 24:15; cp Luke 21:20, 24). The third, as already mentioned, is the one to be carried out by the antichrist (Matt. 24:15, 21-22, 29-31; 2 Thess. 2:4; Rev. 11:1-2, 7-8, 17:8 & 13:1; cp Dan. 12:11). In parading himself as 'god' in the Jerusalem temple, the point the antichrist will seek to make is that he not only opposes God the Creator but now sits in His place assuming all His titles and authority. Pope Leo XIII, in an encyclical dated June 20, 1894 stated: "We [popes] hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty" (*The Great Encyclical Letters of Leo XIII*, p. 304. New York: Benziger Brothers. Quoted in *The National Sunday Law*, p. 76). If that's not shocking enough, read what official Catholic literature has to say about the place and authority of the pope as it eulogizes him to the high heavens: "The Pope is of so great dignity and so exalted that he is not a mere man, but as it were God, and the Vicar of God. ... The Pope is of such lofty and supreme dignity that, properly speaking, he has not been established in any rank of dignity, but rather has been placed upon the very summit of all ranks of dignities. ... The Pope is called most holy because he is rightfully presumed to be such. ... The Pope alone is deservedly called by the name 'most holy', because he alone is the vicar of Christ, who is the fountain and source and fullness of all holiness. ... He is likewise the divine monarch and supreme emperor, and king of kings. ... Hence the Pope is crowned

with a triple crown, as king of heaven and of earth and of the lower regions. ..." (Translated from Lucius Ferraris, *Prompta Bibliotheca*, art. 'Papa', (Pope) II VOL. VI, pp. 26-29. Culled from *The National Sunday Law*, pp. 76-77). The question that begs and answer is, now that plans are far advanced to rebuild the Jerusalem Temple, with the Temple Institute of Jerusalem ([www.templeinstitute.org](http://www.templeinstitute.org)) having completed almost all the objects to be used in temple services, how much more time do we have left? And how prepared are you? Amos 4:12 exhorts us: "Prepare to meet your God, O Israel!"

4. Another common feature the antichrist has with Antiochus IV is that he will be a shrewd diplomat, skilled in the art of using diplomacy to win the confidence of people and then unleash on them his destructive policies! He will be a master of dissimulation and cunning in dealing with people. Daniel wrote prophetically of Antiochus and, by extension, of the last antichrist: "And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors have come to the full, a king, fierce of face, and skilled at intrigues, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power. And he shall destroy marvelously, and shall prosper and work, and destroy the mighty and the holy people. And also through his understanding, he shall cause deceit to succeed in his hand. And he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many. He also shall stand up against the Ruler of rulers. But he shall be broken without a hand" (Dan. 8:23-25 *MKJV*). In Rev. 16:13-14, we read of three frog-like unclean spirits coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet who are then sent on a special diplomatic mission to rally the support of world leaders to battle against God Almighty in the war of Armageddon. From all accounts, it will be a successful mission and the leaders will only belatedly realize that they have been sadly deceived when the war goes against them whereupon they "shall hate the whore [spiritual condition of the antichrist as head of the universal apostate church], and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire" (Rev. 17:12-18). Another hint of the overwhelming success of the '666' propaganda of the antichrist is in 2 Thess. 2. God calls the antichrist's propaganda "strong delusion" which is readily swallowed up by those who do not have "the love of the truth" (vv. 8-12).
5. Like Antiochus, the antichrist will also be a persecuting power—harassing, terrorizing and murdering true believers who won't comply with his decrees. Bible prophecy describes the antichrist's persecution of believers as "war"—"war with the saints" (Dan. 7:21; Rev. 13:5,7; 20:4; cp 6:9-11, 17:6, 18:21-24). The good news, however, is that true believers of the last age ("the elect") will not give in to the antichrist. Indeed, some will survive his murderous attacks and therefore will still be alive at the time of Jesus' return (Matt. 24:29-31, 40-42; Luke 17:34-35; 1 Cor. 15:51-52; 1 Thess. 4:15-17).

Thus we see that the work of Antiochus as a persecutor of God's people and that of the final, actual antichrist, whom he typified in the Old Testament, bear striking resemblance to each other, including their three and half year duration of operation; they dovetail!

### **Rome Swallows Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece as their Combined Successor!**

To situate ourselves back into the world in which Antiochus, the typical antichrist, operated, the new reality that has dawned on the world is that the divided Greek empire is on the wane. A new world power is emerging rapidly and appears unstoppable. It's second century BC—on the cusp of a new century—and Rome is on the rise!

However, Rome did not rise dramatically in a swift ascendancy as the other empires did. It built itself up internally and externally over a period of some six hundred years. From its beginnings as a small town supposedly founded by Romulus, who together with his twin brother Remus were cared for by a wolf, Rome underwent transformation from a local monarchy to a republic and then to a world

empire! By this time, Rome had fought and won many wars, famous among them the three *Punic Wars* fought with Carthage (now Tunisia) from 264 BC to 146 BC and conquered what remained of Alexander's empire. First, it attacked and defeated Macedonia in 197 BC, followed shortly by the Greek city-states in 168 BC in the battle of Pydna and finally the Seleucid kingdom which it conquered piecemeal (using a combination of political intrigues and threats) until "in 64 BC Pompey took Antioch in Syria, bringing the final curtain on the already weakened Seleucid empire" (*Atlas of the Bible*, p. 1630).

Remarkably, the decisive war which crowned Rome with imperial status was not fought between Rome and a foreign aggressor. The naval battle of Actium was fought in 31 BC between two Roman generals, Mark Antony, who ruled the eastern provinces of Rome, and Julius Caesar's great-nephew Octavian, (the later Augustus Caesar), who ruled the western provinces. That battle, fought in western Greece, ended in the defeat of Mark Antony and his lover Queen Cleopatra of Egypt. This "left Octavian as the sole leader of the Roman world, and his victory marked the end of the republic. ... Augustus—to use the title he assumed in 27 B.C.—formally inaugurated the empire, a period that lasted some 500 years in the West and nearly 1,500 in the East. ... It is thus with Augustus [Luke 2:1] that we can speak of Rome as an empire in the political sense, that is, as possessing not merely a territorial empire but also an imperial form of government" (*Civilizations of the World The Human Adventure*, pp. 149-150, Third Edition 1997).

As the last successor to the preceding three empires of the Babylonian system represented by the ONE giant statue of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, the Roman Empire was the great inheritor of all their customs, achievements, gods, political ideas, cruel dispositions and territories in addition to their own achievements. She was indeed a 'composite beast' just as Bible prophecy had predicted.

However, to the extent that Rome had the body of a "leopard" (Greece), it stands to reason that Greece would dominate Rome, the nondescript composite beast, out of all proportion to Babylon ("lion") and Medo-Persia ("bear"). History confirms that this was what exactly happened, once again proving the accuracy of Bible prophecy.

Analyzing the similarities and differences between the rise of Greece and Rome and the comparative impacts both made on 'civilization', Professor West of Suffolk Community College (N.Y.) noted in his online essay: "The Greek city-states had to be united by force, first through the invasion of the Macedonians, and then by the Romans. But the Greeks would, in a sense, have the last laugh. Their culture was more sophisticated, their learning and philosophy more advanced, and Roman culture would be overwhelmed as the Romans absorbed the cultural influences of the Hellenistic east. In the final outcome, as the Roman Empire declined in the west, Roman emperors transferred their capitol from Italy to Asia Minor. Long after the Roman empire was gone, the Byzantine Empire, an amalgam of Roman and Greek culture, centered in the city of Constantinople, would endure. **The Greeks had conquered their conquerors**" (<http://www2.sunysuffolk.edu/westn/Essaygreecrome.html>).

Similarly, Roman lyric poet and satirist Horace quipped: "Captive Greece led captive her fierce conqueror" (Epistle 2.1 156 quoted in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Vol. 5 Q-Z, p. 146). That is to say, Rome had subjugated Greece with her sword, but Greece (re-)conquered Rome with her ideas.

"This was true of religion as well as of literature and art. Rome's willingness to accept and receive met its most transforming challenge when the Republic, becoming a Mediterranean and imperial power after the Punic wars which filled the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. made wider contacts

with the Greeks in Sicily and their own Hellenic homeland. Roman belief ran strongly in the direction of Greek anthropomorphism. Her native deities fused with the gods of the Greek pantheon [see Acts 14:6-15; 17:16-23; 19:26-28]. Jupiter was Zeus; Hera, Zeus's consort, was therefore Juno. Neptune was Poseidon; Mars, Ares; Minerva, Athena; Diana, Artemis; Mercury, Hermes; while Bacchus or Dionysus found his counterpart in the old nature spirit Liber. The lesser deities were not omitted. Faunus, the old patron of agriculture and shepherding, became Pan. Curiously, Apollos found no parallel. He was an early introduction from Etruria, in fact, and was accepted as a god of healing as early as 433 B.C. Games for Apollo, the *Iudi Apollinares* were established in 212 B.C. In Augustus' day his cult, thanks to the enthusiasm of the prince for the god whose aid he had evoked at the decisive climax of Actium, was widely extended. The young bright god was, in the mind of Augustus, a symbol of hope for the new Rome which he sought to create, and a central figure in the revival of old worship which the prince sponsored. ....

"It is possible therefore to picture the religion of Rome in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries B.C. as a COMPOSITE and INTERMINGLED phenomenon, with ancient country cults in city dress, old deities—transformed and Hellenized—worshipped in temples like those of the Greek world, Italian rituals of divination tangled with obscure Etruscan practice and attached to the worship of various deities in the service of the State, in all an astonishing syncretism of past and present, race and race. It was without doubt a vast confusion..." (*The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Vol. 5 Q-Z, pp. 146-147, 1976. Emphasis mine).

Later "the Roman faculty for adaptation and absorption of alien religions and deities into her hospitable pantheon" would define the nature of the new religion she would adopt as the State religion, Christianity.

But Rome was 'a composite beast' not only in the religious sense, but in the larger cultural sense of being a melting-pot of different cultural beliefs and practices adopted from the different peoples she came into contact with. As they went about their vision of world domination, the Romans "carried their culture throughout much of the ancient world. Through the Romanization of diverse peoples and cultures, the Romans were able to transmit ideas they had acquired from others as well as those that they developed themselves" (*Civilizations of the World, The Human Adventure*, p. 139, 1997).

This "Romanization", which was essentially 'Greco-Roman culture', had its greatest impact in Western Europe. "With a comparatively recent and uncivilized history", Western Europe put up no opposition to the cultural onslaught of 'Romanization' "and was soon thoroughly and permanently immersed in the phenomenon of western civilization" (*Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, p. 1420, 2003).

That is the world we live in today, our westernized world! A world dominated by Greco-Roman culture, education and religion. And the clock of is ticking towards divine judgment!

Nevertheless, Rome's lion mouth was not less significant. It symbolized both its cruel and intimidating nature and notoriety for "speaking great things" against God, just as Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon was noted for: "The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? While the word *was* in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, *saying*, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling *shall be* with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven

times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will" (Dan. 4:30-32).

With its Babylonian mouth, the fourth composite beast of Rome has, as one of its unique characteristics, been consistently synonymous with blasphemy in Bible prophecy. Daniel wrote of him: "And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time" (Dan. 7:25).

This takes us back to "the little horn" of the fourth beast, the horn which displaced three horns of the ten-horned beast and which had a mouth speaking great things (v.8, 20-21). What it lacked in size it compensated for in making big boasts! What entity fits this description more accurately than the 'Holy See'? Despite its size as the smallest state in the world, the Vatican has a respected, 'authoritative' voice in the world and historically a blasphemous mouth.

In Revelation, the "little horn" does not have one mouth but proudly wears "names of blasphemy"; the little horn has advanced and proliferated in blasphemy. The "names of blasphemy" refer to the 'ecclesiastical' successors to the Caesars who would claim all the titles of God and persecute and murder many of the believers who would reject their Babylonian false teachings and claim to divine honor (Rev. 17:1-6, cp 13:1). Historians estimate that between 50-100 million people perished in the Catholic Inquisition that operated for 1260 long years between the 13<sup>th</sup> century and 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The brutality of Roman persecution, pagan and papal, unmistakably derives from its bear side. The Roman composite beast's feet of bear depicts its vengeful, destructive nature—just as the bear empire, Medo-Persia, was (Isa. 13:16-18; Jer. 51:53, 56). With its brazen feet of bear, the "dreadful and terrible" fourth beast of Rome "devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it" (Dan. 7:7, 19; see also 2:40).

The image of stomping bear feet not only pictured the Roman power stamping on the truth of the Gospel and throwing it to the ground (vv. 19-21, 25), but also evoked the armies of Rome marching in massive military power over the nations of the and overrunning them: "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall DEVOUR THE WHOLE EARTH, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces" (7:23 Emphasis mine).

And Rome, the strongest state and greatest empire the world has ever known, did devour the whole earth. In its glory days, "the Roman Empire's` might reached as far north as Britain, east to Persia and in the south it encompassed the whole of Northern Africa" ("Roman History" <http://www.unrv.com/empire/roman-history.php>).

But Rome also "devoured the whole world" in another sense—in the sense of its continual unbroken influence as the last amalgamated Babylonian empire to diffuse the Babylonian culture and religion throughout the world. "Even today, Roman law and foundation of government forms the basis of several modern democracies. Her monuments still stand millennia later, awing and inspiring us. Her language, while for all intents and purposes lies dormant and unspoken, forms the basis or penetrates the deepest fibers of many modern tongues. Her final faith, Christianity, was spread like wild-fire through the highly connected system of roads and intermingled cultures of the western world" (ibid.).

So, at long last, Rome, the mistress of the world, has added the Jewish religious sect 'Christianity' and its Messiah to her collection of deities and religions borrowed from other nationalities. Or is it a new state religion that has swept aside and replaced its pagan pantheon as true Christianity demands?



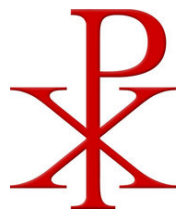
It's a legitimate question to ask because of the basic Roman understanding and approach to religion—one God and one faith were never enough: “If anything, the Romans had a practical attitude to religion, as to most things, which perhaps explains why they themselves had difficulty in taking to the idea of a single, all-seeing, all-powerful god.

“In so far as the Romans had a religion of their own, it was not based on any central belief, but on a mixture of fragmented rituals, taboos, superstitions, and traditions which they collected over the years from a number of sources”. ... To the Romans, the observance of religious rites was a public duty rather than a private impulse. Their beliefs were founded on a variety of unconnected and often inconsistent mythological traditions, many of them derived from the Greek rather than Italian models.

“Since Roman religion was not founded on some core belief which ruled out other religions, foreign religions found it relatively easy to establish themselves in the imperial capital itself. The first such foreign cult to make its way to Rome was the goddess Cybele around 204 BC. (“Roman Religion” <http://www.roman-empire.net/religion/religion.html>).

Obviously then, the Romans saw Christianity as just a new addition to the host of other (pagan) religions they had inherited from the Babylonian nations. As a direct result of such a mindset, the Christian religion Rome adopted would not be the pure Judeo-Christian faith of Yahshua Messiah (Jesus Christ) established and entrusted to the original apostles but a bastardized, Gentilized Christianity superimposed on the existing pagan religious structure of Rome.

And the prime mover of the supposed Roman conversion from paganism to Christianity proves it all the more. After centuries of persecution against the followers of Christ across the empire, notably by emperor Nero (who reportedly executed the apostles Peter and Paul) and Diocletian in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, emperor Constantine, then vying for control of the Roman Empire with rival emperor Maxentius, supposedly saw a vision of a cross in the sky with the inscription *In Hoc Signo Vinces*, that is ‘in this sign conquer’ and then had it inscribed on his helmet as his emblem and ordered his soldiers to paint it on their shields. At the Battle of Milvian Bridge the next day, Constantine, despite the numerical disadvantage of his army, dealt Maxentius a crushing defeat and became the sole emperor of the Roman Empire.



*The cross Constantine saw*

“Chi Rho, the first two letters of [Jesus Christ](#) in Greek, which [Constantine](#) saw in a vision along with the words “in hoc signo vinces” (“in this sign you will conquer”) ([http://orthodoxwiki.org/Edict\\_of\\_Milan](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Edict_of_Milan)).

Following his victory, Constantine issued the Edict of Milan in 313 AD making “all religions legal within the Roman Empire, though it was especially intended to legalize Christianity. [Paganism](#), the official religion of the Empire and particularly of the army, was disestablished as such, and property which had previously been confiscated from Christians was returned” (ibid.). But was the

Constantine-sponsored adoption of Christianity as the state religion of the Roman Empire a heartfelt gesture of genuine “repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21)? (See Acts 26:17-18).

Far from it. For Constantine the Great, the Christian faith was merely a tool to help in the political stability of the empire, not the vehicle of God’s saving truth! Indeed, he “saw Christianity as an ally to help save the empire and Greco-Roman culture. ... After the Edict of Milan, the Roman Empire favored the church. ... Eventually the church was subsidized by the state, and Sunday was made the official day of rest and worship. Constantine had continued to be the chief priest of the pagan state and was not baptized until just before his death” (“A Brief History of the Western Church” *Halley’s Bible Handbook*, pp. 981-982, 2000 ed.).

The church in Rome, now the state church, completely shed its Jewish character and now took on the character of the old syncretistic Babylonian religion of Rome with its universal hallmark of **Sun Worship** or **Sunday Worship**. Pagan priests became the new priests of the church and Constantine, who “continued to be the chief priest of the pagan state and a lifelong devotee to the sun-god Sol, was himself effectively the first pope or chief priest of the church, that is *Pontifex Maximus*.

This is evidenced by the fact that, though not baptized, Constantine issued religious edicts binding on Christians (like his 321 AD Sunday law) and even convened church councils at which his will prevailed. As a matter of fact, Constantine called and presided over the First Ecumenical Council of the church, “the famous Council of Nicaea [in 325] which decided the definition of the Christian deity as the Holy Trinity, God the father, God the son and God the Holy Spirit.

“Had Christianity previously been unclear about its message then the Council of Nicaea (together with a later council at Constantinople in 381 AD) created a clearly defined core belief. However, the nature of its creation - a council - and the diplomatically sensitive way in defining the formula, to many suggests the creed of the Holy Trinity to be rather a political construct between theologians and politicians rather than anything achieved by divine inspiration.

“It is hence often sought that the Council of Nicaea represents the Christian church becoming a **more worldly institution**, moving away from its innocent beginnings in its ascent to power” (<http://www.roman-empire.net/religion/religion.html>).

It was at this council that Constantine the Great, in supporting the call by the western Roman bishops that the Passover (renamed Easter) should be celebrated yearly on Sunday, instead of on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan as argued by the eastern bishops, notoriously declared that “Let us, then, have nothing in common with the Jews, who are our adversaries. ... Therefore this irregularity must be corrected, in order that we may no more have anything in common with the parricides and murderers of our Lord” (John Kiesz, *A History of the Sabbath & Sunday*, p. 19. Sourced from Bower’s *History of the Popes*; Dowling’s *History of Romanism* and Boyle’s *Historical View of the Council of Nice*).

Constantine spoke as if the Lord Jesus was an Italian! The church Constantine referred to definitely did not belong to Jesus “the King of the Jews” (Matt. 2:2; John 19:19). It was the old Babylonian Sun-worship merely given a new name with all its ancient practices, beliefs and even temples retained under the assumed name of ‘Christianity’. History is the faithful witness to this grand scheme to perpetuate the religion of “Mystery Babylon the Great” under the guise of the Christian faith:



“The Pantheon is an ancient temple in Rome that was later converted into the Church of Santa Maria ad Martyres. Dating from 125 AD, this is the most complete ancient building in Rome. The Pantheon was dedicated to *pan theos*, meaning “all the gods.” When it became a Church, it was dedicated to the Virgin Mary and all the martyrs. The Pantheon is the burial place of several important Italians and it remains an active Church.

The statues of the “gods” from the Pantheon are now found in the Vatican Museum with the exception of the great statue of Jupiter, which has been modified, re-titled, and seated on a throne in St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome as St. Peter. Thousands of pilgrims kiss the foot of Jupiter while thinking it is the statue of Peter and have nearly worn it away. Notice the sun wheel above his head? Note also that the pattern on the wall behind the statue utilizes the symbol of Baal.



Following the conquest of Mesopotamia by the Persians, the Babylonian priesthood fled to Pergamum in Asia Minor. Here they erected the Acropolis temples of Pergamum in honour of the Greek Pantheon, but continued to worship the Babylonian mystery god under the name of Saturnus.

Many of the Babylonian mysteries were preserved in the temple of Zeus at Pergamum and transferred to Rome in 133 B.C. when Attalus III died without an heir and bequeathed his kingdom to Rome.

The penetration of the religion of Babylon became so general that Rome was called the “[New Babylon](#).”





The [origin of the number 666](#). In 133 B.C. the Babylonian solar cult was bequeathed to Rome by Attalus III. There its symbols and forms were incorporated into the cult of Caesar and later into Roman Catholicism. Note that the numbers add up to 111 for each row, column and even the diagonals, with the grand total of 6 x 111 equalling 666 for each table.

Winged serpent spirit, signifying the soul of the departed (Egypt). It is very interesting that in ancient mythology, the serpent was universally the symbol of the sun. Sun worship and serpent worship began side by side. The sun was proclaimed to be the source of all fleshly life and the serpent the origin of all spiritual life.



Winged serpent guardians, King Tut's throne, Cairo, Egypt. The religion of the serpent has passed down from one occult priesthood to another all the way down through the years as man was scattered throughout the earth from the time of the Tower of Babel. Remember that sun and serpent worship began together.

Mayan serpent sun god coming out of the mouth of a dragon was used in connection with the Mayan sun god 'Quetzalcoatl' on the Island of Cozumel, 1000 A.D. What do they represent? Revelation 12:9 "*And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth...*"





Romans adopted the worship of the serpent as a symbol of power that carries the soul to heaven. In the Archaeological Museum in Rome, a sarcophagus of the dead has two serpents pulling a chariot taking these people to heaven. Rome also adopted this symbol of the serpent as the healer as have many countries.

Roman bath, in Bath, England. Notice the serpent as a symbol of healing.

Even the United States has adopted the serpent called Aesculapius in the medical field. In Greece, this serpent was the god of drugs and medicines, i.e., a counterfeit healer.



Serpent door handle on the new St. Mary's Cathedral in San Francisco, California. The serpent as we have already seen became the symbol of healing in many countries. It is hard to imagine a symbol that represents Satan on the door of a Cathedral. One would think they would have to know what the Bible says it represents.

Dragon on a large papal crest in the Vatican museum. Vatis = diviner, can = serpent. Vatican = The Divining Serpent. Knowing the meaning of the word *Vatican* no one will be surprised that the crest of the Vatican is "*a serpent-dragon*" The Bible says in Revelation 12:9 "*the dragon, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world...*"





The Persian sun god Mithra was widely accepted in the Roman world prior to Christianity. Sunday was dedicated to Mithra (lord), receiving the title of the “Lord’s Day” Mithraism had seven sacraments the same as the Catholic Church. The Eucharist hosts were signed with a cross, an ancient phallic symbol which originated in Egypt, and the Egyptian cross (the ankh) still shows the original form which included the female symbol.

The Pope enthroned under a canopy with astrological figures of the Zodiac in the Vatican Museum. The sign of Leo is directly above the Pope’s head. During the Dark Ages, the greatest astrologer of all times, Nostradamus had to be cautious of the Inquisition which he narrowly escaped several times. Yet that Church had knowledge of the stars and used astrology.



Golden child in the Vatican treasury, like so many other images of the child in Catholic Churches, is reminiscent of the ancient worship of Tammuz as a child. Born on Dec. 25, he represented the rebirth of the sun. As a pagan god child, he was called “Baal-berith.” Pagan Anglo Saxons called Dec. 25 “Yule” Day, which is a Babylonian word for infant. Egyptians and Persians celebrated the birthday of their god on Dec. 25th. Other names applied to the sun god as a child are Mithras, Horus, Isvara, Deoius, Jupiter, Plutus, Ninus, Osiris, Dionysus, Bacchus, Iacchus, Adonis, Attis etc. All these myths of child worship [originated from ancient Babylon](#) with Semiramis and Nimrod.

Mother or Mary worship is the most powerful and emotional phenomenon in the Roman Catholic Church today. This mystic cult is given credence by the multitude of accounts about supernatural phenomena involving statues, apparitions and healings.

Since Mary worship is found nowhere in the writings of the first Christians, it is evident that its origin is found in the universal adoration of the mother goddess all throughout paganism before the time of Christ. It was adopted into the rising Roman Church early in its history - some suggest after the 4th century A.D.



Serpent crosiers were commonly carried by bishops and high Catholic Church officials in the Middle Ages. They claim that the crosier represents the shepherd's crook, but it can be traced to the divining staff or augur of Pontifex Maximus of ancient Rome who inherited it from the priests of Babylon. It is unrealistic to assume that shepherds of nomadic existence would use wooden rods with handles like the one shown or anything like it. Common sense would have them use something straight and not entangle themselves with when having to fight off wild animals. Thinking about plays representing the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, it is absolutely disgusting to see shepherds hold staffs other than straight wooden rods.

The pagan symbol representing male and female union. The wavy lines portray the female and were associated with the serpent, while the straight line is male and is representing the phallus. We find the same principles of male-female in the paganism of astrology, which is very much a religion of nature worship of which the sun and the moon are the predominant deities. The sun is usually the male and the moon the female (as Horus and Isis of Egypt, which originated from Semiramis and Nimrod her husband/son. See the [origin of sun worship and Babylon.](#))



Adad, Enlil, Baal, Neptune, Poseidon and other “gods” of storm and sea were depicted as carrying tridents. It was symbolic of lightning.

Here Poseidon or Neptune, said to be ruler of the sea or underworld, holds the trident, which is traceable to the horned, hoofed sun god of Babylon who carried the trident or pitchfork. The trident is also a representation of the male-female symbol.



A cross on the altar of St. Paul's Cathedral in London with four tridents in the Hindu fertility style.

Some dispute that Roman Catholic Church leaders incorporated pagan Babylonian religious practices into the Catholic Church but even Catholic historians admit it. Cardinal Newman in his *Development of Christian Doctrine*, pages [372](#), [373](#) says that the Church incorporated many pagan religious practices into the Church. He claims that the Church sanctified them and that made it safe to bring these practices into the Church.



A trident projecting from the head of baby Jesus on a Roman Catholic Madonna and child image. This in fact originally represented Semiramis and Nimrod her husband/son. See the [origin of sun worship and Babylon](#). Also notice the hand how it is displayed with two fingers and thumb prominent, another way of symbolizing the trident, a Satanic hand sign, symbolic of occult powers, also used by high Church officials and priests in various blessings invoking the sign of the cross by motioning their right hand with two fingers and thumb casually extended. It is also found in [freemasonry](#) of which origins can be found in the Catholic Church.

The old statue of Jupiter with its occult blessing hand is now St. Peter in the Vatican. As stated earlier, the statues of the gods from the Roman Pantheon can now be found in the Vatican Museum with the exception of the great statue of Jupiter, which has been modified, re-titled, and seated on a throne in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome as St. Peter. Thousands of pilgrims kiss the foot of Jupiter while thinking it is the statue of Peter and it has been nearly worn away from the many pilgrims who kiss paying homage. Notice the sun wheel above his head? You can also note also that the pattern on the wall behind the statue utilizes the symbol of Baal.



Pagan priests as half fish sprinkling holy water on Assyrian temple laver in the Pergamum Museum of Berlin. One of the names of this god in Babylon and Phylistia was Dagon (dag=fish, on=sun). The most common ways of depicting Dagon are described by the archaeologist Layard, "*The Head of the fish formed the mitre above that of a man, while its scaly, fish-like tail fell as a cloak behind, leaving the human limbs and feet exposed.*" Layard's *Babylon & Nineveh*, p.343

Dagon the sun-fish god, again clearly displayed with fish attire and mitre. Note also the carvings and diagrams of Dagon priests and their fish head hats alongside the Pope with his similar fish head hat holding the crooked cross of Mithra. The carving on the left shows the Dagon priests sprinkling holy water and is taken from the above image.





This pine cone staff in the Egyptian Museum Turino, Italy is a symbol of the solar god Osiris and originated in Egypt where he was their messiah who died for his people and whose Mother, Isis, was worshipped as the Virgin Mother. Osiris was the Egyptian counterfeit of Jesus Christ. The pine cone on the tree of life, slowly ripens the conifer's female seeds, and in the later stages the cone opens up to release its mature seeds. This process symbolizes the seeding effect on other people and culture together with the expansion of consciousness.

Assyrian winged god with pine cone, representing power of regeneration, traceable to Tammuz of Babylon. Most paganism in history is traceable back to Tammuz of Babylon. His mother Semiramis, was the first Virgin Mother predating the birth of Jesus Christ by over a 1000 years. The Catholic practice of making the Sign of the Cross originated in Babylon as people paid homage to their messiah, Tammuz, who *"died for the good of his people."* There love was demonstrated for Tammuz by making the sign of the "T." Satan has transferred this sign for Tammuz into the Catholic Church, as they think they are making the sign of the Christian cross. Tammuz was the Babylonian counterfeit of Jesus Christ.





Here the Greek god Dionysus carries the pine cone staff as a fertility symbol. Pine cones and pine cone staffs are very common on pagan statues and art symbols of fertility and regeneration. Children are always looked upon as extending the life of the human species. Therefore, it is predictable that the Pine Cone should be linked to the new life of the conception of children.

The largest pine cone in the world in the Court of the Pine Cone at the Vatican, Rome. Pagans have always coveted eternal life and have sought it by worshipping and revering many objects they find in Nature.

The Roman Catholic Church utilizes the pine cone just as any good Pagan religion would do. This is further evidence that Roman Catholicism is more Pagan than Christian. In fact we could say that Roman Catholicism is counterfeit Christianity with Paganism as its beating heart. Pine cones are common in Roman Catholic architecture and sacred decorations. Note how the cone at the Vatican is immature and therefore unopened, just the way they want it!"



(Source: [www.666numberofthebeast.com](http://www.666numberofthebeast.com)).

The *vestal virgins* of the pagan Roman religion became known as “nuns” and “sisters”. And this is just a partial list of the innumerable Babylonian, pagan practices and symbols observed by the Church of Rome.

Rome had kept faith with her Babylonian religious heritage.

In 476 AD, the Western Roman Empire disintegrated into ten kingdoms, just as Daniel had prophesied it would (Dan. 2:33 & 41). Though in decline over a period of four hundred years (Dan. 2:42), the key, decisive event that triggered the eventual collapse of the Western Roman Empire (the Eastern Roman Empire with its capital in Constantinople did not come to an end until 1453 AD when

it fell to the Turks) was the overthrow of Romulus Augustus, the last Emperor of the Western Roman Empire, by Odoacer, a Germanic chieftain, on 4<sup>th</sup> September, 476 AD.

The void created by the absence of a centralized imperial government in Rome was filled by ten separate European kingdoms historically known as “Alemanni, Franks, Burgundians, Suevi, Vandals, Visigoths, Anglo-Saxons, Ostrogoths, Lombards, and the Heruli; this is the order that they came into prominence in the western empire” ([http://www.danielbibleprophecy.org/ten\\_divisions\\_of\\_rome.html](http://www.danielbibleprophecy.org/ten_divisions_of_rome.html)). That was why Daniel saw the fourth composite beast of Rome as a ten-horned beast: “After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns” (Dan. 7:7).

The table below shows and gives the modern names of the ten kingdoms, including the three which have since become extinct in so far as “there came up among them [the ten horns] another horn, a little one, before which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots. And behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things” (Dan. 7:8 ESV):

The ten divisions of Rome	
1. Alemanni - Germany.	6. Visigoths - Spain.
2. Franks - France.	7. Anglo-Saxons - England.
3. Burgundians - Switzerland.	8. Ostrogoths - Exterminated.
4. Suevi - Portugal.	9. Lombards - Italy.
5. Vandals - Exterminated.	10. Heruli - Exterminated.

About the whereabouts and fates of the three extinct kingdoms history has this about them:

“**Vandal**, member of a Germanic people who maintained a kingdom in [North Africa](#) from ad 429 to 534 and who sacked Rome in 455. Their name has remained a synonym for willful desecration or destruction.

“Fleeing westward from the Huns at the beginning of the 5th century, the **Vandals** invaded and devastated parts of [Gaul](#) before settling in Spain in 409. There the [Asdingi Vandals](#) under King Gunderic became the ascendant group after attacks by allies of the Romans had dissipated the Silingi and [Alani Vandals](#). In 429 Gunderic’s brother and successor, [Gaiseric](#) (reigned 428–477), settled his people in North Africa, where they became federates of Rome in 435. Four years later Gaiseric threw off Roman overlordship, captured Carthage, and established an independent autocracy. With their rule firmly established in what is now northern Tunisia and northeastern Algeria, the **Vandals** eventually annexed [Sardinia](#), [Corsica](#), and [Sicily](#), and their pirate fleets controlled much of the western Mediterranean. Under Gaiseric, the **Vandals** even invaded Italy and captured Rome in June 455. For a fortnight they occupied the city and systematically plundered it, carrying off many valuable works of art.

“The **Vandals** were ardent Arian Christians, and their persecutions of the Roman Catholic church in Africa were at times fierce, particularly during the last years of the reign of Gaiseric’s successor, Huneric (reigned 477–484). In 533 the Byzantines under [Belisarius](#) invaded North Africa following the deposition by the usurper [Gelimer](#) of Huneric’s son, Hilderich, who was a close friend of the Byzantine emperor [Justinian I](#). In one campaigning season the Vandal kingdom was destroyed. Rome again ruled the area and restored the churches to the Roman Catholics. The Vandals played no

further role in history” (*Britannica Online Encyclopedia*, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/622890/Vandal>).

**Ostrogoth**, member of a division of the Goths (see [Goth](#)); the **Ostrogoths** developed an empire north of the [Black Sea](#) in the 3rd century ad and, in the late 5th century, under [Theodoric the Great](#), established the Gothic kingdom of [Italy](#).

“Invading southward from the [Baltic Sea](#), the **Ostrogoths** built up a huge empire stretching from the Don to the Dniester rivers (in present-day Ukraine) and from the Black Sea to the [Pripet Marshes](#) (southern Belarus). The kingdom reached its highest point under King [Ermanaric](#), who is said to have committed suicide at an advanced age when the [Huns](#) attacked his people and subjugated them about 370. Although many Ostrogothic graves have been excavated south and southeast of Kiev, little is known about the empire. The **Ostrogoths** were probably literate in the 3rd century, and their trade with the Romans was highly developed.

“After their subjugation by the Huns, little is heard of the **Ostrogoths** for about 80 years, after which they reappear in [Pannonia](#) on the middle [Danube River](#) as federates of the Romans. But a pocket remained behind in the [Crimea](#) when the bulk of them moved to central Europe, and these Crimean **Ostrogoths** preserved their identity through the Middle Ages. After the collapse of the [Hun](#) empire (455) the **Ostrogoths** under [Theodoric](#) the Great began to move again, first to Moesia (c. 475–488) and then to Italy. Theodoric became king of Italy in 493 and died in 526. A period of instability then ensued in the ruling dynasty, provoking the Byzantine emperor Justinian to declare war on the **Ostrogoths** in 535 in an effort to wrest Italy from their grasp. The war continued with varying fortunes for almost 20 years and caused untold damage to Italy, and the **Ostrogoths** thereafter had no national existence. They had been converted to Arian Christianity, it seems, soon after their escape from the domination of the Huns, and in this heresy they persisted until their extinction. All extant Gothic texts were written in Italy before 554” (*Britannica Online Encyclopedia*, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/434454/Ostrogoth>).

“**Heruli**, an east Germanic people originally from Scandinavia. They raided towns in the Roman Empire, scoring their greatest success in AD 267, when they captured Byzantium and sacked Greek cities. Two years later, the eastern Heruli were crushingly defeated by the Roman emperor [Claudius II Gothicus](#) in a battle near Naissus (modern Niš, Yugos.). From then until the mid-6th century, when they vanished from history, their fortunes varied. They were subjugated first by the Goths, then by the Huns. Their kingdom on the middle Danube, founded in the late 5th century, fell to the Lombards early in the 6th century. Some survivors are reported to have returned to Scandinavia, while others entered Roman service. (*Britannica Online Encyclopedia*, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/263960/Heruli>).

How accurate Bible prophecy is! Three horns were “plucked up by the roots”, that is EXTIRPATED, and never to be found again! Hence the Vandal kingdom based in North Africa was “destroyed” and “played no further role in history”; the Ostrogoths after a protracted war with Emperor Justinian of the Eastern Roman Empire “had no national existence” and suffered “extinction”, while the Heruli similarly “vanished from history”.

What made all three common targets of EXTERMINATION by the Roman Empire, which still thrived in the east (Constantine having relocated to Byzantium, later Constantinople in 330 AD), was that they had had doctrinal differences with the church of Rome. They were Arian Christians who rejected the false doctrine of the Trinity, however flawed they were in their understanding of the nature of the Son and His relationship to the Father. (See Micah 5:2; Heb. 1:3, 8, John 1:1-3; 1 John

1:1-2; Phil. 2:5-6; Col. 1:15-19, 2:9; Matt. 14:33, 28:9, 17; Luke 24:52, cp Rev. 19:10, 22:8-9; Rev. 22:1).

And they were “plucked up” just before the “little horn” of the fourth beast sprung up to prominence! History identifies this “little horn” to be the Papacy. Note this remarkable self-confession by Pope Pius IX:

“It is, therefore, by a particular decree of Divine Providence that, at the fall of the Roman Empire and its partition into separate kingdoms, the Roman Pontiff, whom Christ made the head and center of his entire Church, acquired civil power.” – Pius IX, Apostolic Letter [Cum Catholica Ecclesia](#), March 26, 1860.

“Source: *Papal Teachings: The Church*, selected and arranged by the Benedictine Monks of Solesmes, translated by Mother E. O’Gorman, R.S.C.J., Manhattanville College of the Sacred Heart, St. Paul Editions, Boston, © 1980, 1962 by Daughters of St. Paul, Library of Congress catalog card number 62-12454, par. #225 (<http://biblelight.net/dragon.htm>).

An apt description, “the phrase ‘little horn’ indicates a ‘little kingdom’. This is one of the distinguishing characteristics of this entity, its small size geographically. The Vatican, the headquarters for the Catholic Church located in Rome, is today the *smallest independent country in the world*, covering only about 108 acres in size. The papal monarchy came up among the divided kingdoms (the 10 horns), after the fall of the Rome Empire, and has had influence greatly disproportionate to its geographical size” (ibid.).

Emperor Justinian of the Eastern Roman Empire (the other leg of Nebuchadnezzar’s image), a zealous defender of the Bishop of Rome, ensured the formal transfer of civil power to the papacy in the wake of the collapse of the Western Roman Empire. The pope was effectively the new ruler of Rome, a Caesar of a bizarre kind: a king in cassock!

“In 533 A.D. Roman Emperor Justinian declared in a letter to the Archbishop of Rome “We have exerted Ourselves to unite all the priests of the East and subject them to the See of Your Holiness”, and that “because you are the head of all the Holy Churches, for We shall exert Ourselves in every way (as has already been stated), to increase the honor and authority of your See.” This was the formal transfer of power from the Emperor of Pagan Rome to the Papacy [see Rev. 13:2, cp 12:3]. It should be noted however, the implementation of this decree did not actually occur until 538 A.D. when a siege of Rome by the Ostrogoths was broken” (<http://biblelight.net/dragon.htm>).

However, the rule of the popes would not bring greater light; it inaugurated the Dark Ages, as a curtain of religious intolerance and ignorance descended on the peoples of Europe and was not lifted for nearly a 1000 years! This period, also known as the Middle Ages, marked the darkest period in European history characterized by the vilest persecution of true believers by the pope of Rome.

This was the age that inaugurated the Crusades and the Catholic machinery of persecution called the Inquisition. By now the Bishop of Rome (the Pope, Italian for father) had attained the status of a ‘universal bishop’, with Emperor Valentinian III (445 AD) recognizing him as “primate of all bishops” (Merrill F. Unger, *The New Unger’s Bible Handbook*, p. 710). The Bishop of Rome was now officially the ‘Pontiff Maximus’ of the church, and with it began an aggressive effort to consolidate the power of the fledgling papal empire on the ruins of the Roman Empire of the West.

A creation of the pagan rulers of Rome, the papacy has always derived its power and legitimacy from the state, and is a matter of historical fact that it has been the practice of the papal church to ride on

the back of the state to assert and to enforce its own authority. This is the church described in Rev. 17 as a woman riding a scarlet-coloured beast:

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

“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.

“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.

“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:

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

“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” (v. 1-6).

While this “beast” (state power) may refer to all the secular powers the papacy has used in its rise to ascendancy, the particular historically identifiable “beast” that readily comes to mind is the Holy Roman Empire which lasted for a little over a 1000 years, from 800 AD to 1806 AD.

What began as a mutually beneficial alliance between pope and king evolved into an empire that was patently a revival of the Western Roman Empire but with the prefix ‘Holy’ to denote its supposed devotion to the Christian cause. As the historical record goes, “Pope Zacharias (741-52) helped Pepin the Short, Charlemagne’s father, to become the king of the Germanic Franks. At the request of [Zacharias’ successor] Stephen II [some sources Stephen III] (752-57), Pepin led his army into Italy, conquered the Lombards, and donated their lands to the Pope (754). This papal kingdom developed into the Papal States, which lasted until 1870. Charlemagne (742-814) built up a European empire and was crowned ‘Emperor of the Romans by Pope Leo II in 800. ... In 962 Otto, a German ruler, was crowned Holy Roman Emperor over a kingdom that lasted till 1806” (*New Unger’s Bible Handbook*, revised by Gary N. Larson, 2005, p.711).

But it was not just a religio-political symbiotic relationship for mutual survival; raw intrigue was at play to the greater advantage of the church of Rome. The donation of Lombard lands to the papacy was not an unprompted gesture of charity to the papacy, but “It was most likely at this meeting that [Pope] Stephen showed his royal host a document of great antiquity. Dusty and crumbling, it had been preserved for centuries in the papal archives. Dated 30 March 315, it was called ‘The Donation of Constantine’. It was a deed or gift from the first Christian emperor to Pope Sylvester”.

In document was a story of how Constantine had been healed of a leprosy by Pope Sylvester after pagan priests had failed to heal him. To show his gratitude to the Pope, “Constantine, in the name of the Senate and the entire Roman people, gave a gift to the Vicar of God’s Son and to all his successors:

‘Inasmuch as our imperial power is earthly, we have decreed that it shall venerate and honour his most holy Roman Church and that the sacred See of Blessed Peter shall be gloriously exalted even above our Empire and earthly throne. ... He shall rule over the four principal Sees, Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople and Jerusalem, as over all churches of God in all the world. ...

‘Finally, lo, we convey to Sylvester, universal Pope, both our place and likewise all provinces and palaces and districts of the city of Rome and Italy and of the regions of the west.’



“Constantine also gave a hitherto unheard of explanation as to why he had taken himself to the East. He wished that Rome, where the Christian religion was founded by the Emperor of Heaven (Christ), should have no rival on earth. Pagan Rome had abdicated in favour of Christian Rome [again see Rev. 13:2].

“King Pepin was impressed. The document proved that the pope was the successor to Peter and Constantine. The emperor had even acted as Sylvester’s groom, inspiring many emperors and kings to initiate his humility at papal coronations in the centuries that followed.

“When Pepin took to the field and routed the Lombards, he handed back to the pope all the lands that were rightly his by the Donation”.

The cold truth, however, was that “The Donation [of Constantine] was a fabrication, probably concocted by a Lateran priest just before Stephen III visited King Pepin. Such was the state of scholarship at that time, no one saw through it, though a schoolboy could do so today. It was not until a papal aide, Lorenzo Valla, took it apart line by line in 1440 that it was proved to be a fraud” (Peter de Rosa, *Vicars of Christ the Dark Side of the Papacy*, pp. 54-57).

And a gigantic fraud it was, but then it was a quintessential hallmark of an antichristian figure as was true of Antiochus Epiphanes and all his likes:

“In his place shall arise a contemptible person to whom royal majesty has not been given. He shall come in without warning and obtain the kingdom by flatteries” (Dan. 11:21 *ESV*; see also 8:23-25). The *New American Standard Bible* (NASB-Update) renders the phrase “obtain the kingdom by flatteries” as “seize the kingdom by intrigue”, *Brenton’s English Septuagint* as “obtain the kingdom by deceitful ways” and the *Good News Bible* as “seize power by trickery”.

Thus at the death of Seleucus IV, the son of Antiochus III the Great and brother of Antiochus Epiphanes, through poison administered by Heliodorus who then usurped the throne (Dan. 11:20), Antiochus Epiphanes succeeded in seizing the throne from the rightful heir, Demetrius, the son of Seleucus, by flatteries and deceit. He “did not lead a bloody coup, but ... “By flattery he won over the kings of Pergamus to his cause, and the Syrians gave in peaceably” (*The Prophecy of Daniel*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977, p. 241).

“Donation of Constantine” was a similar fraudulent exercise and in the crudest form, in so far as Rome was never the founding city of the Christian Church but Jerusalem. But it worked. The Holy Roman Empire emerged as the protector of the pope—fraud and all—and was the main state vehicle used by the papacy, along with other Catholic kingdoms of Western Europe, to crush dissidents—the saints of Jesus whose blood the woman was drunk with.

Initiated in 1095 AD by Pope Urban II, who launched the First Crusade, the Crusades were a series of military campaigns carried out by European rulers between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries with the blessing of the pope ostensibly to capture Jerusalem from the Muslims but were also directed against Jews and other Christians such as the Albigenses, the Waldenses and the Cathars of southern France. In all, eight Crusader Wars were fought at the behest of the papacy:

- First Crusade 1095-99 led by Baldwin of Boulogne, Godfrey of Bouillon, and Peter the Hermit. The crusade succeeded in recapturing Jerusalem from the Muslim Seljuk Turks.

- Second Crusade 1147-49 led by Philip II Augustus of France, [Holy Roman] Emperor Frederick Barbarossa of Germany and Richard I of England. Failed to retake Jerusalem from Saladin who had seized it in 1187.
- Third Crusade 1202-04 led by William of Montferrata, and Baldwin of Hainault.
- Children's Crusade 1212 thousands of children crossed Europe on their way to Palestine but many were sold into slavery or died of disease and hunger.
- Fifth Crusade 1218-21 led by King Andrew of Hungary, Cardinal Pelagius, King John of Jerusalem, and King Hugh of Cyprus. Captured and then lost Damietta, Egypt.
- Sixth Crusade 1228-29 led by Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II. Jerusalem recovered by negotiation with the sultan of Egypt, but the city was finally lost 1244.
- Seventh and Eighth Crusades 1249-54, 1270-72 both led by Louis IX of France. Acre, the last Christian fortress in Syria, was lost 1291.

(Source: *Dictionary of World History*, 1997, pp. 159-160).

Among the many 'heretical' Christians persecuted by the papacy in the Crusade Wars were commandment-keeping, Sabbath-observing believers, the underground Church of the Lord Jesus (Rev. 12:17).

By the end of the Crusade wars, the one Universal (Catholic) Mother Church had ripped into two between the East and the West. The division is formally known as "the Great Schism of 1054" in which the Eastern Roman Catholic Church (under the patriarchate in Constantinople) separated from the Western Roman Catholic Church under the Pope of Rome. The rift was over Easter and icons: "Disputes over the date of Easter, images in the churches, *filioque* (double procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son) and use of unleavened bread in the mass caused the Schism of 1054 and the formation of the Greek Orthodox church of the East" (*New Unger's Bible Handbook*, p. 712).

Europe is still in the fog of the "dark ages", and the Church of Rome has still to deal with 'heretical leftovers' from the Crusade wars! The answer is the Inquisition, a special office created by Pope Gregory IX (1170 – 1241) and vested with judicial powers to search out and try 'heretics'. First called "the Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Inquisition", the office was renamed "the Holy Office" in 1908 and since 1967 "the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith". Though similar in objectives, the Inquisition, unlike the Crusades, would not require "one big army but small groups of equally ruthless men to travel over Christendom in search of unbelief, real or imagined. These men were called Inquisitors. In the pope's name, they were responsible for the most savage and sustained onslaught on human indecency in the history of the race" (*Vicars of Christ the Dark Side of the Papacy*, p. 225).

In the words of Lord Acton, a Catholic, quoted in *Vicars of Christ*, the Inquisition was nothing short of "religious assassination. ... The principle of the Inquisition was murderous'. As to the popes, they 'were not only murderers in the great style, but they made murder a legal basis of the Christian Church and the condition of salvation' (p. 249).

The papal expose` continues: "Even after the Second World War, G.G. Coulton was able to say the Inquisition was responsible for 'the most elaborate, widespread and continuous legal barbarities recorded in all civilized history'. Nothing that the Roman emperors did to Christians can compare with its systematic wickedness in extent or duration" (ibid. p. 249).

The woman that rides the scarlet-colored beast had fulfilled Bible prophecy to a nicety. Accordingly Pope Gregory”, rather than using the church’s own authority, decreed in his Bull establishing the Inquisition that “heretics had to be handed over to the civil authorities for burning. If they repented, they were to be imprisoned for life. No pope ever took up the torch of terror with more enthusiasm” (ibid. p. 226)

In the end between 50million to 120million people perished in the Inquisition—cold-bloodedly murdered—mirroring John’s ghastly vision: “And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. When I saw her, I marveled greatly” (Rev. 17:6 ESV).

These murdered saints are the ones whose souls cry out from under the altar of God in heaven:

“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:

“And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” (Rev. 6:9-10).

In answer to their plea for God to avenge their persecutors and murderers, “ white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they *were*, should be fulfilled” (v. 11).

The latter saints to be persecuted and some killed refer more specifically to 666-era saints who disobey the universal decrees of the antichrist commanding all to worship him, his image and to receive his mark and the number of his name (Rev. 13:8, 15-18). These together with the earlier martyred saints shall reign with Christ as judges and king-priests on this earth for a thousand years:

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years” (Rev. 20:4).

As surely as the prophesied persecution of believers by pagan and papal Rome was fulfilled and witnessed by history, so will the prophesied “great tribulation” of the last saints come to pass at the appointed time. (See Matt. 24:21, Rev. 7:14).

But is the aftermath of Rome’s fall all about apostasy and persecution of true believers?

### **A Mixture of Weak and Strong: The Kingdom will not Cohere**

Daniel interpreted the toes of Nebuchadnezzar’s statue (Rome in its fragmented state) thus:

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

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

“And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay” (Dan. 2:41-43).

This was history before it happened. The Roman Empire after its fall in 476 AD not only disintegrated into ten kingdoms, but also brought about a Europe riven with war and strife. This was the state of Europe throughout virtually all three sub-periods of the Middle Ages: The **early Middle Ages** (5<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> centuries) characterized by the westward movement of barbarian pagan Germanic tribes into the European heartland where they adopted the vestiges of Roman traditions and institutions, converted to Roman Catholicism and founded feudal kingdoms, a highly stratified social system of defined rights and obligations from the king to the common landless labourer; the **high Middle Ages** (12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries) which saw the consolidation of feudal states, the founding of monasteries, the growth of European influence during the Crusades matched with growth in trade and population; and the **later Middle Ages** (14<sup>th</sup>—15<sup>th</sup> centuries) when the **Black Death**, a great epidemic of bubonic plague, decimated between one-third and half of the population of Europe amid incessant warfare and social transformation under influence of new nation-states. This was also the age that saw the first European voyages of exploration and discovery, after a long period of cultural and technological decline in contrast to civilizations in Asia and Africa in the great states of the central and western Sudan.

By now Islam, the militant monotheistic religion Mohammed founded in Arabia in 622 AD, had become a force to be reckoned with, and it added its own pressure to a conflict-ridden Europe with its policy of aggressive proselytization through invasions and wars. Apart from the Crusades fought outside Europe, Moslem forces fought European Christians on European land on numerous occasions. The Iberian peninsula, which included Spain, Portugal and Gibraltar, witnessed most of these wars and was in fact a scene of almost constant warfare between the two sides. Separated by the Mediterranean Sea from North Africa, which the Moslems had conquered and converted to Islam, the Iberian peninsula was the next prized target of Moslem conquest, but they were successfully repulsed by the Europeans after long years of war.

Still, Islam had a significant victory in a former domain of the great Roman Empire: Constantinople, the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, fell to the Muslim Ottoman Turks in 1453, after a 1000-year history beginning with Constantine 's relocation there in 330 AD.

*Pax Romana* (Roman imperial peace) was long gone. Whatever the underlying causes and motives, Europe was in the ferment of war and social change; "iron and clay" would not cleave to one another. That's the spirit of that persists to this day among the community of nations, even in the face of globalization. Another world-ruling empire would not rise until the final revival of the Roman Empire with the last rule of the antichrist.

Until then, it's a world in perpetual turmoil: "And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for *such things* must needs be; but the end *shall not be* yet.

"For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these *are* the beginnings of sorrows" (Mark 13:7-8).

By the end of the Middle Ages, Europe, the dismembered Roman Empire, was on the threshold of profound changes. The world was on its way ...

## Towards the Modern Era

The two major phenomena that shaped European history at this time was the rebirth of learning known as the *Renaissance* and the *Protestant Reformation*. The Renaissance, which flourished between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, was marked by a resurgence of interest in classical Greek and Roman culture and literature spurred by a love of knowledge and free thinking.

After centuries of virtually unchallenged authority, in which dissenting Christian groups like the Waldenses and the Lollards were brutally suppressed, a religious and political movement arose in 16<sup>th</sup> century Europe to call for an end to abuses in the Roman Catholic Church. The torch-bearer of what came to be called the **Reformation** was Martin Luther, a monk. On 31<sup>st</sup> October, 1517, he issued a denunciation of the papal practice of selling indulgences by which sinners were purportedly spared punishment in purgatory. With the support of the absolute monarchies in Europe, the Reformation eventually led to the establishment of Protestant Churches which still largely cling to Catholic teachings except on those points of disagreement raised by the dissident-reformers (Rev. 17:5; Isa. 4:1). Roman Catholic hegemony over all Europe had been broken.

By this time, the minds of the common people kept in the fetters of ignorance were beginning to be unchained. The invention of printing by Johannes Gutenberg in about 1440 aided the long-impeded effort to translate the Bible into the common language of the people. In fact, one of the first books printed by Gutenberg was a Bible dated 1456 (*The World Book Encyclopedia*, Vol. 2, p. 220, 1974). In 1611 the King James Version of the Bible was printed under the auspices of King James I of England.

By now, the man of Europe was on a new adventure—world expedition and conquest! If you ever wondered how Babylonian culture and systems came to be globalized, the answer is the European exploration and colonization of Asia, Africa and the Americas beginning in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. As they constituted the “toes” of the Babylonian system, being the remnants of divided Rome, the last successor to Babylon, the European explorers did not only set sail in search of more opportunities for trade and conquest but also carried along with them the acquired customs and systems of Babylon which they passed on to the non-European peoples they colonized.

Today, Babylon, popularly known as ‘Western civilization’ is a global phenomenon just as the Bible prophecy foretold:

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

“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.

“And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues” (Rev. 17:1-2, 15).

It’s for this reason that in Isaiah 13 the punishment decreed against Babylon (v.1-5) is ultimately inflicted on the whole world which at the time of “the day of the LORD” will have been ‘Babylonized’ in all aspects:

“Howl ye; for the day of the LORD *is* at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.

“Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt:

“And they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be amazed one at another; their faces *shall be as* flames.

“Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.  
“For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.  
“And I will punish the world for *their* evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.  
“I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.  
“Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger” (vv. 6-13).

God vows to punish the world for their evil, but curiously this punishment is bound up with the invasion and overthrow of historical Babylon that once existed in modern-day Iraq by the Medes. This is then followed up by Babylon’s eventual ruin (vv. 17-22).

The simple explanation is that destruction of historical Babylon foreshadows the destruction of the world Babylonian system by the LORD in the last day when He comes to judge humanity.

In the meantime, a ‘great’ new nation was rising in the new world, America. The search for refuge from political and religious persecution mingled with the adventurous spirit of exploration set many Europeans on a voyage to ‘the new world’ of the Americas. Having started off as British colonies, the 13 original states of the United States launched a successful revolt (war of independence) against the King of England and declared independence on July 4, 1776. This nation that sprung up on a sparsely populated continent would play a prominent role in end-time Biblical prophecy: “And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth. And it had two horns like a lamb, but spoke like a dragon” (Rev. 13:11 *LITV*).

The success of the American Revolution was set to upset the socio-political order in Europe; the American ideals of equality and liberty attracted the interest of many thoughtful Europeans. In 1789 the French National Assembly issued the *Declaration of the Rights of Man*, and the French Revolution was born—the culmination of a series of popular agitations for political reforms that began around 1787. Taken prisoner by a Parisian mob in August 1792, King Louis XVI was *guillotined* (beheaded) in January 1793 along with thousands of others in a *Reign of Terror* which followed his execution for ‘treason’. The French monarchy was now history.

Apart from the royal family of France, one of the casualties of the French Revolution was the papacy. In an effort to punish the pope for his refusal to revoke the papal bulls, rescripts, and decrees issued since the beginning of the Revolution in the ecclesiastical affairs of the country, the ruling executive of France, the *Directory*, dispatched a young General in the army Napoleon Bonaparte (1769 – 1821) to Rome to depose Pope Pius VI and forbade any further succession to the papal chair. The pope sued for peace, and Napoleon negotiated the Treaty of Tolentino on 19<sup>th</sup> Feb., 1797 by which the papal government of Rome was to cede certain territories and pay heavy reparations.

The Treaty was, however, not to be. On 28<sup>th</sup> December of that same year, riots broke out in Rome, partly as an expression of public anger at the papal government, and a French Officer, General Duphot, was killed by papal troops. In response, the *Directory*, on January 1, 1798, ordered General Berthier, then in Milan, to invade Rome and to establish a Roman republic.

General Berthier marched to Rome and entered it unopposed on 10 February 1798. Then, as Napoleon’s representative, he proclaimed the Roman Republic and demanded that Pope Pius VI renounce his temporal authority.

When he refused, he was taken prisoner, and on 20 February was escorted from the Vatican to Siena. From there, he was taken to the Certosa near Florence and finally to the French fortress at Valence, in Dauphiny. He arrived there on 14<sup>th</sup> July, 1799, broken with fatigue and sorrow. He died there on the 28<sup>th</sup>. Thus ended 1260 years of papal supremacy, from 538 AD to 1798 AD. French Republican troops had inflicted a “deadly wound” on the papacy. (Sources: “The Deadly Wound of Rev. 13:3” <http://biblelight.net/h-wound.htm>; [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope\\_Pius\\_VI#French\\_Revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Pius_VI#French_Revolution)).

Meanwhile, back home in France, the hotbed of the Revolution, maladministration and economic difficulties continued to breed discontent among the people.

The time was ripe for a new champion to emerge. The man of the moment was Napoleon Bonaparte (b-d 1769 -1821), a dedicated revolutionary and a national hero. He seized power from the five-member *Directory* in a coup d'état in 1799.

Napoleon quickly moved to consolidate his hold on power as a ‘constitutional’ dictator and then sought to create a French empire. After a string of military victories, Napoleon conquered most of Europe until he was defeated at the Battle of Waterloo in June 1815 by a British-led alliance. Napoleon’s expansionist dreams of a ‘fifth empire’ after Rome were now consigned to the dustbin of history.

The new European powers were the victorious *Quadruple Alliance*, Great Britain, Russia, Prussia and Austria. They convened the *Congress of Vienna* between 1814 and 1815 to hammer out a general political settlement for post-Napoleonic Europe. Careful not to foment resentment and possibly another wave of disorder in France in particular and elsewhere in Europe, the Congress did not inflict heavy penalties on the French. France only lost territories it had conquered in Italy, Germany, Belgium and Holland and a few colonies.

For the rest of Europe, that meant dramatic political changes, virtually redrawing the political map of Europe. The Congress in its “final act created a kingdom of the Netherlands, a German confederation of 39 states, Lombardy-Venetia subject to Austria, and the kingdom of Poland. Monarchs were restored in Spain, Naples, Piedmont, Tuscany, and Modena; Louis XVIII was confirmed king of France” (*Dictionary of World History*, p. 609).

The relative stability that came to Europe after the Vienna settlement allowed the slow but steady spread of the *Industrial Revolution* which had started in England in the 1780s to continental Europe. By the end of the nineteenth century, several European countries as well as the United States had industrialized at varying levels. The *Industrial Revolution* brought radical changes to human experience. Its hitherto unknown technological innovations not only changed patterns of work but also “transformed the social class structure and the way people thought about class, and eventually even altered the international balance of political power” (*A History of Western Society*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition Vol. C 1995, p. 727).

The Europe and the world would not be the same again. It was not just an industrializing Europe, but a Europe of competing ideologies such as capitalism versus socialism and liberalism versus conservatism, all of which found expression in outbursts of nationalism in various European nation states. This was the era of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, authors of *The Communist Manifesto*.

And it was also the era of a new imperialist thrust by the European powers in search of more raw materials and international markets for their industrial goods, besides bringing them national prestige. Africa bore the brunt of the European imperialist competition in what has become known in history as *The Scramble for Africa*. Between 1884 and 1885, the European powers held the *Berlin Conference* where they agreed on the rules for dividing the African continent among themselves.

Daniel's vision of strong and weak nations mingling but not cleaving to one another had been fulfilled—and at a time of increased knowledge and travel (Dan. 12:4). The Romanization (Westernization) of the world could only happen at a faster pace.

The Vienna settlement stood the test of time—though with considerable challenges—for hundred years until it the First World War swept it away. Indeed it had begun to fray with the further political re-arrangements that took place in Europe in the years that followed the Vienna conference. Those new political changes were marked by the emergence of rival European powers and alliances made up of the *Central European Powers* (German, Austria-Hungary, and allies), the *Triple Entente* (Britain and the British Empire, France, and Russia) and *Neutral States*.

No wonder, within 20 days of the outbreak of the First World War (1914 - 1918), triggered by the assassination of the heir to the Austrian throne in Sarajevo, Serbia, “the major European countries were engulfed in war, largely because of the alliances which had committed them to support each other in the event of threats to their security or interests. ... An estimated 10million lives were lost and twice that number were wounded. It was fought on the eastern and western fronts, in the Middle East, Africa, and at sea. The peace treaty of Versailles 1919 was the formal end to the war” after Germany surrendered in November 1918 (*Dictionary of World History*, pp. 630 - 631). The USA had entered the war against Germany in April- May 1917. That was the year British forces under General Allenby captured Jerusalem from the Turks.

Again, the nations would not cleave one to another.

The Treaty of Versailles established the *League of Nations* to solve international disputes by arbitration. Established in 1920 in Geneva, League of Nations had representatives from all states throughout the world. It however had two weaknesses: the United States refused to join, and it had no power to enforce its decisions. Two organs of the League which survived into the UN after the former's dissolution in 1946 were the *International Labour Organization* (ILO) and the *Permanent Court of International Justice* in the Hague, Netherlands.

Internationalism had born, although a major test lay ahead. The test was the Second World War fought from 1939 to 1943.

The intervening period (i.e. the years after WW1 & before WW2) had seen the establishment of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) with the successful 1917 *Bolshevik (Communist) Revolution* in Russia. 1917 was also the year of the *Balfour Declaration* which promised British government support for the establishment of “a Jewish national home” in Palestine.

From the early 1920s to the early 1930s, several *fascist* or authoritarian governments had come to power in Europe, particularly Benito Mussolini in Italy (1922) and Adolf Hitler and his Nazi party in Germany (1932). In 1929, Mussolini signed a *concordat* with the papacy (the *Lateran Treaty*) giving back to the Pope 108 acres of territory in the city of Rome out of the total seized by the Republican forces in 1798. The area is called the Vatican, an independent papal state and the seat of the Pope. The “deadly wound” is beginning to heal (Rev. 13:3). As it did with its Italian counterpart, the Vatican would also sign a concordat with the Nazi government of Germany in 1933.



Six years later, Nazi Germany sparked off the Second World War with its invasion of Poland on 1<sup>st</sup> September, 1939. The war was fought between the *Axis* powers of Germany, Italy and Japan on one side and the *Allied* powers of Britain, the Commonwealth, France, the USA, the USSR, and China on the other. “An estimated 55 million lives were lost, 20 million of them citizens of the USSR. The war was fought in the Atlantic and Pacific theatres. In 1945, Germany surrendered (May) but Japan fought on until the USA dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Aug)” (*Dictionary of World History*, p. 635).

Europe lay in ruins after the war, and recovery began in earnest. Already the leaders of the victorious Allies, especially the ‘Big Three’ Franklin Roosevelt of USA (who died just before the war ended), Winston Churchill of UK and Joseph Stalin of USSR, had committed themselves to the idea of a United Nations to promote international peace and cooperation among nations. “On 25 April 1945, the [UN Conference on International Organization](#) began in San Francisco, attended by 50 governments and a number of non-governmental organizations involved in drafting the [United Nations Charter](#). The UN officially came into existence on 24 October 1945 upon ratification of the Charter by the five permanent members of the [Security Council](#)—France, the [Republic of China](#), the [Soviet Union](#), the United Kingdom and the United States—and by a majority of the other 46 signatories” ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_nations#History](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_nations#History)).

Again, internationalism (now being served by a stronger world body) is the answer. Would the nations now cleave to one another?

Differences in ideology, mutual suspicion, and postwar disagreements between the former USSR and Eastern Europe on one hand and the USA and Western Europe on the other hand brought about a new world war—the *Cold War*! As Churchill aptly described it, “an iron curtain” had descended across Europe dividing Germany and the continent into two as Europe split into two hostile pro-US and pro-Russia camps. But the *Cold War* was bigger than Europe. It “was exacerbated by propaganda, covert activity by intelligence agencies, and economic sanctions; it intensified at times of conflict anywhere in the world” (*Dictionary of World History*, p. 143).

Nevertheless, internationalism thrived inaugurating an age of international organizations. The International Monetary Fund was established on 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 1944; the Arab League on 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 1945; the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development popularly known as the World Bank on 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 1945; the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on 26<sup>th</sup> June, 1945; Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) on 16<sup>th</sup> October, 1945; World Health Organization on 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 1946; Organization of American States (OAS) in 1948; World Council of Churches (WCC) in August 1948; North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on 4<sup>th</sup> April, 1949; World Customs Organization on 15<sup>th</sup> December, 1950; the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1952 now evolved into the European Union (EU); International Finance Corporation (IFC) on 25<sup>th</sup> May, 1955; International Development Association (IDA) on 24<sup>th</sup> September, 1960; World Food Program (WFP) on 24<sup>th</sup> November, 1961; Organization of African Unity (now AU) in 1963; Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) on 8<sup>th</sup> December, 1964; African Development Bank on 10<sup>th</sup> September, 1964; Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on 8<sup>th</sup> August, 1967; European Economic and Monetary Union on 1-2 December, 1969; West African Development Bank (WADB) on 14<sup>th</sup> November, 1973; International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in November 1974; Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on 28<sup>th</sup> May, 1975 to name just a few.

At this same time of increased international cooperation, agitations for self-rule intensified in colonial Africa and elsewhere. The first postwar nation to gain independence was (British) India in 1947. This was followed in May 1948 by Israel’s attainment of Statehood after taking in multitudes

of Jewish exiles fleeing the Nazi death camps in Europe and a successful revolt against the British who then had mandate over the Holy Land. Then “all the trees” began to shoot forth leaves all of a sudden:

“And He told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree, and all the trees.

“As soon as they come out in leaf, you see for yourselves and know that the summer is already near.

“So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near” (Luke 21:29-31 *ESV*).

The “fig tree” Christ mentions is symbolic of the nation of Israel (Hos. 9:10) and “all the trees” other nations of the world, especially those who not only share cultural affinity with Israel but also a similar historical fate. After years of being under oppression as stateless peoples, Christ indicates in the parable that, the national revival of the “fig tree” and “all the trees” will take place in the “summer” (i.e. harvest time, Amos 8:1-3; Rev. 14:14-19) of the earth when the visible, universal Kingdom of God is about to appear.

Hence after Israel’s restoration in 1948 (see Deut. 30:1-5; Isa. 43:5-6, 66:8), many nations in Africa broke free from the chains of colonialism: Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia in 1956; Ghana in 1957; Guinea in 1958; Central African Republic, Cameroon, Chad, Zaire (now DR Congo), Benin (formerly Dahomey), Gabon, Ivory Coast (Cote D’voire), Malagasy, Togo, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Congo (Brazzaville), Senegal, and Somalia in 1960; Sierra Leone and Tanzania in 1961; Algeria, Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda in 1962; Kenya and Zanzibar in 1963; Malawi, Zambia and The Gambia in 1964; Botswana in 1965; Lesotho in 1966, and Swaziland in 1968.

All this while, the world has been moving towards a *New World Order*, necessitating changes now and then to the prevailing geopolitical order. Hardly would one superpower have its way in a world ruled by two superpowers as it happened after WWII (with USA and USSR), but by 1989 the USSR was a pale shadow of its former glory. The Berlin wall which divided Germany into communist East and capitalist West was torn down and German reunified in 1990.

The USSR has disintegrated. The world is now a uni-polar world. America is the sole superpower. Against the background of the American-Iraq war of 1991, dubbed “Operation Desert Storm”, President George Bush Sr. spoke of the dawn of a “new world order”.

The world would never be the same again. Fast-forward to 2011 and President Barack Obama gives an update on the ‘new world order’ (though not in as many words) in his UN address:

**“From Tripoli to Misratah to Benghazi — today, Libya is free. Yesterday, the leaders of a new Libya took their rightful place beside us, and this week, the United States is reopening our Embassy in Tripoli. This is how the international community is supposed to work — nations standing together for the sake of peace and security; individuals claiming their rights.”**

**“[T]he United States has imposed strong sanctions on Syria's leaders. We have supported a transfer of power that is responsive to the Syrian people. Many of our allies have joined us in this effort. But for the sake of Syria — and the peace and security of the world — we must speak with one voice. There is no excuse for inaction. Now is the time for the United Nations Security Council to sanction the Syrian regime, and to stand with the Syrian people.”** (Excerpts of President Obama’s speech delivered to the UN General Assembly on 21<sup>st</sup> September, 2011).

Radical Islam is the face of international terrorism (especially since September 11, 2001), but a new Islamic militant movement (‘Arab Spring’) is seemingly pro-democracy and has won the backing of the West. America and her western allies call the shots at the UN and virtually rule the world effecting ‘regime change’ by military force (as in Iraq and Libya) or by political pressure (as in Egypt)

or combination of both. Of, course Washington never acts outside ‘international law’; a UN Security Council Resolution gives its actions ‘international legitimacy’—never mind that many “weak”, *veto-less* nations protest.

The lamb-like beast speaks like a dragon (Rev. 3:11). It’s only a matter of time before he compels all (in concert with other world institutions) to worship the beast and his image and to receive his mark in their foreheads (vv. 12-17).

The world is on the cusp of the rule of the antichrist foreshadowed by such new world order systems as cashless transactions, regional/supranational currencies, international governance institutions (e.g. ICC), and surveillance technologies (‘Big Brother’) which are able to monitor the movements of people and track them down. There isn’t much time is left.

### **Vengeance—Soon to Break Out!**

All the evidence—prophetic and geopolitical—points to the fact that Babylon is on the threshold of her final revival before her final doom. Prophetically the die is cast:

“And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast *it* into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all” (Rev. 18:21; see also Jer. 51:60-64).

As true believers, let’s always keep in mind that “the end of all things is near” and therefore we should be sober and prayerful (1 Pet. 4:7).

Sobriety is the last thing ‘end-time Babylonians’ are enthusiastic about. They are in an inebriated state of careless living arising from a false sense of security. The prophet Isaiah said of historical Babylon:

“Therefore hear now this, *thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly*, 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” (Isa. 47:8).

A life of wanton pleasure, in which all we care about is the world and what it has to offer us, is the very ‘social trend’ Christ warns us against being sucked into:

“And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and *so that day come upon you unawares*.

“For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

“Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man” (Luke 21:34-36).

As our Lord makes it plain, it’s those followers of His who endure in the truth to the end in a time of widespread lawlessness (promoted in no small part by false prophets) that shall be saved (Mat. 24:11-13).

End-time Babylon will soon fall under unprecedented divine judgment. As it happened in the life of national Israel, Babylon by her rejection of the light of God’s truth has brought upon herself “days of vengeance” (see Luke 21:20-24 and Matt. 23:34-38).

By the clock of end-time prophecy, we have drawn very close to the time when Christ will break the fifth seal of the 7 seals of Revelation. (The preceding 4 seals are all facts of history as of now—the rise of the papacy and his crusaders and inquisitors/executioners—with types and shadows present down through the post-ascension era of “the last days”, Matt. 24:3-8; cp Acts 2:17. For more on this, request our booklet: “The Mount Olivet Prophecy of Christ and the Book of Revelation”).

As far as Babylon’s ultimate end is concerned, the fifth seal forebodes utter doom for end-time “Babylon the great” which the 6<sup>th</sup> seal sets in motion and the 7 trumpets and 7 last plagues actualize. We read in Rev. 6:9-11:

“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:

“And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

“And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they *were*, should be fulfilled”.

The prophetic text indicates a time gap—“rest for a little season”. This is the reason why the martyred saints’ plea for vengeance on the Babylonian world, though accepted by God, is not immediately carried out. The vengeance will only be unleashed when the end-time counterparts of the early N.T. saints are also persecuted and some murdered for their refusal to worship the beast (the antichrist) and to receive his 666 mark.

Revelation 20:4 clearly makes such a distinction:

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years”.

The second group of martyred saints represent the last saints who will suffer persecution under the last Babylonian antichrist. Since this persecution, called the “great tribulation” (Matt. 24:21; Dan. 12:1; Jer. 30:7), has not taken place, it presupposes that the antichrist under the last Babylonian system will have come to power by this time. Thus the last persecution of the last saints hinted at in Rev. 6:11 anticipates Rev. 13 which, together with other chapters, describes the rise of the antichrist and his worldwide dictatorial rule.

Since the end of the Second World War in 1945, the world has been in preparation for the coming of the world government of the antichrist. As we have previously studied, this world government is steadily taking shape as it rises from the “sea” or “bottomless pit” (Rev. 13:1, 11:7, 17:8). When it finally ‘rises’ from the sea, , it will have three main pillars: a one-world governmental authority (Rev. 13:3, 7, 16; 17:8, 15; 16:13-14); a one-world amalgamated religion (Rev. 13:8, 12-15; 17:1-2; 18:23); and a one-world economy (Rev. 13:16-18; 18:3, 11).

After being in power for three and half years or 42 months, having rode to power on the back of worldwide popular support (Rev. 13:3-4; 2 Thess. 2:11-12; cp Ps 81:11-12; Hosea 8:11-12; Ez. 20:24-26, 39; Rom. 1:21-28), Babylon’s cup of iniquity will reach its full (Rev. 18:5)—and the sixth seal will be opened!

By then, the remnant Church will have preached the truth in all nations and those who believe sealed in their foreheads with the law of God and His Spirit (Matt. 24:14; Rev. 7:1-9; Isa. 8:16; Eph. 4:30).

Once God is satisfied that the required number of the saved has been reached and sealed against His judgments (Rev. 9:4; 16:2), the judgments of the sixth seal will be unleashed. The LORD states the main reason for the outbreak of the plagues in Isa. 24:5-6:

“The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.

“Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left” (Isa. 24:5-6).

In the other words, the whole world will wilfully and enthusiastically participate in the abominations of the antichrist and therefore as culpable as he. (See Rev. 11:7-13). At the close of the unleashing of the seven trumpets and the seven last plagues which spring from the sixth seal (Rev. 6:12-17) but triggered by the seventh seal (Rev. 8:1), “few men will be left”. In a sense, the sixth seal is a summary of the overall events and outcomes of the seven trumpets and seven last plagues combined. That explains its seeming tone of finality and allusion to Armageddon (the last plague), even though there’s the seventh seal yet to be opened.

In advance of the trumpet and bowl judgments in which major calamities will strike the earth, the world has been experiencing increasing ‘natural’ disasters in recent times. While these ‘natural disasters’ are partly in fulfilment of Jesus’ Mount Olivet prophecy (Matt. 24:7 & Luke 21:25), they are in reality a dress rehearsal compared to terrible plagues of the seven trumpets and seven bowls. Still, to get an idea of how devastating the apocalyptic plagues could be, let’s have a look at the following media report:

### **Signs of the Times: Natural Disasters Prevalent in 2011**

By Dale Hurd

CBN News Sr. Reporter

Sunday, September 04, 2011

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. -- The year 2011 began with a flood in Australia so vast it turned an area almost twice as large as Texas into a disaster zone.

The first half of 2011 saw thousands of lives lost to natural disasters and made it the most expensive on record in terms of property damage.

In January, earthquakes hit Argentina, Chile, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Tonga. In February, they hit Burma, the Pacific Islands and the big one, in Christchurch, New Zealand.

The quake struck at midday. Buildings were toppled. Scores were buried under rubble and 181 died. Survivors who crawled from collapsed office buildings were stunned.

One woman who appeared dazed, said of her office building, "It just came down. Like, right down."

The monster earthquake of 2011 in Japan was like something out of a science fiction movie. From 20 miles under the surface of the Pacific, the quake created a wall of water 130 feet high that traveled six miles inland, causing cars and boats to bob like toys.

It was a quake so powerful it moved the island of Honshu eight feet. More than 15,000 people died and nearly 5,000 are still missing.

Then in a terrible twist, after the quake knocked out power at the Fukushima nuclear plant, the tsunami washed out its backup generators, the last line of defense against overheating. It would be the world's first triple meltdown, spreading radiation over a wide area.

It was the worst disaster to afflict Japan since World War II.

#### U.S. Tornado Outbreak

The world was still in shock when the southern and eastern United States experienced the worst rash of tornadoes in recorded weather history. The 2011 "Super Outbreak" included four EF-5 tornadoes, and led to almost 350 deaths and more than \$6 billion in insured losses.

Then just weeks later on a Sunday afternoon in May, a mile-wide multiple vortex EF-5 tornado plowed through Joplin, Mo., obliterating parts of the city, killing 159 people and causing an estimated \$2 billion in insured losses.

The insurance industry was left reeling. Americans were in shock.

Vinson Synan, author of 19 books and the dean emeritus at [Regent University](#) in Virginia Beach, Va., says the unprecedented string of calamities is forcing many Americans to ask, "Why?"

"It's a sobering thing, for even natural man to face up to natural disasters that don't make any sense at all. And to hit randomly in the world, and may hit you," Synan said. "And the question, in the back of their minds -- 'What does this mean?'"

"So I think it brings people to question the ultimate end of everything," he explained.

And unfortunately, the world's worst disasters could still be ahead, like a category five hurricane making a direct hit on a large American city".

(Pasted from <http://www.cbn.com/cbnnews/healthscience/2011/August/Sign-of-the-Times-Natural-Disasters-Prevalent-in-2011/>).

The disasters reviewed in the above article are not fiction; they were real disasters which dislocated the lives of real people in real time with horrific consequences. Sadly, many remain unrepentant, and so Babylon and her abominable people will have more of the cataclysmic dose with the opening of the sixth seal towards the end of the 42-month rule of the antichrist:

"And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

"And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.

"And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer *it* with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

"And the smoke of the incense, *which came* with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

"And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast *it* into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake" (Rev. 8:1-5).

Call it 'calm before a storm', and the silence that follows the opening of the seventh seal is pregnant with meaning: God has been silent for long in the face of human rebellion, but He will not be silent in judgment (Ps 50:3, 83:1). The trumpets signal that "the day of the LORD" has dawned; God is at war with rebellious humanity and His judgments are about to break out on them. We read in Joel 2:

“Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand;  
“A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations” (vv. 1-2; cp Num. 10:9).

Since incense burning on the altar stands for the prayer of the saints, it follows that the association of the trumpets with the incense-prayer of the saints signify that the judgments of the trumpets are a direct response to the prayer of the saints for vengeance on the Babylonian world, particularly those saints whose souls on the opening of the fifth seal cried out from under the altar of God for vengeance on the inhabitants of the earth who persecuted and killed them (Rev. 6:9-11).

As a sign that their prayer had been answered for “the smoke of the incense [prayer] ascends up before God”, the angel beside the altar takes fills his censer with fire, a symbol of judgment (Isa. 33:14; 2 Pet. 2:6; 3:7) from the altar and casts it to the earth, “and there were voices, and thundering, and lightnings, and an earthquake”—a foretaste of the devastating plagues to afflict the earth!

“And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.  
“The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.  
“And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood;  
“And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

“And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters;  
“And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.  
“And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.  
“And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabters of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!” (vv. 6-13).

As He did in Egypt prior to the *Exodus*, God sends a clear message to the world that He is the Creator and has power over His creation (‘nature’) on which rebellious mankind depend for their very survival. In succession the LORD strikes vegetation and food crops of the earth to bring on famine, the sea to decrease fish stocks and cripple international maritime trade, rivers and water bodies to poison one-third of the drinkable waters of the earth, and the sun and the stars to plunge a section of humanity into unexpected darkness. The ‘life-support systems’ of the earth have been severely damaged, but God is not finished with end-time Babylon yet. The “star” that falls from heaven on the rivers and fountains could well be a comet or an asteroid on a divine mission to earth, but King David’s prayer for God to punish transgression has only been partly answered: “*It is time for Thee, LORD, to work [act]: for they have made void Thy law*” (Ps. 119:126). Three more “woes” follow.

“And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

“And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

“And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

“And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

“And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment *was* as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.

“And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.

“And the shapes of the locusts *were* like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads *were* as it were crowns like gold, and their faces *were* as the faces of men.

“And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as *the teeth* of lions.

“And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings *was* as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.

“And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power *was* to hurt men five months.

“And they had a king over them, *which is* the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue *is* Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath *his* name Apollyon.

“One woe is past; *and*, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.

“And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,

“Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

“And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.

“And the number of the army of the horsemen *were* two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.

“And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses *were* as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.

“By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.

“For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails *were* like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.

“And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:

“Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts (Rev. 9:1-21).

The “locusts” look more like demonic creatures considering where they come from—“the bottomless pit”—and the designation of their leader: “the angel of the bottomless pit”. Presently, some of the wicked fallen angels are kept in chains of darkness in this unseen spiritual abyss (Jude 1:6; 2 Pet. 2:4). This was the place the “legion” of demons begged the Lord Jesus not to send them to when He cast them out of the demoniac of Gadarenes who lived in tombs (Luke 8:26-31). Because of man’s unremitting evil God will send an angel (the “star from heaven”) at the sounding of the fifth



trumpet to release some of these wicked spirits to earth to torment the 666 world of Babylon to the exclusion of God's elect who have His seal in their foreheads.

But could these "locusts" (given how they are described) refer to some modern armaments of "iron" yet to be invented or even to the 'robotic soldiers' now being experimented? Whatever they are, the fact remains that Apollyon, "the angel of the bottomless pit", is the one who controls them.

Ever a volatile region, the Middle East catches fire afresh as "the four angels" bound in the river Euphrates are loosed. These four angels are not to be confused with actual angels nor the four angels of Rev. 7 holding back the four winds of the earth to restrain the nations from an all-out world war. They refer to powerful forces supernaturally held in check until the blowing of the sixth trumpet in a region characterized by mistrust, sectarian violence and intractable conflicts. Indeed, going by the unresolved tensions there, it cannot be gainsaid that the conditions that could give rise to the war described in the prophetic text already exist in the Middle East. From the Arab-Israeli conflict to the Sunni-Shiite divide (between Saudi Arabia and Iran) to the ongoing uprising in Syria and the Iran-Israel war of words over the former's development of nuclear arms, the Middle East is a powder keg that can explode at any time with dire economic and political repercussions for the wider world.

But that's until the sixth angel sounds as the 42-month-rule of the antichrist comes to an end. The brimstone and fire-spitting horses which also have breastplates of iron are clear allusions to modern weaponry like tanks and chemical weapons but which John could only describe in terms he was familiar with. With 200 million troops involved, the war is likely to draw in a number of non-Middle East nations who have vested interests in the region. The result will be a fearsome war fought with the latest conventional, nuclear and biological weapons. The bloodbath will wipe one-third of mankind off the face of the earth. But people will still not have learnt to honour God even at this stage. The "third woe" is at the door (Rev. 11:14).

"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

"And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

"Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power, and hast reigned.

"And the nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

"And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail" (Rev. 11:15-19).

The seventh trumpet announces the overthrow of all worldly kingdoms to be replaced by the Kingdom of Christ over all. The 24 elders fall down in worship in acknowledgement and praise of the irreversible certainty of the message of the seventh trumpet blast. Again, the transgression of divine Law is the basic reason for the divine judgments on the earth set to culminate in the overthrow of all Babylonian world kingdoms. Hence when the ark of God's testament is opened in the heavenly temple, it is instantly followed by lightning, voices, thunder, an earthquake and hail. Another set of plagues, more devastating than the first, are on their way to earth. It's by these plagues that God will complete the overthrow and destruction of the last Babylonian world empire!

## The Seven Last Plagues

“And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

“And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, *and* over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

“And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous *are* thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true *are* Thy ways, Thou King of saints.

“Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for *Thou* only *art* holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest.

“And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:

“And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.

“And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

“And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from His power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled” (Rev. 15:1-8).

The “seven last plagues” contain the fullness of the wrath of God, and they unfold against the background of the victory of the end-time saints over the Babylonian beast system which is now in the throes of God’s severe judgment arising from man’s arrant disregard for God’s Law represented by the testimony of God opened in the temple in heaven (see Ex. 25:16, 40:22; Deut. 10:1-5; Isa. 66:24). While the plagues are breaking out on the sinful world of Babylon, the temple is filled with smoke from the glowing glory of God to indicate that no further intercession on behalf of sinners will be accepted by God, “till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled”. (See Lam. 3:44). The patience of God has been exhausted. Man has flagrantly refused to repent and gone ahead to enthusiastically embraced the 666 government of the beast (Rev. 13:3-4, 8), even though the gospel of repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus has been preached for 2000 years in which God has exercised great forbearance and given all people opportunity to repent (2 Pet. 3:1-9; Rev. 14:6-11). Finally, transgression must be punished.

“And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

“And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and *upon* them which worshipped his image.

“And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead *man*: and every living soul died in the sea.

“And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.

“And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.

“For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.

“And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous *are* thy judgments.

“And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.

“And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.

“And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,

“And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

“And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

“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.

“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.

“Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed *is* he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

“And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

“And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.

“And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, *and* so great.

“And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

“And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

“And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, *every stone* about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great” (Rev. 16:1-21).

Judgment roars from the temple of God—the place of worship and supplication and prayer for pardon and atonement— “saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth”. We will notice that the second, the third and the fourth bowls or plagues are repetitions of the second, third and fourth judgments of the trumpets, only that they are severer in magnitude and effects. Even so, people do not have a change of heart; as with the trumpet judgments they harden in their incorrigibility and rebellion against God even as the plagues bite them more and more. They are beyond redemption. We read in Jer. 5:3: “O LORD, do not your eyes look for truth? You have struck them down, but they felt no anguish; you have consumed them, but they refused to take correction. They have made their faces harder than rock; they have refused to repent” (ESV).

But more than just the unleashing of another plague, an important stage appears to have been reached with the sixth bowl in the unfolding operation of the seven angels pouring out the seven vials or bowls of God’s wrath. Instead of the outbreak of a plague or calamity, the river Euphrates, as at the blowing of trumpet 6 (9:13-14), is interfered with, this drying it up so “that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared”. This follows the successful ‘diplomatic mission’ of the three frog-like unclean spirits who, on hopping out of the mouths of the dragon, the beast and the false prophet, go to all the kings of the earth (including those of the east) to rally them to battle against God Almighty in the battle of Armageddon!

The four angels holding back the four winds of the earth as a check on a world war have now let go of the winds of war (Rev. 7:1-3), and the powerful spiritual forces which instigate global conflicts and wars are on the loose. Only this time the common enemy they are fighting is Christ who is destined to crush them (Rev. 17:13-14).

Who doesn't know that today China, which is east of Jerusalem, is an economic giant and a military colossus? Not only China, but India is nuclear armed and so is Pakistan, not to mention Iran—all east of Israel.

The seventh plague is the war of Armageddon, and the thunders, voices, lightning, the great earthquake of unprecedented magnitude which splits the seat of the beast into three parts and the hail are just a prelude to the actual outbreak of the terrifying unprecedented human-angelic war of Armageddon!

However, just before Armageddon breaks out, God will whisk away His elect still living on earth (and so far protected from the trumpet judgments and six of the plagues, Rev. 9:4, 16:2) to the safety of heaven—to escape the desolations of Armageddon as well as attend the marriage supper of the Lamb. The scriptural references are in Isaiah 26 and Revelation 19:

**Isa. 26:20-21:**

“Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.

“For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.

**Rev. 19:1-9:**

“And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:

“For true and righteous *are* His judgments: for He hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand.

“And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

“And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.

“And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.

“And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

“And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

“And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed *are* they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God”.

Now that none of His elect is on planet earth (mass ascension having occurred), Christ descends as King of kings and Lord of lords to fight His enemies in the war of Armageddon:

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon Him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war.

“His eyes *were* as a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself.

“And He *was* clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God.

“And the armies *which were* in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

“And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

“And He hath on *His* vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

“And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;

“That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all *men, both* free and bond, both small and great.

“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.

“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.

“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” (vv. 11-21).

Babylon has come to a violent end—a judgment historical Babylon had been under since the days of Jeremiah, the prophet:

“The word which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, when he went with Zedekiah the king of Judah into Babylon in the fourth year of his reign. And *this* Seraiah *was* a quiet prince.

“So Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that should come upon Babylon, *even* all these words that are written against Babylon.

“And Jeremiah said to Seraiah, When thou comest to Babylon, and shalt see, and shalt read all these words;

“Then shalt thou say, O LORD, thou hast spoken against this place, to cut it off, that none shall remain in it, neither man nor beast, but that it shall be desolate for ever.

“And it shall be, when thou hast made an end of reading this book, *that* thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates:

“And thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her: and they shall be weary. Thus far *are* the words of Jeremiah” (Jer. 51:59-64).

The prophecy of Babylon’s violent overthrow and destruction is repeated in Rev. 18 to show that her doomed fate is sealed and irreversible:

“And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast *it* into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.

“And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft *he be*, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;

“And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.

“And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth” (Rev. 18:21-24).

The eternal future belongs to the “Daughter of Zion”, the long-suffering people of God:

“Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD.

“And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto thee.

“And the LORD shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again” (Zech. 2:12).

This is the New Jerusalem of the saints described in Rev. 21.

Surely, the last days Christ said would lead to His return has been ushered in, evidenced by, among others, the emergence of the homosexual lifestyle of Sodom (Luke 17:28) and the gradual rise of the government of the Antichrist. The modern god of this hell-bound Babylonian world whose worship is now being imposed on all is ‘human rights’. Its ‘sacrosanct’ name only has to be invoked, and evil instantly becomes good and good evil (Isa. 5:20). Such was what UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon did at a meeting he held with African leaders in late January 2012. Following up on similar calls by UK Prime Minister David Cameron and US President Barack Obama, Mr. Ban Ki-moon told the African Union summit in Ethiopia “that discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity ‘prompted governments to treat people as second class citizens or even criminals. Confronting these discriminations is a challenge, but we must not give up on the ideas of the universal declaration (of human rights),’ he said, quoted by AFP” (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-16780079>).

With the UN and the West spearheading a programme of worldwide *sodomization*, Isaiah 1:9 is on a fast track to fulfilment: “Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, *and* we should have been like unto Gomorrah”.

Yet God's position is clear: He abhors and punishes homosexuality with a passion just as he does with abortion (Lev. 18:22, 20:1-3; Ex. 21:22-23; Amos 1:13). But the very Western nations which formerly promoted Biblical virtues and the Christian faith (however imperfectly) have now turned round 360 degrees to promote practices the Bible condemns as abominable. In a sense, it's a return to their true (pagan) roots, even though they claim to be promoting ‘enlightenment’. Man is trying to build a Utopia without God, and the failure is all too apparent: a world of war, wickedness, greed and untold suffering. The builders—world leaders—have rejected the light of the Biblical gospel of Christ (Acts 4:11-12) and “what wisdom is in them?” (Jer. 8:9).

The prophetic clock of judgment is ticking against Babylon. And now is the time to come out of the Babylonian world-ruling system, comprising its cultural and religious traditions and socio-political ideologies before it is too late (Rev. 18:4-6). The only way of escape is genuine repentance and faith in Christ which is expressed through the keeping of God's commandments. Ungodliness will not go unpunished forever. Thomas Jefferson, a founding father of the United States and its 3<sup>rd</sup> president, recognized this ineluctable truth and eloquently stated:

“I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, that His justice cannot sleep forever”.

The world has since sunk further and further into the abyss of immorality and false worship than Jefferson ever witnessed in his lifetime. We should therefore tremble more and do all we can as believers to reach the lost and the perishing in this “perilous times” of the end. Amen!

For more on the prophetic events of the closing age, contact:

Pastor Enoch Ofori Jnr

Seventh Day Pentecostal Assemblies (Esreso)

P.O. Box 481, Kumasi, Ghana, W/A

Tel: 233-322095507 Mobile Phones: 233-02-7499933/233-24-4235015

Websites: [www.asdpagh.com](http://www.asdpagh.com); [www.enochevangelism.org](http://www.enochevangelism.org). Email: [info@asdpagh.com](mailto:info@asdpagh.com)