

God's Master Plan In Prophecy

Lesson 12 – The Judging of the Great Harlot

Key Scriptures: Revelation 17:1 – 18:24

Introduction

After John saw the seven vials of the wrath of God poured out upon the earth, then one of the angels came to him and began to show him a quite different type of vision, what scholars refer to as "The judgment of the great harlot." Whomever this "great harlot" is or whatever it represents, it will be upon the earth at Christ's return and will be judged by God during the wrath of God. Both the 17th and 18th chapter of the Revelation deal extensively with the judgment of this "Great Harlot" whom we are also told goes by the name, "Babylon."

The Vision of the Great Harlot

Rev 17:1 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters,

Throughout the 17th verse, there are many clues given to help us identify the great harlot, and, fortunately, the answers to the clues are revealed as well. As we go along in this study, we will first point out the clues and then use them together to try to discover the identity of the great harlot that John saw. Here in the very first verse we have already been given two pertinent clues:

1. *Whatever God was trying to talk about is represented by a female.*
2. *She "sits on many waters."*

Rev 17:2 with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality."

The word translated as "acts of immorality" is a reference to sexual sin. From this verse, we can draw two more clues:

3. *The kings of the earth have been involved intimately with her.*
4. *The people of the earth have been made "drunk" with the wine of immorality.*

Rev 17:3 And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns.

This is a remarkable scripture because it identifies this harlot with Satan¹ and the one world government of the Antichrist that we studied in the 13th chapter of Revelation because that beast had "seven heads and ten horns" as well. All of this gives us our next clue:

- 5.) *This great harlot is affiliated with and very much a part of the Antichrist's end time rule.*

Rev 17:4 The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality,

This verse gives us three more clues in rapid-fire manner:

6. *The woman wore clothes of purple and red.*
7. *She was decked with gold and all sorts of jewelry.*
8. *She committed many "abominations" against God and much immorality.*

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Remember that Satan was described as a "red dragon" in the 12th chapter of Revelation.

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Rev 17:5 and on her forehead a name was written, a mystery, "BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."

The clues found in this verse are very astounding and deserve a pause of contemplation. John was told that the woman had a name written on her forehead, "Babylon the Great." Babylon was the world power in the time of Daniel the prophet. We have already learned in our studies² how that the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, became prideful and took the credit as a man for the great kingdom and viewed himself as the ruler of the entire earth, and because of this God struck him with illness for seven years. His grandson, Belshazzar, sealed his fate as the last king of Babylon when during a drunken feast, he called for the sacred vessels of the Jewish temple to be brought and began to drink from the vessels that the one true God had called "holy." While he drank and desecrated the temple items, God allowed the kingdom to be captured by the Medes and Persians. From all of these stories, we can summarize that Babylon of old was judged by God because of three main reasons: idolatry, their leader viewing himself as the ruler of the entire earth, and desecrating things that God had called holy. That this woman is identified with ancient Babylon indicates to us that she exhibits the same traits. That leads us to our next clue:

- 9. She is involved with idolatry, her leader views himself as the ruler of the entire earth, and she desecrates things that God has called holy.*

The other new clue is that she is the, "Mother of harlots." That is that she had daughters which exhibit many of the same characteristics of their mother! To put it succinctly:

- 10. She is the mother of harlots and has daughters which commit many of the same sins.*

Rev 17:6 And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. When I saw her, I wondered greatly.

Here is yet another clue to this great harlot:

- 11. She is "drunken" with the blood of the saints and has been responsible for many martyrs of Jesus' people.*

When John saw all of these things he thought the question that you may be asking yourself: "who is the great harlot? And what do all of these clues mean?" Thankfully, the angel went on to give us the correct interpretations and further details of these clues:

Rev 17:7-8 And the angel said to me, "Why do you wonder? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. 8 "The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will wonder when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come.

The beast that the great harlot rode, was without a shadow of a doubt the Antichrist's end-time government and the ascension out of the abyss is a reference to the 5th trumpet war³ so it seems that the Antichrist will secretly provoke this war as well. Remember that the beast represents the one world government of peace of the Antichrist. We have already discussed how the one world government of the Antichrist will be a revival of the "Holy Roman Empire" and the terms "was, and is not, and is about to come" is a reference to the fact that the Empire would fall and then rise again. Keep in mind that the Holy Roman Empire was different from the normal Roman Empire because it had two leaders: a political leader and a religious leader. It also had one religion: the Roman Catholic Church and all other beliefs were heavily persecuted by that central church. We have also discussed how that the false prophet who will rule with the Antichrist would probably be the Pope of that time.⁴ Keep all of this in mind as the angel gives us the interpretation of some of these clues:

Rev 17:9 "Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits,

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See the 5th lesson of this series.

³ See the 8th lesson of this series.

⁴ All of the past principles referred to in this paragraph are drawn from the 5th lesson of this series.

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Here we get some further information and it turns out to be a very telling clue as to the identity of the great harlot:

12. The woman sits upon "seven mountains."

Rev 17:10-11 and they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while. 11 "The beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction.

There is quite a bit of supposition about what this scripture means, but I am going to give what I think is a simple explanation and yet matches all of the criteria.⁵ From a careful reading of these verses several points can be learned. First, there are five kings or kingdoms that have fallen, a sixth one that was in rule at the time of John's seeing this vision,⁶ and a seventh one that would continue but a short time. The eighth king or kingdom is the beast, or Antichrist, which is the one who "goes to destruction."

There had been five powerful kingdoms with great influence in the world at the time of the writing of the book of Revelation and all five met judgment from the true God. They are: Egypt,⁷ Assyria, Babylon, the Medes and Persians, and the Grecians. The sixth world power that was in rule as John wrote the book of Revelation were the Romans. The seventh that came and ruled but a short time was the Holy Roman Empire. It tried to resurrect several times but always failed. The eighth will be a revived Holy Roman Empire that will be governed by the Antichrist and the False Prophet. Keep in mind that whatever "the great harlot" represents, she rides upon and is thus connected with this coming government of the Antichrist.

Rev 17:12-13 "The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour. 13 "These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast.

We have already avidly discussed these ten kings and what they represent.⁸ Remember that this is the ten nation union from which the Antichrist will arise. They support the Antichrist completely in his plan to rule over all of the world.

Rev 17:14 "These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful."

Here we are given additional information that we did not know before: these ten kingdoms will be the leading opponents in a "war against the Lamb." That war is what we studied as the Battle of Armageddon which happens toward the end of the Wrath of God. We will study this battle in detail in the next lesson.¹

Rev 17:15 And he said to me, "The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.

Here the clues begin to be somewhat decoded: the waters that the great whore sat upon represent "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." Whatever this woman represents obviously is something that is found working in all nations and languages on the earth in the end times!

Rev 17:16-17 "And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire. 17 "For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God will be fulfilled.

These ten kings and kingdoms of the Antichrist will at first love the harlot and allow her to ride upon their power and then yet will turn on her and destroy her! It is quite obvious that the peace between her and the Antichrist will be short lived.

Rev 17:18 "The woman whom you saw is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth."

Here we have our final clue as to this immoral woman's identity:

⁵ The theory that I am postulating here draws heavily from the conservative commentary of Jameison, Fausset, and Brown.

⁶ Which would be somewhere between A.D. 90 and A.D. 100.

⁷ See the 29th and 30th chapters of Ezekiel.

⁸ See the 4th lesson of this series.

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13. *The woman is a great city that reigns over kings of the earth.*

Unveiling the Great Harlot

Now that we have all of our clues and have had them explained a bit, let's turn to seeking the probable identity of the great harlot. There is a power that exists within this world that fits perfectly every description of "the great harlot." That is the Roman Catholic Church. When we realize that the Roman Catholic Church was the religious half of the Holy Roman Empire and that the Antichrist will rule over a revived Holy Roman Empire, then it becomes very clear the role of the Roman Catholic Church in end-time prophecy. Before we go through the clues and show how that Roman Catholicism fulfills this particular area of prophecy, let us mention that this study is not to condemn or offend people who have been raised Catholic, but to point out the facts about the Roman Catholic Religion and its doctrines and origins.

1. *It is represented by a female.* This should not be much of a shock because the true Apostolic Church of God is represented many times in the word of God by a pure virgin. Even Israel was often compared to a woman with which God was engaged and yet was unfaithful. It makes sense, then that the false church would be represented by a harlot or an unfaithful woman. The Roman Catholic Church has certainly been unfaithful to the scriptures and we will discuss many of these things in a moment.

2. *She sits upon many waters which represent many nationalities, people, and tongues.* The Roman Catholic Religion has made inroads and mission efforts into almost every nation on earth. They present themselves as "the church" of whatever nation and tongue that they are in using familial pressure to gain the faith of the new generations.

3. *The Kings of the earth have been involved with her intimately and have committed acts of immorality.* From the Holy Roman Empire until the present, the Roman Catholic Church has always been heavily involved in world politics. Many world leaders have assumed a throne or presidency simply because they had the backing of the Roman Catholic Church. Although not widely broadcast, Adolph Hitler and Pope Pius XII had an agreement to work together in leadership if Hitler succeeded in conquering the world as he had planned.⁹ Because of the tremendous power and sheer number of people of the Catholic church, many kings and leaders have been willing to "sell out their purity and morals" for an alliance with them.

4. *The people of the earth have been made "drunk" with her immorality and seductiveness.* Ask most people on the earth if Catholicism is against scripture or a false religion and the usual answer will be "no" and yet the simple fact of the matter is that the Roman Catholic Church has historically made it a point to discourage their saints to read the Bible for themselves¹⁰ and usually refer to "Church tradition" as the doctrinal basis for their practices. As a result, most people who are "Catholic" are simply that out of tradition and not because they know why they believe what they believe. The lie of tradition has caused many people to sell out their souls to the harlot and become drunk and not thinking right because of drinking from her cup.

5. *This "great harlot" is affiliated and a part of the Antichrist's end time rule!* We have already discussed how that the Antichrist's government will be a revived Holy Roman Empire with the Antichrist as the political leader and the false prophet as the spiritual leader. What better spiritual leader with world-wide recognition is there than the Pope!? Also the Holy Roman Empire was an attempted blend of the Catholic Church as the one world religion to complement the one world government. The Antichrist's kingdom will be based upon the same idea thus it seems probable that the Pope would be the one to fulfill this role.

6. *The woman wore clothes of purple and red.* Those colors are precisely the colors that the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church wear. The "cardinals" wear red, and the bishops and archbishops wear purple.

7. *She was decked with gold and jewelry.* Every priest that ministers does so with a gold cross on a chain around his neck. Often other jewelry is worn and rings are sometimes given special significance. The Pope's crown is a multi-jeweled headdress with much ornamentation.

8. *She committed many "abominations" against God and much immorality.* The Roman Catholic Church has been the source of the greatest heresies of Christianity. False doctrines of the Godhead, infant baptism, worship and prayers to

⁹ see *Decline & Fall of the Roman Church* by Malachi Martin, pg. 101.

¹⁰ To the extent that in the Middle Ages, it was against the law and punishable by death to translate the Bible in a language that the common people could read. See the stories and writings of William Tyndale and Martin Luther, et al.

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saints and angels, indulgences,¹¹ sprinkling in water baptism, use of the titles in baptism rather than the name of Jesus, the elevation of Mary into an object of worship and mediator between God and man, penance to man or “confession,” vows of celibacy of the ministry, transubstantiation,¹² purgatory, receiving the literal Holy Spirit not necessary for salvation, eternal security, prayer for the dead, lack of outward worship, and mass are just a few of the ways that the Roman Catholic Church contradicts God's Word and teaches false doctrines! Most of the above changes from the true Word of God were a result of the Catholic Church changing their beliefs to match a then current political climate.

9. *She is involved with idolatry, her leader views himself as the ruler of the entire earth, and she desecrates things that God has called holy.* It has been seen from above that the Roman Catholic Church has indeed desecrated almost everything that God calls holy in the Bible. Her greatest sin, though, is idolatry. Despite the clear and absolute forbidding of idol worship in the scriptures¹³ the Roman Catholic Church has made statues and idols a focal point of their religion. Furthermore, when the Pope is crowned, he is pronounced in Latin, "The Vicar of the Universe." "Vicar" means "supreme ruler" and Catholicism teaches that they will subdue the earth for Jesus Christ. That is why most Catholics ignore the scripture's teaching on the Rapture of the Church because it does not fit well with their plan of global domination.

10. *She is the mother of harlots and has daughters which commit many of the same sins.* This is actually a very scary scripture in light of recent events. The Roman Catholic Church is on a declared mission to unify all churches into one religion. Pope John XXIII proclaimed "We, the Mother Church, are opening our arms to all of our daughters to return home." He used "daughters" to refer to the many religions who formed because they disagreed with some of the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church but still held on to a few of the tenants. Prophecy teacher, Irvin Baxter, cites a report that appeared in the Indianapolis Star on June 17, 1994 that was headlined "Southern Baptists Embrace Catholics." It was a report on a recent Southern Baptist convention that had decided to join an earlier decision by the Evangelical Trinitarians and the Catholics to discourage their ministers from "proselyting" each other's flocks and "work together." Also in 1994, Pope John Paul II released the first new catechism in 400 years. In it the Catholic Church embraced the Muslim religion as being saved. Here is an exact quote found on pages 242-243 from that edict:

"The plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator, in the first place amongst whom are the Muslims; these profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and together with us they adore the one, merciful God, mankind's judge on the last day."

Yet, the Muslims do not believe that Jesus Christ was the Messiah and the scriptures clearly state in John 8:24: "... if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins!" Whatever church you are a part of, you must make sure that it is based upon the Apostolic Church of Acts that Jesus and His disciples founded and not upon the traditions and heresies of the Roman Catholic Church even as a distant offshoot.

11. *She is "drunken" with the blood of the saints and has been responsible for many martyrs of Jesus' people.* There has never been a group of religion that has killed more Bible believing Christians than the Roman Catholic Church. A rough estimate by historians reveals that at least 68 million Christians have been put to death by the Roman Catholic Church. The Spanish Inquisition (A.D. 1100-1500) was a time of extreme torture and death by the Roman Catholic Church against anyone who dared believe differently than their traditions. People were burned at the stake, devoured by beasts, beheaded and killed by many different means. Torture devices such as "the rack," "the iron maiden," and "thumb screws" were invented to extract as much pain as possible before death during this time. The details of many of these martyrs can be discovered through reading history books such as "Foxe's book of Martyrs." Some examples are Michael Servetus who was burned at the stake for saying that Jesus and the Father were one and quoting John 10:30, and William Tyndale who was burned at the stake after a church trial that found him guilty of translating the New Testament into the language of common people.

12. *The woman sits upon "seven mountains."* The headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church is found in Rome, Italy which is known as the "city on seven hills" because of the seven mountains upon which it sits. Any good world encyclopedia will tell you that the seven mountains are named. They are Aventine, Palantine, Capitoline, Quirinal, Viminal, Esquiline, and Caelian.

¹¹ That is a fancy way of saying, “advance forgiveness for sins.”

¹² Another big word that means that they believe that the Lord's Supper is the act of salvation and that the wine and bread literally become the body and blood of Jesus Christ when blessed by the priest.

¹³ See Exodus 20:46; 2 Corinthians 6:16; 1 John 5:21 for some of thousands of scriptures that forbid the worship of relics, images, and statues.

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13. *The woman is a great city that reigns over kings of the earth.* Within the city of Rome, is the city of the Vatican. It is a city within a city. Italy and Rome has no jurisdiction over the Vatican and it operates under its own rule as a sovereign nation. If a leader of a country is Catholic, then the Pope claims to be his superior. This small city which is the headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church certainly claims to rule over kings and kingdoms of the earth!

The Future Judgment of the Great Harlot

The reason that John saw this immoral woman in the Book of Revelation becomes abundantly clear in the 18th chapter: during the Wrath of God, God Almighty will judge and bring down the great harlot.

Rev 18:1-2 After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illumined with his glory. 2 And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird.

This is the prophesied downfall of the Great Whore, "Mystery Babylon." Can you imagine how shocking it will be to people in the world for the Roman Catholic Church to fall and fail? No wonder God spends two chapters of Revelation describing His Wrath against her.

Rev 18:3 "For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed acts of immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality."

She will be judged because of her many sins against God and because she has deceived so many people. Notice also that "the merchants of the earth" have grown rich from selling things relating to her: how many businesses have made their fortune through the selling of statues, pictures, candles, relics, and such that Catholic Church has deemed "holy?"

Rev 18:4-5 I heard another voice from heaven, saying, "Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues; 5 for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.

The commandment of God here is very important to grasp: those who are His people will "come out" from her false teachings and traditions – to be saved we must separate ourselves from the heresies of the Roman Catholic Church because God will remember her sins and will punish her thoroughly!

Rev 18:6 "Pay her back even as she has paid, and give back to her double according to her deeds; in the cup which she has mixed, mix twice as much for her.

God will pour out His wrath in double measure compared to the amount of persecution and pain that she has caused the true Apostolic church!

Rev 18:7-8 "To the degree that she glorified herself and lived sensuously, to the same degree give her torment and mourning; for she says in her heart, 'I SIT as A QUEEN AND I AM NOT A WIDOW, and will never see mourning.' 8 "For this reason in one day her plagues will come, pestilence and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for the Lord God who judges her is strong.

Because the Catholic Church has pride in what they have become, God will cause their downfall to be so swift and fast that she will completely fall in one day.

Rev 18:9-10 "And the kings of the earth, who committed acts of immorality and lived sensuously with her, will weep and lament over her when they see the smoke of her burning, 10 standing at a distance because of the fear of her torment, saying, 'Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! For in one hour your judgment has come.'

When the Catholic Church falls, many of the nations that have bought into her lies will cry out in grief and they will be shocked that her demise came so quickly and sudden.

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Rev 18:11-14 "And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, because no one buys their cargoes any more — 12 cargoes of gold and silver and precious stones and pearls and fine linen and purple and silk and scarlet, and every kind of citron wood and every article of ivory and every article made from very costly wood and bronze and iron and marble, 13 and cinnamon and spice and incense and perfume and frankincense and wine and olive oil and fine flour and wheat and cattle and sheep, and cargoes of horses and chariots and slaves and human lives. 14 "The fruit you long for has gone from you, and all things that were luxurious and splendid have passed away from you and men will no longer find them.

Notice how thorough the list of merchandise is and how well it matches the many endeavors and relics of the Roman Catholic Church. In the midst of all of this worldly wealth, verse 13 concludes with "and human lives." A literal reading of the Greek here reads "the souls of people." The greatest crime of the Catholic Church has been the doctrine of "purchasing salvation." How many people are lost because they believed this damnable, unscriptural doctrine?

Rev 18:15-16 "The merchants of these things, who became rich from her, will stand at a distance because of the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning, 16 saying, 'Woe, woe, the great city, she who was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls;

Those merchants who have gained a fortune through the selling of items and commodities associated with the Roman Catholic Church will be heartbroken that their source of riches is gone!

Rev 18:17-19 for in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste!' And every shipmaster and every passenger and sailor, and as many as make their living by the sea, stood at a distance, 18 and were crying out as they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What city is like the great city?' 19 "And they threw dust on their heads and were crying out, weeping and mourning, saying, 'Woe, woe, the great city, in which all who had ships at sea became rich by her wealth, for in one hour she has been laid waste!'

It seems from these scriptures that God will not only destroy the Vatican, but the surrounding city of Rome as well. At the time that John wrote this, Rome was the leading seaport in the world.

Rev 18:20 "Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgment for you against her."

Here we find the reason for the destruction of Rome. It was from Rome that Nero launched his infamous persecution against the Early Apostolic Church. Both Paul and Peter were killed in Rome. God is avenging their deaths.

Rev 18:21-22 Then a strong angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "So will Babylon, the great city, be thrown down with violence, and will not be found any longer. 22 "And the sound of harpists and musicians and flute-players and trumpeters will not be heard in you any longer; and no craftsman of any craft will be found in you any longer; and the sound of a mill will not be heard in you any longer;

God will completely destroy the city of Rome and the masses of the Roman Catholic Church! There will be no more cathedrals and traditional, ceremonial services that go against the Word of God.

Rev 18:23 and the light of a lamp will not shine in you any longer; and the voice of the bridegroom and bride will not be heard in you any longer; for your merchants were the great men of the earth, because all the nations were deceived by your sorcery.

There will be no more candles and no more weddings in magnificent chapels, because the Catholic Church will be as removed from the earth and as out of sight as a millstone that has sunk beneath the sea! Notice what God considers their traditions: "sorcery." The scripture elsewhere tells us that "rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft."¹⁴ In other words, by rebelling against God's Word, the Roman Catholic Church is actually a type of sorcery in God's view!

Rev 18:24 "And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on the earth."

The Catholic Church may say that the martyrs of so many Christians are just ancient history and they have confessed and been forgiven, but God still remembers – His Wrath will be poured out in such a great manner that it will completely destroy the Roman Catholic Church in one day! This will happen sometime during the Wrath of God before the Battle of

¹⁴ See 1 Samuel 15:23.

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Armageddon. These chapters seem to very much indicate that the Roman Catholic Church will be involved in the end time events and the Antichrist's resurrected Holy Roman Empire. They also seem to point to the fact that whomever is Pope at the time of the Antichrist will also be the False Prophet.

Conclusion

Our job as a church striving to be fully Apostolic today is to reach people that are bound by the clutches of the tradition of this "great harlot." The Roman Catholic Church is not the true church of God but a false church very much in contradiction of the true doctrines of scripture. The true bride of Christ will be pure and holy and not able to be portrayed spiritually as a prostitute! The Apostle Paul prophesied that such doctrines would arise in the last days:

1 Tim 4:1-3 But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, 3 men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth.

This false church would arise as a result of "falling away from the faith" and would be the work of "deceitful spirits" and "doctrines of demons." The Apostle was using strong words, but his clues as to what these men who followed such a path is even more startling: they would forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods. Until the 1960s the Roman Catholic Church decreed that it was a sin to eat meat on Fridays and many devout Catholics abstain to this day. The Roman Catholic Church have also forbidden the ministry – their priests and nuns – to marry and have a normal relationship as God ordained. These practices are found here in the Bible but not as something given by God as truth, but rather as a trait of those who have "fallen away from the faith" and who have believed "doctrines of demons." This, combined with the information that John gave us that the great harlot will receive the wrath of God and be destroyed should wake us up to the grand deception that is the Roman Catholic Church.

We must heed the warning of God in Revelation 18:4: **"Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues;"** Our doctrine, lifestyle, and experience must match the Early Apostolic Church, the true bride of Christ and not follow the traditions of the Great Harlot of Mystery Babylon! There is hope and true salvation and eternal life awaiting, but those who have been a part must heed the warning to "come out of" the harlot and any teaching derived from her. Let us be a part of the true bride of Christ, not the great harlot that will drink of the cup of the Wrath of God!

Endnotes

Also notice that the war here is referred to as "war against the Lamb." In the last lesson we noticed that this battle was referred to as "the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (Revelation 16:14). In Revelation chapter 19, we find that is Jesus who fights this battle. Obviously, "the Lamb," "God Almighty," and "Jesus" are the same person!