

Introduction—Can We Identify Antichrist?

'Even so, Come [quickly], Lord Jesus'

Few (Revelation 22:21) subjects have intrigued the student of prophecy more than the Antichrist—'Man of Sin.' Small wonder, all Bible-believing Christians with the Apostle John long to be united with our Heavenly Bridegroom at his return, the event which will bring the satisfying grand fulfillment of 'that blessed hope'.(Tit 2:13) Excited by Paul's clue in 2 Thessalonians 2:8 that the Man of Sin must first be revealed before Christ returns, speculation on the identity of this mysterious figure has always been intense....

Eager for their Bridegroom's return, Christians during the first three centuries concluded that the Pagan Roman Empire was undoubtedly the Man of Sin. In the sixteenth century, the rallying cry of the Reformation leaders was that Papacy was the Man of Sin. And So the imminent return of Christ was the heart- throbbing expectation of Christians during the centuries that followed.

With the rebirth of the State of Israel in 1948 and Jewish zealots calling for the construction of the third temple, a literal, superhuman Man of Sin sitting in a literal temple in Jerusalem became a popular option of prophetic interpretation. What are the scriptural merits of this popular concept of Antichrist?

How can we identify the Antichrist, the Man of Sin, which must come before Jesus Christ can return for his Bride, his Church? When then can John's prayer representing the longings of the Church for centuries be answered?

Chapter 1—The Antichrist and the 'Little Horn'

The literal Man of Sin concept holds that the four beasts of Daniel 7 represent four governments or empires. The 'little horn' of the fourth beast (vss. 8, 11, 20) symbolizes a single individual who is the Man of Sin. At the same time this concept claims that the Leopard Beast of Revelation 13 pictures not a government, but a personal Man of Sin and that the ten horns (verse 1) picture ten governments that support this worldwide dictator. But this interpretation is completely inconsistent with itself:

Inconsistent Interpretation

Daniel 7 Horn = Individual Man of Sin Beast = Government

Revelation 13 Horns = Governments Beasts = Individual Man of Sin

Once the Bible identifies a symbol, then we are on shaky ground to assign that symbol a different meaning. Since Daniel identifies these

beasts as governments, most agree that these beasts of Daniel 7 are universal empires: Babylon, Medo- Persia, Greece and Rome. By what logic then are the beasts of Revelation symbolic of an individual when beasts in Daniel are admittedly governments? Also, is it not inconsistent to claim the little horn in Daniel is a man, whereas the horns of Revelation are governments? Consistency requires a uniform application of the beasts and horns in both Daniel and Revelation.

The justification for this reversal of interpretation is the claim that the Leopard Beast of Revelation 13 is referred to by a personal pronoun he; whereas the government beasts of Daniel are not. This reasoning, however, is simply not valid. The fourth beast, (Daniel 7:19,20) which all agree represents the Roman Empire, is also referred to by the personal pronoun his. Additionally, the beasts picturing Medo- Persia and Greece in Daniel 8:3- 7 are continually referred to by the personal pronouns he and him. Therefore, 'he' or 'him' do not at all necessarily indicate a man.

In Daniel and Revelation beasts are governments of long duration— empires. Horns are governmental powers within these empires. They can be sequential as in Daniel 7. Or they can be contemporaneous as in Revelation 13. According to history, Papacy was a power which grew out of the Roman Empire. Papacy as the 'little horn' of Daniel 7 was a sequential government power erupting as a horn from within the Pagan Roman Empire. But in Revelation 13 Papacy is represented as a beast, actually a continuation of the Roman beast of Daniel 7 from the time the little horn emerged—the Papal Holy Roman Empire.

The Persecution of the Saints

Several other factors concerning the Little Horn prove that Antichrist is a system and not an individual. The 'little horn... wears out the saints of the most high'.(Daniel 7:25) This fact presents a dilemma if a personal Antichrist wears out the saints during a future 'seven- year tribulation.' If, as some claim, the true Church is taken to heaven before the 'tribulation,' who are the 'saints of the most high' that are persecuted by the Man of Sin? They reply that these are the 'tribulation saints' (Revelation 7:14) and not the saints or Church of Christ who are taken before the tribulation. They add that these 'tribulation saints' will be in the Kingdom as subjects, but have no part in reigning with Christ in his Kingdom. This reigning in the Kingdom, they say, is reserved exclusively for the Church of Christ who previous to the tribulation have been gathered together to Christ.

This difference cannot be correct. The same saints that are persecuted by the Little Horn, the Man of Sin, are also given the Kingdom. The sequence of events in Daniel 7 is significant: First, Christ is brought before the Heavenly Father and given the Kingdom (vss. 13, 14). The saints of Daniel 7, like Christ, are given the Kingdom (vss. 21, 22) after the Little Horn 'made war with [them] the saints and prevailed against them.' Notice—the saints that are persecuted by the Little Horn are the same saints that reign with Christ. The *saints* of Daniel 7 are not the

‘tribulation saints’ of Revelation 7. Only Christ and his Church reign in his Kingdom. Therefore, ‘the saints of the most high’ of verse 22 are not the ‘tribulation saints,’ but the Church of Christ who reigns with Christ. This consistent reasoning also provides us the time element for the Man of Sin. The Little Horn persecutes these saints. Consequently, the Little Horn, the Man of Sin, must be revealed before the Day of Christ when the saints are resurrected—and before the tribulation occurs. Thus, a future, literal Man of Sin concept crumbles. The Man of Sin could not persecute saints who already are in heaven.

‘The Seven Years’ Tribulation’

In fact, the whole ‘seven- year tribulation’ concept dissolves before the Book of Daniel. ‘The saints of the most high’ are worn out by the Little Horn for a period of a ‘time, times, and the dividing of time’,(Daniel 7:25) which most agree refers to 3 1/2 years or 1260 days. Since the saints persecuted by the Man of Sin are the Church who reign with Christ and not the tribulation saints, this 1260- day persecution must occur before the great tribulation and not be part of that tribulation.

The popular, literal Man of Sin view just does not harmonize with Daniel 7 and Revelation 13, the very scriptures that are used as an evidence for this teaching.... We must go back to the basic scriptures of the Apostles which clearly delineate the characteristics that enable us to identify the Man of Sin—the Antichrist.

Chapter 2—What Do the Apostles Say?

The Apostle Paul’s discussion in his letter to the Thessalonians is essential in identifying the Man of Sin. In 2 Thessalonians 2:3- 9 (kjb), Paul mentions three names for Antichrist:

1. The Man of Sin (Vs. 3)
2. The Mystery of Iniquity (Vs. 7)
3. That Wicked [One] (Vs. 8)

If the Man of Sin and Mystery of Iniquity are, indeed, names of the same entity, then we have an important clue as to both the identity and the time of operation of the Man of Sin.

Most translations—including the New International Version (niv) and The New American Standard (nas)—leave no doubt that all three names refer to the same entity.

2 3:3- 8 (NIV)

(3) Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. (4) He opposes and exalts himself over

everything that is called God or is worshipped, and even sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

(5) Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? (6) And now you know what is holding him back, So that he may be revealed at the proper time. (7) For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do So till he is taken out of the way. (8) And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.

2 3:3- 8 (NAS)

(3) Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction.

(4) who opposes and exalts himself above every so- called god or object of worship, So that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.

(5) Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?

(6) And you know what restrains him now, So that in his times he may be revealed.

(7) For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do So until he is taken out of the way.

(8) And then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming.

Notice the names, 'Man of Lawlessness' and 'Mystery of Lawlessness' (vss. 3 and 7). These two translations are based on the two oldest Greek manuscripts of the New Testament where the same Greek word anomia (anomia) is the basis of both names, 'Man of Sin' (anomia) and 'mystery of iniquity' (anomia). (i) Actually, all three names vss. 3, 7 and 8 contain this same basic Greek word. The nas translates this basic Greek word anomia in the English, 'man of lawlessness' vs. 3, 'mystery of lawlessness' vs. 7 and 'that lawless one' vs. 8.

Obviously 'that lawless one' (vs. 8) that is destroyed during the Lord's second advent is the 'man of lawlessness' (vs. 3) who is also called the 'mystery of lawlessness' (vs. 7).

NAS That Lawless One = Man of Lawlessness = Mystery of Lawlessness

KJV That Wicked = Man of Sin = Mystery of Iniquity

Although the name 'man of lawlessness' is more Scripturally accurate, the name 'Man of Sin' is the name of popular usage. Therefore, we will continue to use 'Man of Sin' in this treatise as rendered in the King James Version.

Origin of the Man of Sin

Having established the Man of Sin and Mystery of Iniquity as names of the same entity, we can readily understand the important clues the Apostle Paul provides us in 2 Thessalonians 2:7 identifying the Man of Sin.

Clue 1—Already at Work

Paul calls the Man of Sin the Mystery of Iniquity and observes that it is already at work in his day. The Man of Sin could not be a literal man for he would be nearly two thousand years old by now!

Clue 2—Mystery Class

Why did Paul call the Man of Sin the Mystery of Iniquity? Paul's lesson of contrast is clear. Remember the beautiful mystery of the true Church described in his letters. (Ephesians 5:30- 32 Colossians 1:26- 27 _ 1 Corinthians 12:12- 28) Christ is 'not one member, but many'! Just as the human body is a union of many members, So the church is the body of Christ. Just as there is a mystery class of righteous or justified believers who compose Christ, So there is a mystery class of iniquity—evil workers—who comprise Antichrist.

Clue 3—Removal of Pagan Rome

All agree the King James Version is a poor translation of vss. 7 and 8, 'For the mystery of iniquity [Man of Sin] doth already work [in Paul's day]: only he who now letteth [Greek, restrains] (ii) will let restrain until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked Man of Sin be revealed.' All other translations are similar to the nas, 'For the mystery of lawlessness Man of Sin is already at work; only he who now *restrains* will *do So* until he is taken out of the way. And then that lawless one (Man of Sin) will be revealed.'

The Pagan Roman Empire was the restraining factor. Any profession of Christianity, true or false, was restrained in varying degrees during the first three centuries of church history. But the political power opportunists were ever present in the Church. When Constantine became Emperor of Rome, the power- grasping Nicolaitan element found its opportunity and Christianity was declared the religion of the Roman Empire. When 'he' (Pagan Rome) ceased to *restrain* the Christian Church, it was just a matter of time before a worldly Christian Church claimed to be the kingdom of God on earth.

Clue 4—Revealed before Return of Christ

The Man of Sin is a ‘mystery’ or secret during its incipient beginnings. This secret stage is in contrast to its revealment during its future full-scale operation. And that revealment, Paul explains, would come before ‘our gathering together unto him’ (vss. 1- 3), which many refer to as the ‘rapture.’

Carefully study 2 Thessalonians 2:1- 3, nas:

(1) Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him.

(2) that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed...to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.

(3) Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction.

Verse 2 establishes that ‘the day of the Lord’ includes both ‘the coming of our Lord and our gathering together with him.’

When Paul says in vs 3, ‘it will not come,’ he is referring to ‘the day of the Lord’ (vs. 2). Since the day of the Lord is the time of the ‘coming of our Lord Jesus and our gathering together to him,’ we may conclude the ‘man of lawlessness’ or the ‘Man of Sin’ is revealed before the first resurrection of the saints or ‘rapture.’

This sequence presented by the Apostle Paul presents a problem to those who hold the pre- tribulation rapture scenario (that Jesus returns to rapture his saints before the tribulation). Paul is here teaching that the Man of Sin is revealed before ‘our gathering together to him,’ whereas, pre- tribulationists (iii) believe the Man of Sin is revealed after their rapture.

Clue 5—Preceded by a Doctrinal Apostasy

‘The day of Christ’ could not come except there come ‘a falling away first’ [apostasy] and secondly, ‘that man of sin be revealed’ (vss. 2- 3, KJV).

These two events must precede ‘the day of Christ.’ ‘First,’ the ‘falling away [Greek, apostasia]’ and then the ‘Man of Sin be revealed.’ Many believe this apostasia is a rebellion or wave of anarchy that will cause the world to accept a superman dictator who will during the last half of the 7- year tribulation be revealed as the ‘Man of Sin.’

However, this Greek word apostasia as used in the Bible means ‘a defection from the truth’ (iv) and not a political rebellion. Apostasia is used twice in the New Testament—here and in Acts 21:21, where the

text speaks of those who ‘forsake’ the teachings of Moses. (v) The revealment of the Man of Sin, which is a system and not an individual, will be preceded by a doctrinal defection and not a political rebellion.

Clue 6—Exalted in the Temple, the Church

The ‘Man of Sin’ ‘exalts himself’ ‘in the temple of God.’ 2 Thess. 2:4 (nas) ...who opposes and exalts himself [above every so- called] god or [object of worship,] So that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. Can there be any doubt as to what ‘temple of God’ Paul means? Paul speaks of only one temple of God in all his writings. ‘Know ye not that ye are the temple of God’.(1 Corinthians 3:16) Paul speaks of Christians as being ‘built upon the foundation of the apostles’ and ‘Jesus Christ...the chief corner stone; in whom all the building...together groweth up unto an holy temple in the Lord’.(Ephesians 2:19- 21) The church of Christ is now the temple of God.

Some speculate that Israelis will construct a literal temple just before or during the first part of a 7- year tribulation. But when God destroyed His literal temple in A.D. 70 during the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, that temple was only a picture or type of the Church which is the actual or antitypical temple of God. (1 Corinthians 3:16) God left no instructions for the Jews to build a temple before He sets up His Kingdom in Jerusalem. By no stretch of the imagination will a man-initiated, man- ordained temple built before God’s Kingdom be accepted and called by God as His temple—the temple of God.’

Therefore, when the Apostle Paul said the Man of Sin will exalt himself in ‘the temple of God,’ he meant Antichrist would exalt itself in the ‘temple’ of professed Christians. ‘Know ye not, ye are the temple of God.’

Apostle John and Antichrist

Most students of prophecy agree that the Antichrist and the Man of Sin are one and the same entity. The Apostle John’s evaluation of Antichrist in 1 John 2 somewhat parallels the Apostle Paul’s description of the Man of Sin in 2 Thessalonians 2.

1 John 2:18 (nas)

Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that [the] antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen; from this we know that it is the last hour. By the authority of the Apostle John, the Christian dispensation is called the ‘last hour’ during which the Antichrist—the Man of Sin—would come.

Clue 7—Anti Means ‘In Place Of’

The Apostle John calls the Man of Sin the ‘*Antichrist*’ for good reason.

The name Man of Sin implies an entity that would be against or opposing the righteous ways of Christ. But the Greek prefix anti signifies 'instead of' or 'in place of.' (vi) Anti is used 20 times in the New Testament as a complete word and never does it have the meaning of 'against.' Nineteen times it is translated 'for' as in Romans 12:17, 'Recompense no man evil for evil.' (vii) We should not return or replace evil with evil.

Thus '*Antichrist*' replaces the position of Christ. Since Antichrist is also called the Man of Sin, obviously the operating principles of this system would be also against the principles of Christ.

Summary of the Apostles' Clues:

4. The Man of Sin was at work in Paul's day, but was not a literal man for then he would be almost 2,000 years old.
5. The Man of Sin is a counterfeit body of Christ, that is, a system of lawlessness intent on setting up a pseudo Kingdom of God contrary to God's arrangement and laws.
6. The Man of Sin was held back by the Pagan Roman Empire until a Roman Emperor joined forces with the power-hungry element of the Christian Church.
7. The Man of Sin system would be in full operation, identified and revealed before the dead and living in Christ are 'gathered' to him.
8. The revealment of the Man of Sin system would be preceded by the apostasy, a great defection from pure Christian doctrine.
9. Professed Christians are the temple of God in which the Man of Sin will be exalted.
10. 'Antichrist' signifies not only against Christ, but in place of Christ.

(i) Constantine Tischendorf, the new testament with readings of old manuscripts London: Sampson Low, Marston and Company, Limited, 1869, 330.

(ii) The Greek word *kateko* is incorrectly rendered 'letteth' in the KJV. *kateko* is used eighteen other times in the New Testament and in every instance contains the thought of 'hold' (possess) or 'withhold' (restrain). the new englishman's Greek concordance of the new testament (Wilmington, DE: Associated Publishers & Authors, 1976), 417. It is translated 'withholdeth' in the KJV of vs. 6 and 'restrains' in the NAS version of vs. 6.

(iii) Those who hold that the church will be taken before the tribulation.

(iv) Dr. James Strong, strong's exhaustive concordance Grand Rapids: Guardian Press, Gk. word 646.

(v) New Englishman's Greek Concordance Of The New Testament, 76.

(vi) James Strong, Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, Gk. Word number 473.

(vii) New Englishmen's Greek Concordance Of The New Testament, number 467.

Chapter 3—A Search Through History

Using the clues left by the Apostles Paul and John, we will trace through history for the Antichrist / Man of Sin system with the searchlight of the Scriptures. Our time frame, of course, is the Christian Age- between the Apostles' day and the gathering of the dead and living in Christ to himself in the first resurrection at our Lord's return.

The Apostle Paul said, 'The apostasy comes first.' No Protestant will deny that in the first centuries of the Christian Age, there was a great 'falling away' (apostasy). Paul again warned of this apostasy in 2 Timothy 4:3,4. 'In later times (not the 'last times'—the Greek literally means after the present time) some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons...Men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from meat...' This description gives us further clues as to specific characteristics of the 'Man of Sin.' There is, of course, only one church that for centuries prohibited its clergy to marry and forbade the eating of meat on Friday.

Jude was one of the last writers of the New Testament. By the time Jude wrote the book that bears his name, some of the apostles had already died in the Lord. False teachers had become influential. It was necessary for Jude to sound an alarm to 'earnestly contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints' (vs. 3). Jude warns that just as predicted, 'certain men crept in unawares' and were teaching error (vss. 3,4). Then he devoted the rest of his epistle to warning against the dire consequences of their doctrine. Yes, just as Paul predicted in his first letter to Timothy (4:1 - 6), the apostasy would shortly follow.

Debut of the Man of Sin

The defection from pure doctrine that continued in the next few centuries was incredible. The system that this error developed was monstrous in both its claims and deeds. Indeed, very soon the Man of Sin made a debut in full splendor....

Pompous rituals and elaborate ceremonies replaced the simple preaching of the Gospel. Salvation was sought no longer through the blood of Christ alone—but from holy water, relics of saints, medals and amulets, the rosary and the intercession of Mary. Multitudes flocked to converted heathen temples to pray to and adore the very same idols which the Pagans had worshipped a short time before. The names of the statues were simply changed from those of Pagan gods and heroes to the names

of Christian martyrs and saints. The Roman Emperor, who as Pontifex Maximus ('Chief Religious Ruler') had been the head of all the Pagan priests, vacated his office in favor of the Bishop of Rome, the new Pontifex Maximus. Whereas the Roman emperors had claimed to possess the 'Keys of Janus and Cybele,' the new supreme pontiffs, dressed in the same costume as their forerunners (the Pagan Roman emperors), claimed possession of the 'Keys of St. Peter' and attempted to prove that the Apostle Peter had once been the Bishop and Pope of Rome—a claim completely unsubstantiated by history.

This Man of Sin growing out of the apostasy as foreseen by Paul, exalted 'himself above every so-called god or object of worship, So that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God' (nas). Since the 'temple' Paul refers to is not a literal building, but the Church of God, the self-exaltation of the Popes of Rome in the Church of God was extravagant beyond measure. Applying divine prerogatives, they claimed that every human being must be subject to their authority.

The System—Not Individuals

Not any one Pope was the Antichrist——much less is every Catholic or Pope a Man of Sin. The Man of Sin, the Antichrist, the 'Mystery of Iniquity,' is the Papal system. It is not an individual.

Astounding as these false claims are, they deceived the whole Christian world during most of Papacy's dark reign. Only a faithful few escaped their baneful influence and remained loyal to their true Lord and Head. And as already noted, the Greek prefix anti signifies not merely 'against' or 'opposing,' but also 'instead, in the place of.' Thus, Antichrist is not simply an opponent of our Lord and his truth, but an impostor, a usurper of his position. Claiming to be the 'Vicar of Christ' on earth and supreme 'Head of the Church,' each Pope in turn, has applied the Messianic promises and titles of Scripture to himself. Even kings were required to kiss the Pope's great toe, in supposed fulfillment of Psalms 2:12, 'Kiss the Son, lest he be angry.' However, attributing the purest motives to the Popes, the Papacy would still be the Antichrist.

If the development of such a pompous church defected from the original simplicity and purity of the apostolic church seems implausible, a glance at history will confirm our conclusions. The testimony of history presents a clear case of how the Papacy developed and claimed to be reigning in the place of Christ and his Kingdom on earth. (*See Appendix A for an historic documentation of Antichrist's incredible rise to power.*)

Chapter 4—Man of Sin Becomes The Antichrist

Three centuries of defection from the teachings of the Apostles had gradually prepared the worldly Church to step into the role of the Antichrist. In A.D. 313 Constantine embraced Christianity and the Church embraced Constantine. Although the next century witnessed an even further development of the Man of Sin, still, a minority of faithful

Christians were not in harmony with this aberrant church- state organization. But with the stroke of a pen by the intellectual spokesman of the Church, the Man of Sin was finally transformed into The Antichrist—in the primary, fullest sense of the word—'instead of,' 'in place of' Christ.

Between A.D. 413- 426, Augustine wrote in a 22- volume work, the city of god, that Christians were all wrong in waiting for the second advent before the Kingdom of God is established on earth. Rather, he advanced the idea, the Catholic Church united with imperial Rome was in reality the Kingdom of God now reigning on earth. Augustine proceeded to weave an incredible fabric of prophetic fantasy to prove his new theology. (1) He claimed that Christ at his first advent was the 'stone' that smote the image and would fill the whole earth Daniel 2: (2)

That stone increased and filled the whole earth: that he showed is His Kingdom, which is the church, with which He has filled the whole face of the earth.

The Millennium, Augustine advocated, was figurative of the period between the first and second advents. 'From the first coming of Christ to the second time...during this interval, which goes by the name of a thousand years, he [Satan] should not seduce the Church.' (3) That Satan was bound for a thousand years in God's Kingdom, Augustine construed to mean Satan could only inflict selective harm. 'The devil is prohibited and restrained from seducing those nations which belong to Christ...' 'By the abyss' is meant the countless multitudes of the wicked...when prevented from harming believers he takes more complete possession of the ungodly. (4)

Augustine taught two resurrections for his Kingdom, the 'first resurrection' of Revelation 20 is spiritual—from the death of sin to the life of righteousness.' The second resurrection is that of the body which occurs at the end of the world, when the thousand years end. Thus he wrote, 'There are two resurrections, —the one the first and spiritual resurrection, which has its place in this life...the other the second, which does not occur now, but in the end of the world.' (5)

The Catholic Church readily embraced Augustine's theology that the Kingdom of God had begun. Then for centuries nothing could stand in the way of extending this kingdom to the ends of the earth. The Catholic Church, no longer a chaste virgin waiting the return of her espoused Bridegroom to set up his Kingdom, (2 Corinthians 11:2 Revelation 22:17) united with the kings of earth to set up her own kingdom. Revelation 17 describes such a union as symbolic 'fornication.'

To this day, the Vatican with its vast network of ambassadors that reach around the world still claims to be the Kingdom of God on earth.

'Who Sits as God in the Temple of God'

2 Thessalonians 2:8 Before Pagan Rome became Papal Rome, the Pagan Emperor claimed the title of Pontifex Maximus, that is, the Greatest Religious Ruler. As a demigod, in some sense descended from their heathen deities, he was worshipped and his statues adored. Then when Pagan Rome became Papal Rome, the Emperor who still possessed the title of Pontifex Maximus was delighted with Augustine's teaching that the Papal Roman Empire was the Kingdom of God on earth. But still it was the Catholic civil Emperor and not yet the Papacy that sat as God in the temple of God and declared himself the divine ruler over all Christians.

At that point in history (AD 413), no single one of the eighteen hundred bishops of the empire was yet prepared to demand recognition as the head or pope. But several had their eyes on the prize. The prestige of the bishops of Rome, however, rapidly grew when the seat of the empire was transferred to Constantinople. As the city of Rome fell subject to the invasion of the barbarians from the north, the bishop of Rome was left as the most permanent and time-honored protector. Finally, in A.D. 455, the city of Rome was invaded and plundered by the Vandals, and Leo, the bishop of Rome, improved the opportunity for claiming spiritual power. (6)

Beware! I am the successor of St. Peter, to whom God has given the keys of the kingdom of heaven...I am the living representative of divine power on the earth: I am Caesar, a Christian Caesar...I absolve all subjects from allegiance to kings; I give and take away, by divine right, all thrones and principalities of Christendom.

Succeeding bishops of Rome made the same pompous claims, but it was not until A.D. 533 that the bishop of Rome was so recognized by the Roman Emperor, Justinian I. Excerpts from a letter from Justinian reveals significantly the emperor's acknowledgment of the Pope John, Patriarch of Rome—as well as what the emperor expected in return: (7)

The victorious Justinian...to John, the most holy archbishop of the fostering city of Rome...we have hastened to make subject to the See of your Holiness, and to unite with it, all the priests of the whole Eastern district...your Holiness...who is the Head of all the holy churches. For in all points...we are eager to add to the honor and authority of your See...now we entreat your Blessedness to pray for us, and to obtain for us the protection of heaven.

In another letter to the bishop of Constantinople, the arch rival of Pope John, the Emperor Justinian warned him to acknowledge Pope John of Rome as 'his supreme Holiness, the Pope of Ancient Rome.' (8) The Eastern Roman Emperor not only accepted the Bishop of Rome as Pope or head of the Catholic Church, but also as the authority over the Emperor himself.

However, one problem remained for complete sovereignty of the Church: The Ostrogothic kingdom that ruled Italy challenged the Pope's

authority. Consequently, Justinian dispatched his army to Italy. In A.D. 539 the Ostrogoths were defeated, (9) an event significantly marked in prophecy. The 'little horn' Papal Rome that grew out of the 'fourth beast, dreadful and terrible' Pagan Rome, first needed to displace three 'horns' political powers. The third 'horn'—the Ostrogoths—now out of the way, the 'little horn' could then be free to flourish and speak 'great things' Daniel 7:7- 8. Now the Pope of Rome reigned supreme as the Pontifex Maximus—both civil and ecclesiastical ruler—over the entire Papal Roman Empire.

'The Holy Roman Empire'

The French kings, Pepin and Charlemagne, each in turn brought his army to the protection of Papacy's dominion. In A.D. 800 Charlemagne formally presented Papacy with the Papal States and the reign of the 'Holy Roman Empire' began. (10) Far from being holy, its history was written in blood. This transfer of power from Pagan Rome to Papal Rome was also a fulfillment of the prophecy in Revelation: 'And the beast which I saw generally accepted as Antichrist...the dragon civil Rome gave him Antichrist his power and his seat and great authority' Revelation 13:2.

The following is a capsulation of this supreme sovereignty of the Papacy: (11)

The pontiff...trode on the necks of Kings, made and unmade sovereigns, disposed of states and kingdoms, and, as the great high- priest and vicegerent of the Almighty on earth, established an authority as lord paramount, and reigned over heads of other sovereigns...

Did Papacy as the Man of Sin fulfill sitting 'in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God'? (2 Thessalonians 2:4) A standard Roman Catholic authority will speak for itself: (12)

The Pope is of such dignity and highness that he is not simply a man but, as it were, God, and the vicar [representative] of God...the pope's excellence and power are not only about heaven, terrestrial and infernal things, but he is also above angels...He is of such great dignity and power that he occupies one and the same tribunal with Christ...The pope is, as it were, God on earth...the Pope is of So great authority and power that he can modify, declare or interpret the divine law.

As the centuries progressed, the Popes became more and more arrogantly articulate in their presumptuous claims. 'The pope holds the place of the true God,' declared Pope Innocent III (A.D. 1198- 1216). The Lateran Council (A.D. 1123) acclaimed the Pope as 'Prince of the Universe.' St. Bernard (A.D. 1090- 1153) wrote that 'none except God is like the Pope, either in heaven or on earth.' And Pope Nicholas (A.D. 858- 856) boasted, 'What can you make me but God?' Ferrar's (Roman Catholic) Ecclesiastical Dictionary states, 'The Pope, is as it were, God on Earth.' (13) No wonder the Revelator wrote, 'And there was given unto him a

mouth speaking great things and blasphemies...And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven' Revelation 13:5,6.

Clearly, the 'Little Horn' of Papacy which grew out of the Roman Empire beast fits the description with 'eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.'

(1) These following quotes and citations from Augustine's writing are found in the collection, A Select Library Of The Nicene And Post-Nicene Fathers hereafter abbreviated NPNF. These quotes and citations are also found in the prophetic faith of our fathers by Leviticus Roy Edwin Froom Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1950, Vol. 1, 473-490.

(2) Augustine, Tractate 4 On The Gospel Of John, Sec. 4, NPNF, 1st Series, Vol. 7, 26.

(3) Augustine, The City Of God, Book 20 8, NPNF, 1st Series, Vol. 2, 428.

(4) Ibid., 428.

(5) Ibid., 425, 426.

(6) Time Is At Hand New Brunswick: Bible Students Congregation of New Brunswick, 1977, 295.

(7) Volume of the Civil Law. Codices lib. I tit. i A.D. 533.

(8) Ibid., 75.

(9) Gibbon, The Decline And Fall Of The Roman Empire, Vol. 3, 536 including footnote, 537.

(10) John M'Clintock and James Strong, Cyclopaedia Of Biblical, Theological, And Ecclesiastical Literature New York: Harper & Brothers, 1877, Vol. 7, 630, and Vol. 9, 996.

(11) Adolphe Thiers & Edward E. Bowen, The Campaigns Of Napoleon London: Rivingtons, 1875, 89, 90.

(12) John Ferrar, An Ecclesiastical Dictionary London: John Mason, 1858.

(13) Ibid., Thomas J. Capel, The Pope: The Vicar Of Christ, The Head Of The Church New York: Pustet & Co., 1885. Fox's Book Of Martyrs cited by H. Gratton Guinness, The Approaching End Of The Age London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1878, 191- 192.