

**THE GREAT
AND
ABOMINABLE CHURCH**

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1. Revelation 17:3-6 speaks about a woman and a beast which shall have great power in the latter times.
In prophetic language a woman represents a _____
and a beast represents a worldly _____.
2. Upon this woman's head were written the words, MYSTERY _____
THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOST AND ABOMINATIONS . . .
(Ancient Babylon is considered to be the founder of the world's first great, mystery religion, always in conflict with God's true religion and His people.)
3. Funk and Wagnall's Encyclopedia tells us "Herodotus (484-425 BC), Greek historian, know as the father of history, born in Halicarnassus (Now Bodrum, Turkey). He is believed to have been exiled from Halicarnassus about 457 BC for conspiring against Persian rule. He probably went directly to Samos, from which he traveled throughout Asia Minor, Babylonia, Egypt and Greece. The direction and extent of his travels are not precisely known, but they provided him with valuable firsthand knowledge of virtually the entire ancient Middle East."
4. This historian tells us that "Babylon was the primeval source from which all systems of idolatry flowed." Woodrow, *Babylon Mystery Religion*, p.4.
5. In Luke 21:12-17, Jesus tells His disciples of things which will befall them.
 - a. The first phrase in verse 12 sets the time _____
 - b. The verse then speaks of _____
 - c. Verse 16 speaks of _____
 - d. Verse 17 tells them they shall be _____
 - e. Verses 18 & 19 promises them salvation.
6. As the church expanded and came into conflict with Rome, all these things were fulfilled. Yet the zeal of those early Christians, magnified by the working of the Holy Spirit, literally turned the world upside down. Before his death at the hands of the Romans, the Apostle Paul warned of a new and greater threat:
 - a. 2 Thessalonians 2:3,7,8 _____
 - b. 1 Timothy 4:1 _____
7. In the 4th century changes took place which forever changed the church which Christ established and the apostles built.
 - a. The Roman Emperor, Constantine, was converted to, protected and supported Christianity. But as the historian, Gonzalez reports, "This did not prevent the

emperor from serving other gods.” “Reportedly, even after his conversion, he took part in pagan rites in which no Christian would participate, and the bishops raised no voice of condemnation.” *The Story of Christianity*, pp. 122 and 121.

b. The bishops were honored, but Constantine - though never baptized until his death - demanded a place of leadership within the church.

c. As the nobility and wealthy entered the church, “Now riches, and pomp came to be seen as signs of divine favor.” *ibid.*, Gonzalez, p. 134.

d. The church grew numerically and in power, but a great price was paid for this growth. “Christian theology was being shaped (changed - dem) by the new circumstances, even to the point of abandoning some of its traditional themes.” *ibid.*, Gonzalez, p. 134. “From here on, wholesale mixtures of paganism into Christianity were made, especially at Rome.” *op,cit.*, Woodrow, p. 6. Those mixtures of paganism that entered into the church at Rome came from the ancient religion of Babylon; hence, the description of the woman (church) that was seen by John in the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

8. A similar vision was seen by Nephi and recorded in 1 Nephi 3:136-144.

a. A great church was founded among the _____.

b. For the _____ of the world it will slay the saints of God.

c. Its founder is the _____.

d. It is called a _____ and _____ church.

In subsequent lessons we shall examine some of the pagan beliefs and practices which entered into the church that would cause it to be called by such a name.

THE USURPATION OF AUTHORITY

1. Both 2 Thessalonians 2:3-8 and Daniel 7:19-25 prophesy of the rise of this great, apostate church. They speak prophetically, yet clearly, of the leadership of this church as well. We will consider the prophecy of Paul first.

vs. 3 - Who shall come to power? _____

Since he is also called a “son of perdition” it is clear that he shall arise from within the church.

vs. 4 - What authority shall this man take upon himself?

- a. _____
b. _____
c. _____

Now we shall consider the prophecy of Daniel. Verses 19 & 20 identify this man of sin as a ruler of the _____ Empire.

vs. 25 - describes the power he will falsely assume.

- d. _____
e. _____
f. _____

2. Let’s now look at the historical record and see if these prophecies have been fulfilled. Paul revealed (2 Thessalonians 2:7-8) that the “man of sin” could not arise until the Roman Emperor (he who now letteth) was taken out of the way. The historian, Justo Gonzalez, in his book, *The Story of Christianity*, writes, “It was the barbarian invasions that brought about the great upsurge in the pope’s authority. . . . the church became the guardian of what was left of ancient civilization, as well as of order and justice. Thus the most prestigious bishop in the West, that of Rome, became the focal point for regaining a unity that had been shattered by the invasions. A prime example of this is Leo: “the Great” (about 450 A.D. - dem), who has been called the first ‘pope’ . . .” p. 242

Interestingly, the word “pope” simply means father. Does this ring any bells? See Matthew 23:9. Consider verse 3 of 2 Thessalonians 2, above: did he arise from within the church?

Now consider verses 19 & 20 of Daniel 7: Can he be identified as ruler of the Roman Empire?

3. Let us consider now the authority this man of sin would wrongly assure for himself (a, c, d, and f, above) as we read the historical record which came from papal decrees. Pope Boniface VIII wrote, “The pope is of so great dignity and excellence, that he is not merely man, but as if God, and the vicar of God. The

pope alone is most holy, divine monarch, and supreme emperor, the king of kings . . . so that whatever the pope does seems to proceed from the mouth of God. The pope is as God on earth.”

Guinness, *Romanism and the Reformation*, pp. 25 & 26.

Another of the papal decrees reads, “I do make holy and unholy; I do justify the wicked; I do forgive sins; I open and no man shutteth. If these things that I do be said to be done not of man, but of god, what do you make me but God? . . . whereupon no marvel if it be in my power to *change times and abrogate laws*, to dispense with all things, yea, the precepts of Christ.”

Bolton, *The Great Antichrist*, p.48.

4. Concerning the changing of divine laws and the institution of man’s ideas, one of the early popes, Gregory the Great, “took measures to promote clerical celibacy, which was slowly becoming the norm throughout Italy.” An earlier theologian had suggested “that there was a place of purification for those who died in sin, where they would spend some time before going to heaven. Gregory affirmed the existence of such a place, and thus gave impetus to the development of the doctrine of purgatory.” He also established the doctrines of “penance” and “priestly absolution”. Such changes in divine law continued throughout the years; for example, in 1214, the Fourth Lateran Council “promulgated the doctrine of transubstantiation, which holds that in communion the substance of the body and blood of Christ takes the place of the bread and wine.” -
Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, pp. 246,247 and 310.

5. Consider the prophecy that “he shall wear out the saints of the most High”. We shall not go into all the terrible details of the Inquisition, but refer to only a few historical date.
“Upon February 16, 1568, a sentence of the Holy Office condemned all the inhabitants of the Netherlands to death as heretics. Three millions of people, men, women, and children, were sentenced to scaffold in three line.” -
Motely, *Rise of the Dutch Empire as Quoted by Macgregor*, p. 59.
“The religious intolerance that prompted the Inquisition caused wars which involved entire cities. In 1209, the city of Beziers was taken by men who had been promised by the pope that by engaging in the crusade against heretics, they would at death bypass Purgatory and immediately enter Heaven. Sixty thousand, it is reported, in this city perished by the sword while blood flowed in the streets. “At Lavaur, in 1211, the governor was hanged on a gibbet and his wife thrown into a well and crushed with stones. Four hundred people in this town were burned alive. The crusaders attended High Mass in the morning, then proceeded to take other towns of the area. In this siege, it is estimated that 100,000 Albigenses fell in one day.” Woodrow, *Babylon Mystery Religion*, pp. 99 & 100.

THE CHANGING OF THE SCRIPTURES

1. Certainly one reason that this great ecclesiastical empire was described as being “abominable” was that it was involved in the changing of the scriptures. We shall begin by reading 1 Nephi 3:165-172.

vs. 165 & 166 are speaking about the _____

vs. 167 - Nephi saw the formation of the _____

vs. 168 - Why was it called abominable? _____

vs. 169 - What else had been taken away? _____

2. Let's examine the record to see if there is any historical evidence that this prophecy has been fulfilled.

I.M. Price, in his book, *The Ancestry of Our English Bible*, tells us “Still we fail to understand our Bible of today if we do not take full account of the many passages where, in spite of all the care of the scribes - rather, should we say, occasionally because of such care? - changes did find their way into the text. For the astonishing fact is that in some cases deliberately and with full knowledge they altered the text they had received.” - p. 21

Philip Comfort, in his book, *The Origin of the Bible*, tells us the reason this often happened. “In the late first and early second century, the oral traditions and the written word existed side by side with equal status - especially with respect to the material of the Gospels. Often, the text was changed by scribes attempting to conform the written message to the oral tradition . . . Other scribes, however, felt free to make ‘improvements’ in the text - either in the interest of doctrine and harmonization or due to the influence of a competitive oral tradition.”
pp. 184 & 185

An internal comparison of scriptures from the Holy Bible and the Book of Mormon also shows such evidence of change and possible deletion. A teaching of Jesus comes to mind immediately:

“But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment . . .” - Matthew 5:22

Now we read in 3 Nephi 5:70 -

“But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of his judgment . . .” Vines tells us that the phrase, “without a cause”, is absent from the most authentic manuscripts. And why? Because this phrase was added by an overzealous scribe.

THE WORSHIP OF MARY

Virgin Mary appearing in Valley, the faithful say

By Kim Sue Lia Perkes
The Arizona Republic

A large statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe is flanked by prickly-pear cactus in the back yard of Estela and Reyes Ruiz of Phoenix.

Flowers and votive candles sit on the small altar of the grotto that is in their yard's far corner. A picture of the Virgin Mary and the Sacred Heart of Jesus hangs in the grotto. Nearby, a 15-foot cross shows Jesus writhing in pain.

These are the trimmings that grew from what many believe is a miraculous event taking place in the Ruiz home.

It's the same thing that happened to Rosa Lopez in Hollywood, Fla., and to Mary Constancio in Lubbock, Texas.

The Virgin Mary, they say, has appeared to them, bringing messages of peace, love and faith for the world.

The Vatican reports receiving more than 200 accounts of apparitions yearly.

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, head of the Vatican's Doctrine of Faith, wrote in a report, "One of the signs of our times is that the announcements of Marian apparitions are multiplying all over the world."

Mary seems to be popping up everywhere in the United States — Conyers, Ga.; Bayside, N.Y.; Seven Hills, Ohio; New Orleans; Marlboro Township, N.J.; Belleville, Ill.; and

— See VIRGIN, page A20

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1. How did such ideas come into existence as a part of Christian worship, and from what source did they originate? This is the question we now consider and we must go back into antiquity to find the answer. In 1051 B.C. the Israelites cried unto the Lord, "We have sinned, because we have forsaken the Lord, and have served Baalim and Ashtaroth . . ." (1 Samuel 12:10). Five hundred years later we find the Lord chastising Israel because "The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven . . ." (Jeremiah 7:18).
2. Who is this "queen of heaven" that provoked the Lord's anger because His people worshipped her? Jack Finegan, in his book about the pagan religions of the biblical world, *Myth & Mystery*, gives us the answer: "Inanna (the Sumerian name goes back to the form Ninanna, from *nin*, 'lady' or 'queen', and *anna*, 'heaven' . . .), the queen of heaven, is associated with the planet Venus . . . She is the goddess of love, being always young and beautiful . . ." - p. 26. She is one of the three celestial deities of the ancient Babylonians.
3. In our first lesson we learned that "Babylon was the primeval source from which all systems of idolatry flowed." This pagan love goddess of Babylonia was the Astarath worshipped in Israel, the Astarte of Phoenicia, Ceres to the Greeks, Venus to the Romans, the Diana of Ephesus with whom Paul had to contend and the Isis of Egypt. "But regardless of her name or place she was the wife of Baal,

the virgin queen of heaven, who bore fruit although she never conceived.”
- Bach, *Strange Sects and Curious Cults*, p.12. All the pagan world, in one form or another, worshipped the “queen of heaven”.

4. In the first centuries there was no attempt to make Mary any object of worship. This is admitted in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*: “. . . there is perhaps no ground for surprise if we do not meet with any clear traces of the cultus of the Blessed Virgin in the first Christian centuries . . .” vol. 15, p. 459. The veneration of Mary resulted from a gradual evolution as outlined in *Funk and Wagnall's New Encyclopedia*, Vol. 17, pp. 43 & 44:

a. “the Council of Ephesus (431) . . . affirmed that Mary is to be called Theotokos (“Mother of God” - dem), a title that has been used since that time in the Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches.” The very nature of this title exalts the position of the mother, rather than the Son. (2 Nephi 8:27)

b. “the assumption (the doctrine that after death, her body was immediately taken to heaven and reunited with her soul - dem) was first commemorated as the Feast of the Dormition (falling asleep) of Mary in the 6th century. In 1950, Pope Pius XII solemnly defined as an article of faith for all Roman Catholics the doctrine of the bodily assumption of Mary into heaven.” (John 3:13)

c. “by the middle of the 7th century the understanding of the title came to include the conviction that Mary remained a virgin for the whole of her life.” (Matthew 13:55-56)

d. In the 13th century the doctrine of immaculate conception was introduced. “This doctrine . . . maintains that Mary was conceived without original sin. In 1854 Pope Pius IX issued a solemn decree defining the Immaculate Conception for all Roman Catholics . . .” (Romans 3:23)

e. In the Middle Ages it was taught that prayers to Mary, now in heaven, of course, were more effective than were prayers to Christ. The author of this teaching was canonized as a “saint” in 1839. He further stressed that it was easier to gain the portals of heaven through Mary than through Christ. (2 Nephi 11:39)

f. We recognize that not only are these doctrines concerning Mary not taught in the Bible, they are in diametric opposition to the teachings of the Bible.

5. Throughout the ancient Roman Empire, spread across the tapestry of pagan nations and religions, the worship of the “great mother”, the “queen of heaven”,

was very popular and wide-spread. With great difficulty did the prophets of old, and later the Christian missionaries (See Acts 17:24-27), dissuade people to believe in the ancient Mother God, the Queen of Heaven, of the Babylonians. But as the “falling away” took place, and church leaders began to “depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits” (1 Timothy 4:1) and it was found they could more easily bring people to the church by incorporating those long-held beliefs into their doctrine by substituting Mary in the place of the pagan “queen of heaven”. The heretical teachings of that great and abominable apostate church are summed up in the words of her own St. Bernard: “On the third day after Mary’s death, when the apostles gathered around her tomb, they found it empty. The sacred body had been carried up to the Celestial Paradise . . . the grave had no power over one who was immaculate . . . But it was not enough that Mary should be received into heaven . . . she had a dignity beyond the reach even of the highest of the archangels. Mary was to be crowned Queen of Heaven by the Eternal Father: she was to have a throne at her Son’s right hand . . . Now day by day, hour by hour, she is praying for us, obtaining graces for us, preserving us from danger, shielding us from temptation, showering down blessings upon us.” - Woodrow, *Babylon Mystery Religion*, p. 20. Little by little, the faithful and simple Mary of the Holy Bible became something quite different from that picture of her portrayed in the scripture.

6. This practice of the Roman Catholic church has been going on in a thousand places for more than a thousand years. It was graphically portrayed, and confessed, in a recent documentary on PBS, “Return to the Sacred Ice”, written and filmed by a Peruvian scholar. He accompanied more than 60,000 Indian pilgrims on their annual journey to a Catholic shrine at the foot of an Andean glacier high in the mountains. The journey is to the location of a sacred rock, the *Q’orolliti*, now enshrined in a small church high in the Andes.

The Celebration stems from a legend handed down for 200 years: a young boy tending his llamas at the foot of the glacier, saw a vision of Christ as a youth. The two boys played and danced among the rocks. As they danced the heads of animals mysteriously increased in size. Upon the appearance of some adults, the apparition disappeared into the large rock, now venerated as the Lord Q’orolliti. It is to this rock, now with a picture of Christ inscribed upon it and the church built around it, that the pilgrims travel.

They come from great distances in their ancient costumes. As the drums beat and the wind instruments play, they dance and sing before the rock, burning their candles and placing their petitions before it. On the second night (having no sleep since arriving) the men and boys don their ancient uniforms as “soldiers of the Lord”; carrying a large cross and their whips, they climb in the darkness onto the

overhanging glacier. No outsider, nor camera has ever recorded the ritual combat that takes place there. It is shrouded in secrecy. Of it the most informed visitor said, "When a death occurs it is taken as an offering. It is believed that the Mountain Spirit is satisfied to receive a life. At times, it is said, the deaths are deliberate."

When the day dawned, the men returned, carrying huge pieces of ice, considered to be the Lord of Water. Once again, one of the leaders failed to return. That day the 60,000 pilgrims (less one) filed into the church and the Catholic priest, standing by an altar near the sacred rock, said a Mass and gave them the sacrament. An Indian leader told the narrator, "We have been believers in the Catholic church since the days of our grandfathers, but we still practice the old traditions of our society. We have faith in the worship of our Lord Q'orolliti. We have a parallel worship of Christ and the mountain."

That night, the festivities over, the 60,000 began their long descent, accompanied by the priest. As the moon sank low in the western sky it was nearly time for the sun to rise. The worshippers danced in place, then as the first rays shone above the hill they fell to their knees and began to pray in their Indian dialect. Obviously it was to the rising sun their prayers were directed.

Their Christian adviser, the Catholic priest who had served them sacrament, explained it this way: "Europe was evangelized and it had pagan rituals. **Rome is open to different forms of worship** because there is **no one single way of approaching God**. This is not a Roman form of Catholicism; it's Andean and Peruvian because sun worship is not necessarily Catholic ritual. That is why I say **it is a process of combined rituals**. We give thanks for the sun, as well as **giving thanks to the sun.**" (emphasis mine - dem)

7. The mountain which was climbed had always been connected to the sun god. "These Indian people had always regarded rocks as possessing magical qualities, so it was easy for the Catholic Church to turn this ancient rock into a Catholic idol", said the moderator. This is exactly what had been done with Mary, the mother of Jesus. The Apostles had labored with great effort to turn the people of Ephesus away from worship of the Mother God, Diana, only to see the church fathers in succeeding generations have all her pagan attributes reappear, now consigned to Mary - all this that pagans might be more easily brought into the Christian church.
8. Every form of Mary worship stems directly, or indirectly, from the ancient Babylonian system of religion, now incorporated into the church that had "fallen away". This is why John (Revelations 17:1-6) saw written upon the head of that apostate church,

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

9. Is it any wonder that the following statement was issued by Pope John Paul II?

Nov. 15, 1994
**Pope urges
church
to face sins**

The Associated Press

VATICAN CITY — Pope John Paul II says his church must mark 2000 by owning up to the sins of Roman Catholics over the centuries, including religious intolerance and acquiescence in human-rights abuses.

The pope's views, set down in a letter released Monday, appeared to be a major step toward meeting critics' demands for a self-examination as the church approaches its third millennium, which it considers as beginning in 2000.

The pontiff said the church must express "profound regret for the weakness of so many of her sons and daughters who sullied her face."

The pope stopped short of citing particular abuses or of blaming the church as such. But he appeared to be calling for Catholics to reflect on abuses in the name of religion such as the Spanish Inquisition and the Nazi Holocaust against European Jews that have led critics to question the church's conduct.

The 74-year-old pontiff also expressed a wish to lead a pilgrimage to the holy places in the Middle East in 2000, a sign he doesn't view his papacy as slowing down as some have suggested because of recent illness.

"The church should become more fully conscious of the sinfulness of her children, recalling all those times in history when they departed from the spirit of Christ and his Gospel," the pope said in the letter to Roman Catholics.

Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, presenting the 71-page letter at a Vatican news conference, would not go beyond the pope's wording, but said he expected clarifications before the Church's celebrations marking the third millennium.

BY THEIR FRUITS YOU SHALL KNOW THEM

1. Jesus warned His followers to beware of false teachers. He said, "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's' clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits." (Matthew 7:15-16) With that in mind, let us now turn to history and examine the personal lives of several of the papacy. For this survey we shall utilize the informative and acclaimed history of the early church, *The Story of Christianity*, by Dr. Justo L. Gonzalez, 1984.
2. We read that by the time of the 8th century ". . . Pope succeeded pope in rapid sequence. Their history is one of intrigues too complicated to follow here, as the papacy became the prize for which the various rival parties in Rome and beyond the Alps fought. Popes were strangled, or died of starvation in the dungeons where they had been thrown by their successors. At times there were two popes, or even three, each claiming to be the one true successor of Saint Peter." p. 275
3. "In 904, Sergius III had his two rivals . . . incarcerated and killed. He had come to power with the support of one of the most powerful families of Italy. This family was headed by Theophylact and his wife Theodora, whose daughter, Marozia, was Sergius' lover. Thirty years after the death of John XI, that papacy was in the hands of John XII, a grandson of Marozia. Later, her nephew became John XIII. His successor, Benedict VI, was overthrown and strangled by Crescentius, a brother of John XIII. John XIV died of either poison or starvation in the dungeon where he had been thrown by Boniface VII, who in turn was poisoned." - p. 275
4. "Paul II (1464-1471) was an opportunist who, upon learning that his uncle had been made pope (Eugene IV), had decided that an ecclesiastical career was more promising than his current occupation in trade. His main interest was collecting works of art - particularly jewelry and silver. His penchant for luxury became proverbial, and his concubines were publicly acknowledged in the papal court. His main project was the restoration of the monuments of pagan Rome, to which he devoted a great deal of wealth and attention. According to some chroniclers, he died of apoplexy, as a consequence of his excesses." - p. 371
5. "Before his election, Innocent VIII (1484-1492) made a solemn vow not to name more than one member of his family to high office and to put the Roman seat in order. But as soon as he was made pope he declared that since papal power was supreme, he was not bound by his oath, especially one made under pressure. His was the first pope to acknowledge several of his illegitimate children, on whom he heaped honors and riches. The sale of indulgences became a shameless business proposition, under the management of one of his sons. In 1484 he ordered that

Christendom be cleansed of witches, and the result was the death of hundreds of innocent women.” - p. 372

6. “After Innocent’s death, Rodrigo Borgia bought the cardinals’ votes and became pope under the name of Alexander VI (1492-1503). Under him, papal corruption reached its peak. He was a strong and implacable man, who was said to commit publicly all the capital sins - except gluttony, for his digestion was not good. His concubines, who were legally wives of other in his court, gave him several children whom he acknowledged publicly. Italy, bathed in blood due to his plots and his wars, was ready to believe the worst of him, and the prestige of the papacy suffered accordingly.” - p. 373
7. “Julius II (1503-1513), who had been made a cardinal by his uncle Sixtus IV, took that name to indicate that his model was not a Christian saint, but rather Julius Caesar. Like most of the popes of that period, he was a patron of the arts. But Julius’ favorite pastime was war. He reorganized the papal guard, dressed it in colorful uniforms . . . And led it to battle. In 1513, death put an end to the projects of this pope, whom his contemporaries called ‘the Terrible’.” p. 373
8. “When a position was vacant, its income for one year was to be sent to Rome. If the vacancy lasted longer, the income continued going to Avignon (a city in France where the popes resided in the 14th century - dem). Therefore, the popes had a vested interest in frequent unfilled vacancies. This did not benefit the pastoral ministry of the church, which was repeatedly interrupted by frequent and prolonged vacancies. To this was added the sale of ecclesiastical posts - the very simony that Gregory VII and other advocates of reform had deplored. Since ecclesiastical positions were a good means of income, there were some who held several of them, and who therefore were usually absent from their charges. These evils, usually called simony, pluralism, and absenteeism, were compounded by another practice for which many popes set the example: nepotism - the naming of relatives to positions of power.” - p. 337
9. These were the men who sat at the head of the Roman church and claimed to be “as God on earth”. These were the men who - affirmed by the Vatican Council of 1870 - are infallible when they speak in their office as pastor and teacher of all Christians. If the spiritual leaders of this great church are to be judged by the fruit they bore, is it any wonder it was identified as a “great and abominable church”??