

# **THE ANTICHRIST UNVEILED**

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# THE ANTI CHRIST Unveiled

by Richard Bennett

On October 8th, 2000, Pope John Paul II, under the assumed title of Vicar of Christ, consecrated the world and the new millennium to “Mary Most Holy.”<sup>1</sup> This blasphemous “Act of Entrustment to Mary Most Holy” of that which belongs to God alone is a mockery of the First Commandment. The Pope’s official and offensive act ought to warn Christians that while the Pope formally claims to be “the true vicar of Christ,”<sup>2</sup> he in fact opposes Christ by false worship. What is equally serious is the title under which he performs. The True Vicar of Christ is the Holy Spirit. He alone is sent to take the Lord’s place, testifying not to Himself but to Christ. (John 15:26) The gravity of teaching and purporting to act in this divine role is that it denigrates the divine Person of the Holy Spirit. The Antichrist is also anti Holy Spirit.

With self-assurance, on September 5th 2000, the Church of Rome claimed, “the very fullness of grace and truth [of the Lord Jesus Christ is alone] entrusted to the Catholic Church.”<sup>3</sup> While aping His divine prerogatives, this was explicitly speaking against Christ, the only One who is full of grace and truth. The Scripture declares it necessary to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ alone, from Whom one receives “*abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness.*”<sup>4</sup> Over and against Him is the present day decree of Rome, “The Church affirms that for believers **the sacraments** of the New Covenant **are necessary for salvation.** ‘Sacramental grace’ is the grace of the Holy Spirit, given by Christ and proper to each sacrament.”<sup>5</sup> What is not said here is that Rome’s physical sacraments, tightly gripped in the Pontiff’s hand and declared indispensable, are thereby substituted for the Lord of Glory and His Gospel. Unwaveringly, in the present day, too, Church of Rome has upheld *Unum Sanctum*, “We declare, say, define, and proclaim to every human creature that they by necessity for salvation are entirely subject to the Roman Pontiff.”<sup>6</sup> Depending on these physical signs instead of direct faith on the Lord Christ Jesus is the deception of the papacy, which subtly deflects faith from the person of Christ to signs that are claimed to be powers.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, there are many other events wherein the Pope has officially contradicted the Gospel, as on May 13th of this “Jubilee Year 2000.” There are also historical events wherein is revealed horrendous sin, as the now documented involvement of Pope Pius XII in Hitler’s reign of death.<sup>8</sup> These things ought to make Christians consider

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<sup>1</sup> “The culminating moment of the Jubilee of Bishops was the Mass concelebrated by the Pope and Bishops in St Peter’s Square on Sunday morning, 8 October. Tens of thousands of the faithful gathered for the sacred liturgy, which concluded with the Act of Entrustment to Mary Most Holy.” *L’Osservatore Romano* Weekly edition in English 11 October 2000.htm

<sup>2</sup> Henry Denzinger, “Unam Sanctum”, Nov. 18, 1302, *The Sourcing of Catholic Dogma*, Tr. By Roy J. Deferrari, 30th ed. of *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, rev. by Karl Rahner, S. J. (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder Book Co., 1957) #694. See also *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994) #882 & #936.

<sup>3</sup> Dominus Iesus, Section 16 [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_20000806\\_dominus-iesus\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000806_dominus-iesus_en.html)

<sup>4</sup> Romans 5:17.

<sup>5</sup> *Catechism*, #1129. Bolding in any quotation indicates emphasis added in this paper.

<sup>6</sup> Denzinger, #469.

<sup>7</sup> *Catechism*, #1116 states, “**Sacraments are ‘powers that come forth’** from the Body of Christ [i.e., The Roman Catholic Church] which is ever living and life-giving....”

<sup>8</sup> John Cornwell, *Hitler’s Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII* (New York, NY 10014: Viking, 1999).

carefully if their eyes have seen in the Office of the Papacy the line of men that the Scripture calls the Man of Sin—for the Papacy gives the title of Vicar of Christ to its Pope.

### One Lord, One Holy Father

The Church of Rome authoritatively teaches that her Sovereign Pontiff is rightly called “Most Holy,”<sup>9</sup> and “the most holy Roman Pontiff.” This, together with usual titles of “Holy Father”<sup>10</sup> and “Vicar of Christ” is the full sense of the definition of the Antichrist given by the Apostle John. *“Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.”*<sup>11</sup> The Pope, in assuming these titles to himself, is against the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Father in heaven by purporting to possess these very offices. Such haughtiness also blatantly breaks the New Covenant Law of the Christ, *“call no man your father upon the earth: for One is your Father, which is in heaven.”*<sup>12</sup> Christ Jesus declared, *“One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren”*<sup>13</sup> The Pope declares himself “Most Holy,” “Holy Father,” and “the true vicar of Christ.” The Pope’s claim is similar to that recorded in Isaiah 14: 14, *“I will be like the Host High.”* The Scripture speaks of such a one denying the Father and the Son by assuming the titles of both. In the words of Scripture we proclaim, *“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...”*<sup>14</sup>

### The historical origins of the Antichrist

Throughout history, circumstances concerning the coming and character of Christ have corresponded so brilliantly to prophecy that in the past the Lord’s people praised His name for it. Likewise, the Lord’s flock thanked Him for clearly depicting the Antichrist.

The Lord Himself confirmed the understanding that there would be a specific fulfillment in the Antichrist’s role when He stated, *“for the ruler of this world is coming.”*<sup>15</sup> Similarly Christ Jesus said, *“I have come in my Father’s name, and you do not receive me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive.”*<sup>16</sup> John the Beloved, following in the Master’s footsteps, states emphatically, *“ye have heard that antichrist shall come...”*<sup>17</sup> John confirms that while there were contemporary opponents of Christ (many antichrists), these forces of opposition would eventually center in one entity.

Contrary to flawed popular belief, the popes are not the successors to the Apostle Peter. They are, however, the successors to the Roman Emperor. History shows that the title of “Supreme High Priest” was officially bestowed on the bishop of the church at Rome by the Emperor Justinian in the sixth century.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, the office of “supreme high priest” of the Roman Catholic Church, perpetuated now for nearly 1,500 years, came from an apostate secular source, whereas the Bible proclaims one Supreme High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ appointed

<sup>9</sup> Denzinger, #649.

<sup>10</sup> *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Robert Broderick, ed. (Nashville, TN: Thos. Nelson Inc., 1976) p. 217.

<sup>11</sup> 1 John 2:22.

<sup>12</sup> Matthew 23:9.

<sup>13</sup> Matthew 23:8.

<sup>14</sup> Revelation 15: 4.

<sup>15</sup> John 14:30.

<sup>16</sup> John 5:43.

<sup>17</sup> 1 John 2:18. The Greek text says that **the** antiehrst shall come.

<sup>18</sup> LeRoy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, 4 vols. (Washington DC: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1978) Vol I, pp. 511-517.

by God. The pagan Emperor Justinian also bestowed on the bishop of the church at Rome the universal oversight of the entire Christian world. That was when the bishop of the church at Rome became known as the Pope, arising as Spiritual Head of the pagan Roman Empire. The authority of this historical fact alone ought to be seen as clearly designating the Antichrist.

### **The cloud of witnesses from Christian History**

From the time of persecution of the Vaudois and the Waldenses, and throughout the long era of the Inquisition, the Lollards, the Bohemians, and the believers of the Reformation understood both the Office of Christ and also its counterfeit, the Antichrist. The zeal and courage of many of these martyrs were based on their conviction that they were withstanding the Antichrist. Today, however, it is “religiously correct” to declare one’s ignorance of the identity of the Antichrist. As the ecumenical movement gains momentum, it is imperative to regain a Biblical understanding of Scriptural prophecy, which has been and still is being played out in time, rather than simply relegating it to some future cataclysmic period.

Bible believers of old recognized the Roman Catholic institution as the Antichrist. This identification was known and spoken of even through the Middle Ages by, among others, Dante Alighieri, John Wycliff, John Huss, and Savonarola; during the Reformation, by Martin Luther, William Tyndale, John Calvin, Thomas Cranmer, Hugh Latimer, Nicholas Ridley, John Bradford, and John Foxe; in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, by John Bunyan, the translators of the King James Bible, and by the men who published the Westminster and Baptist Confessions of Faith; Sir Isaac Newton, Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, John Wesley; and in more recent times, by Charles Spurgeon, Bishop J. C. Ryle and Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones. All these men and many more knew the precision of Scripture regarding both Christ and the Antichrist. The Written Word has been fulfilled in history, in both Light and darkness. As a silk glove over the hand, so the events of history clothe the prophecy of the Scripture. Today, it is “religiously correct” to refrain from speaking about the Antichrist, except in some futuristic scenario that cannot be analyzed since has not yet occurred. This is an application of “the tolerance principal” of today that has all but blunted the edge of the accuracy and distinctness of the Biblical sword. Such tolerance holds that the warnings of Christ and the Apostles John and Paul are not to be seen historically, but rather applied to some future political leader at the end of the last times. While much modern Biblical teaching assumes a future political leader to be the coming Antichrist, the Biblical Antichrist is first apostate, and then political only from his apostate seat of power. This perfectly describes every Roman Catholic Pope in his Pontifical office.

This paper deals particularly with II Thessalonians 2:3-12, one of the many texts that unveils the Antichrist and serves as an introduction to the other texts.

### **The Man of Sin Appears**

The Apostle clearly states, *“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.”* (v. 3) The Man of Sin would appear as the outworking of the “falling away,” or “apostasia” (“apostasy” in English). Clearly, there was to be a large-scale apostasy that would lead to the emergence of the Man of Sin. Apostasy can only take place in the professing church of God, since there must be something from which to fall away. The embryo of the iniquity that would lead to this apostasy and the revealing of the Man of Sin was already at work in the Apostle’s day--thus he says, *“For the mystery of iniquity doth already work.”* (v. 7) The Scriptures elsewhere speak of the *“mystery of godliness”*, *“great is the mystery of godliness:*

*God was manifest in the flesh...*” (1 Timothy 3:16) By contrast, in verse 7 the exact opposite is spoken of, *“the mystery of iniquity,”* that is, the disclosure of the Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition.

The *“mystery of iniquity”* was soon to show itself visibly in the form of the Man of Sin. The outcome of this apostasy would be *“all deceivableness of unrighteousness.”* Such apostasy was to be marked, not by open hostility, but by hypocrisy and deceit, which to the world appears righteous and holy. Apostasy by definition is duplicity and falseness, a withdrawal and defection from the Gospel and true godliness.

### **The “who” and the “what” that held back the Man of Sin (vv. 3, 6, & 7)**

There was something withholding or hindering the appearance of Man of Sin, a constraint, keeping back his emergence. Notice this constraint is a thing, “what,” in verse 6 and a person, “he,” in verse 7. The Apostle’s unusual reserve to spell out the identity of this constraint is to be noticed, although he clearly realized that the Thessalonians would understand when he said, *“now ye know what withholdeth.”* Of great importance is the historical background to the second letter to the Thessalonians which is outlined in Acts 17:1-10. There the events that took place when Paul was at Thessalonica previous to this letter are explained. At that time, the Jews brought a political charge against Paul and Silas, *“these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus.”* This was not a religious charge, but one against “Caesar,” that is, the Roman Empire. All of that had been clear to the Apostle and to the Thessalonians. Had the Apostle written that the constraint was the Roman Empire, it would have appeared that he was supporting political revolt. The “what” of verse 6 and the “he” of verse 7 made it abundantly clear to the Thessalonians that he was speaking of the Roman Empire and its Emperor, respectively. The Roman Empire and Emperor providentially impeded the appearance of the Man of Sin for a time.

To know the time, therefore, at which the Man of Sin will appear, the whole passage (from verse 1 through 12) must be taken in context. The Man of Sin is set forth, appears at the removal of him *“who is now holding back”* (v.7). In the previous verse, Paul reminds the believers *“now you know what holds him back.”* What was it that the believers then knew? They knew that the Roman Empire kept all and everyone in check. In the Thessalonian mind, Rome, and only Rome, restrained. (That early believers like Tertullian and Jerome had such convictions is documented.)<sup>19</sup> The course of history precisely fulfilled what was stated in Scripture. First, the Emperor Constantine removed the seat of the empire to Constantinople. This removal gave all the opportunity that could be desired for the growth of the power-seeking Roman bishops. Internal corruption and external pressures destroyed the Empire. It was only after the break-up of the Roman Empire that the Papacy gained ascendancy over the civil powers, and the Man of Sin became more apparent. When the Roman Papacy acquired the dominion that the Empire had had for centuries, which was rule in both the civil and religious spheres, then the Antichrist was seen and recognised by the Vaudois and others. In all history it is hard to find a series of events corresponding more accurately with a prophetic statement than this.

### **The place where the Man of Sin appears**

The Apostle states unmistakably the place where the Man of Sin would become visible *“Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he*

<sup>19</sup> Froom, Vol. I, pp. 257-258, pp. 443-444.

as *God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God*" (v. 4) He would appear in the "temple of God." The word "temple" is constantly used by the Apostle to describe the people of God themselves. For example, "*If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.*"<sup>20</sup> This testifies that the Man of Sin would emanate from among the people of God as a result of the falling away, i.e. the apostasy, outlined in the preceding verse.

### Presenting himself as God

The authority and truth of the Lord's Written Word is of such importance that Scripture declares, "*thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.*" (Ps 138:2) The Lord Jesus Christ said, "*the Scripture cannot be broken,*" speaking of the absolute character of God's Written Word that He has magnified above His name. While many are unaware of it, the substance of II Thess. 2:4 is both the official claim and practice of the Papacy. This is documented in primary Roman Catholic sources. Verse 4 in the Scripture teaches, "*...he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.*" Consistently in Roman Catholic teaching and practice, the Pope is called "His Holiness." Such a title applies solely to God. God is the only Being whose very nature is holy.<sup>21</sup> Concerning the Pope's assumed title, "His Holiness," the Roman Catholic Church claims the following divine attributes,

"The Supreme Pontiff, in virtue of his office, possesses infallible teaching authority when, as supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful...he proclaims with a definitive act that a doctrine of faith or morals is to be held as such."<sup>22</sup>

In the papal claim to "infallible teaching authority," it is this very quality of God's infallibility that is at stake. Thus Rome's official claim exalts the Pope "*above all that is called God.*"<sup>23</sup>

Likewise, the earned righteousness of Christ Jesus after the Resurrection gave Him "*All power... in heaven and in earth.*" (Matt 28:18) The papal claim is officially expressed thus, "The Pope enjoys, by divine institution, 'supreme, full, immediate, and universal power in the care of souls.'"<sup>24</sup> In this assertion to a power given to the Lord Christ Jesus alone, the Pope again exalts himself "*above all that is called God*". How many extra marital affairs make it common sense to cry adultery? How much official blasphemy is needed for the one who calls himself "His Holiness" to be identified correctly as the "Man of Sin?"

Extravagantly, apparently without trembling, the Roman Catholic Office of the Papacy in itself fulfills the Thessalonians text and the definition of "Antichrist." It is important to note that the Greek word for antichrist in the Bible means not simply against Christ, but more significantly, substituting for Him. That the Papacy in a real sense has been living out this two-fold meaning of the Greek word, one who is against the Lord Jesus Christ by presuming to take His place, is seen in its attempt to usurp His power and position as Prophet, Priest, and King. Full and supreme power belongs solely to the God-man Christ Jesus, Who acts freely on each one in His church. This is evidenced in Ephesians 1:22-23, "*And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.*"

<sup>20</sup> I Corinthians 3:17; cf Ephesians 2:21, II Corinthians 6:16.

<sup>21</sup> Revelation 15: 4 , I Samuel 2:2.

<sup>22</sup> *Code of Canon Law*, Latin-Eng. ed. (Washington, DC: Canon Law Society of America, 1983) Can. 749, Sect. 1. All canons are taken from this source unless otherwise stated.

<sup>23</sup> The Greek word for "above" can mean "in a place of" or "as much as". It seems to be this meaning that applies the text rather than superior to God, cf. Strong's *Hebrew-Greek Dictionary*, # 1909.

<sup>24</sup> *Catechism*, # 937.

The Roman Catholic Church purports to take for itself His Divine position, according to her official teaching, "For the Roman Pontiff, by reason of his office as Vicar of Christ, namely, and as pastor of the entire Church, has full, supreme and universal power over the whole Church, a power which he can always exercise unhindered."<sup>25</sup> He is the worst and greatest enemy of Christ, who under the pretense of service to Christ presumes to undermine His unique offices by covertly usurping His position and power.

The wickedness within the Roman Catholic system has reached such horrendous proportions that it is difficult to keep up with the documented evidence.<sup>26</sup> While conviction regarding the nature of this apostate church comes from God's Word, present day evils show the mystery of iniquity at work.

### Capitulation of mind and will

Rome's law demands submission of mind and will to the one "*shewing himself that he is God.*" The official law of the Roman Catholic Church, enunciates the necessity of submitting one's highest faculties, that of mind and will, not to God Himself, but to the Roman Pontiff.

"A religious respect of intellect and will, even if not the assent of faith, is to be paid to the teaching which the Supreme Pontiff or the college of bishops enunciate on faith or morals when they exercise the authentic magisterium even if they do not intend to proclaim it with a definitive act; therefore the Christian faithful are to take care to avoid whatever is not in harmony with that teaching."<sup>27</sup>

Not only does Rome demand this, but also in Canon 1371 she decrees that the consequence for not obeying is punishment with a "just penalty."<sup>28</sup>

To presume to take the place of Christ Himself as Prophet, Priest, and King, and to presume to act as in His person is clearly tantamount to "*sit[ting] as God in the temple of God, setting himself forth, that he is God.*" Yet this is exactly the documented claim of Papal Rome. The teaching given in Rome's *Code of Canon Law* puts teeth into its claim by exacting submission and promising punishment for those who fail to obey.

### The purpose and intent of Man of Sin

The Apostle Paul appears to use deliberately the terms that generally refer to Christ, "revealed," "coming," and "mystery," to describe the performance of the Man of Sin. This indicates that Satan's design is to replace Christ with his own man. The stated objective is given in verse 4, "*Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.*" This, as has here been documented, is the claim and the law of Papal Rome. Verse 9 depicts how the aim of Satan is to be carried out, "*Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.*" The Man of Sin was to come with all power and signs and lying wonders, "*in all deceivableness of unrighteousness.*"<sup>29</sup>

<sup>25</sup> *Catechism*, #882.

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.iconbusters.com/iconbusters/lechery/current-lechery1.htm> That source links also to Roman Catholic sources that further show the mystery of iniquity at work.

<sup>27</sup> Canon 752.

<sup>28</sup> Canon 1371, Para. 1 The following are to be punished with a just penalty: 1 a person who, apart from the case mentioned in canon 1364, 1, teaches a doctrine condemned by the Roman Pontiff, or by an Ecumenical Council, or obstinately rejects the teachings mentioned in canon 750, [Para.] 2 or in canon 752 and, when warned by the Apostolic See or by the Ordinary, does not retract;"

<sup>29</sup> See *Quite Contrary: A Biblical Reconsideration of the Apparitions of Mary* by Timothy F. Kauffman (Huntsville,

Just as the Lord wrought miracles through the Apostles to confirm their position, so Satan would work with Antichrist, endorsing his alleged position with false miracles designed to overthrow the Gospel. The Man of Sin is both an attempted personification of Christ and a contrast to Him. He attempts to occupy His position, but is totally unlike Him, and in opposition to Him. He has usurped His place and His prerogatives, and far from truly representing Him, he represents His greatest enemy. As Christ acts for God, so the Man of Sin acts for Satan, who indeed uses him for this very purpose, so the text states that the Man of Sin's coming is "*after the working of Satan.*"

The purpose and intent of the Man of Sin is given also in the second name, "son of perdition." The reference is to Judas, who pretended to be a disciple of Christ even as he betrayed the Son of Man with a sign of love and loyalty. The Son of Perdition is a secret enemy while a seeming friend, a well-known confidant, yet a fatal foe who betrays with a kiss even while he says he serves the Lord and master. He is a Judas whose coming was to be "*after the working of Satan,*" with "*lying wonders.*" Those under him are under the influence of "*strong delusion.*" For their own part, they had "*not received the love of the truth,*" but rather took "*pleasure in unrighteousness.*" In a denial of the Gospel of Christ, on May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2000, the present Pope, John Paul II, endorsed the identity and origin of the vision of Mary of Fatima—a "*lying wonder.*" He proclaimed,

"According to the divine plan, 'a woman clothed with the sun' (Rev. 12:1) came down from heaven to this earth to visit the privileged children....She **asks them to offer themselves as victims of reparation, saying that she was ready to lead them safely to God.** And behold, **they see a light shining from her maternal hands which penetrates them inwardly,** so that they feel immersed in God..."<sup>30</sup>

### **The final end of the Man of Sin**

"*And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.*" (v 8) Verse 8 tells of the end of the Wicked one. He, who would be revealed when the power of imperial Rome was removed, will continue until the breath of Christ's mouth and the brightness of His coming destroy him. This is a clear reference to the Second Coming. The Lord in this verse has foretold the destruction of the Man of Sin's reign: the Word of the Lord will reduce it to nothing. He will be completely and in every respect destroyed on the final day.

In the meantime, the victory of the Gospel is also seen in this verse. The Apostle was repeating the truth of the Lord spoken of in Isaiah 11:4, "*But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.*" The Lord's power has always been greatest in the day of utmost need, when He comes to the aid of those destitute and poor in spirit. The character of God in His gracious Gospel is "*the spirit of his mouth.*" All through history this verse has been understood and lived out in this sense. The Gospel is "*the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.*"<sup>31</sup> Repeatedly throughout history the

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AL 35804: White Horse Publications, 1993). See also *Graven Bread: The Papacy, the Apparitions of Mary, and the Worship of the Bread of the Altar* by same author.

<sup>30</sup> [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_p.../hf\\_jp-ii\\_hom\\_20000513\\_beatification-fatima\\_en.htm](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_p.../hf_jp-ii_hom_20000513_beatification-fatima_en.htm) 6/1/00. See on our web page our critique of the same in *Fatima: JP II, RCC Contradict Gospel: Where Do Evangelical ECT Signatories Now Stand?*

<sup>31</sup> Romans 1:16.

“Gospel of grace” has conquered the Man of Sin. The Vaudois, the Waldenses, the men of the Reformation, and all genuine revivals have seen the Lord smite with the rod of His mouth and with the breath of His lips. His power is seen when His graciousness is boldly proclaimed, every individual who is saved “*being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*”<sup>32</sup>

## Conclusion

None but God could have delineated beforehand the “*mystery of iniquity,*” which is clearly the Office of the Papacy of the Roman Catholic Church. Man could never have anticipated all this; only God foretells it. That a power claiming to act for God, to be “as God”, in the midst of the Christian Church, flouting His truth and mocking His own Holiness, defies imagination. Corruption, fraud, and false pretenses have ruled the world for ages from the very same seven-hilled city where the pagan Roman Empire once ruled by military force, and they are such that were they not clearly described by the Lord’s Word, and seen in past and recent history, they could never have been expected by man. The prophetic portrayal of the wickedness of the system built around the Antichrist is a demonstration of the divine inspiration of the Bible and the power and authority of our Lord God.

To reject the clear testimony of God’s Written Word on the fundamental office of the Antichrist, and to prefer a doctrine that can neither be verified by the text itself nor tested in time is a serious matter. It obscures the wisdom of Divine prophecy and denies the true character of the days in which we live. While futurism asserts the nearness of the Second Advent of Christ, it destroys the historical timeframe of His opposer, the Antichrist, which is essential to correctly understanding this fulfillment of prophecy. The historic playing-out of those predictions concerning the apostasy is an essential element of what the Lord foretold in His Word. Just as the Lord explained regarding Himself, “*all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.*” Likewise, the substance of what was written concerning the office of the one who opposes Him has been fulfilled. With the Vaudois, the Waldenses, Lollards, and the Bohemians, through the Inquisition and the Reformation, the truth of the Gospel and the Prophetic Word lifted nations from the depths of superstition and despotism to Biblical freedom and economic growth.<sup>33</sup> Much futurist teaching has been the work of sincere and dedicated men of God; nonetheless, by failing to expose the presence of Antichrist in our midst, the nations are being lured effectively into slavery once again. In the face of such failure, it is imperative to know as believers of old knew the presence of the True Seed, Christ Jesus, with them in spirit and in truth.

The historic interpretation has been embodied in the most solemn confessions of the Biblical world.<sup>34</sup> It forms a leading part in the testimony of martyrs and reformers. Like the prophets of old, these holy men bore a twofold testimony, a testimony for the truth of God, and a testimony against the Apostasy of those professing to be Christian. Their testimony was that Papal Rome is the Babylon of prophecy, “*that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth,*”<sup>35</sup> and that its head, the Roman pontiff, is the predicted “Man of Sin,” or Antichrist. ♦

<sup>32</sup> Romans 3:24.

<sup>33</sup> John W. Robbins, *Ecclesiastical Megalomania: The Economic and Political Thought of the Roman Catholic Church*, (ISBN 0-940931-52-4; USA: The Trinity Foundation, 1999) pp. 13-24.

<sup>34</sup> See *The Westminster Confession of Faith, 1646; The Baptist Confession of Faith, 1689; The Philadelphia Confession of Faith, Adopted by The Baptist Association, 1742;* and others.

<sup>35</sup> Revelation 17:18

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