

Great Controversy Series
4-FROM Sheep to BEAST!
“Formation of the Papacy”
 Chapter 3 - An Era of Spiritual Darkness
 Bible Sermon Study Notes: Pastor Cary Rodgers, Jr

“Little by little, at first in stealth and silence, and then more openly as it increased in strength and gained control of the minds of men, "the mystery of iniquity" carried forward its deceptive and blasphemous work. Almost imperceptibly the customs of heathenism found their way into the Christian church. The spirit of compromise and conformity was restrained for a time by the fierce persecutions which the church endured under paganism. But as persecution ceased, and Christianity entered the courts and palaces of kings, she laid aside the humble simplicity of Christ and His apostles for the pomp and pride of pagan priests and rulers; and in place of the requirements of God, she substituted human theories and traditions.” GC-49

What is apostasy?

1. a total desertion of or departure from one's religion, principles, party, cause, etc. (dictionary.com)

Christian Church Apostasy is departure from Bible truth as explicitly revealed in the ministry of Jesus and his Word.

Apostasy is mixing truth and error, God's word with men philosophies, Bible doctrine with idolatry. In other words, apostasy is the drinking and serving of “Babylonian” wine which are false doctrines that confuse the mind and cause self and others to doubt and reject Bible truth. Apostasy rejects the true Jesus and accept a false Jesus!

One Church

Remember, Jesus only has one true church that was established by Jesus in which He is the head. In order to be a member of His true church we must abide in Christ and He in us daily, surrendering our sinful desires to him.

How does the Bible describe apostate Christians in the last days of perilous times?

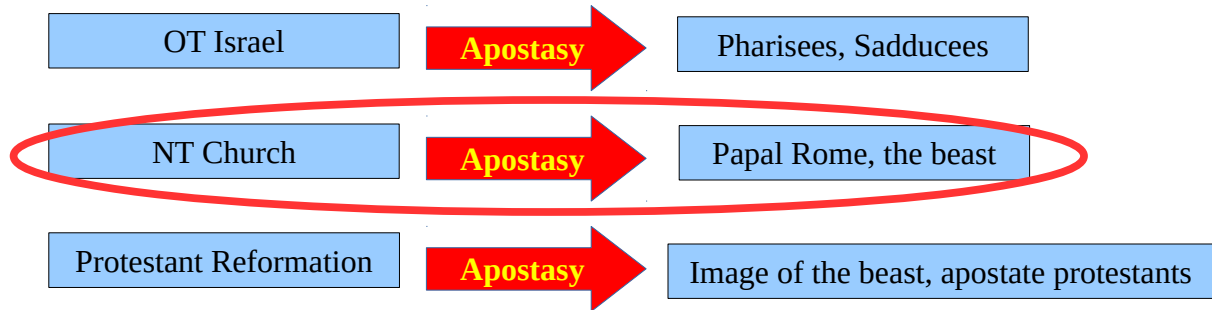
2 Timothy 3:1-8

- 1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. [Notice the characteristics of apostates]
- 2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,
- 3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent (without self control-reject health reform), fierce, despisers of those that are good,
- 4 Traitors, heady, highminded, **lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;**
- 5 Having a **form of godliness, but denying [reject TRUTH] the power thereof:** from such turn away.
- 6 For of this sort (these) [apostate Christians] are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women [add to their numbers of apostasy] laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,
- 7 **Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.**
- 8 Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also **resist the truth:** men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

A church (group / conference) is officially in full blown apostasy when the church leadership establishes and promote “Babylonian” wine to its people!

Summary of Apostasy:

Same NAME, Same Claim, but NEW organization detached from God's ONE true church



FROM Sheep to BEAST: The formation of Papal Rome

Satan's NT Church Stealth Attack

The model of Satan's Stealth Attack of destruction. The first goal is to distract his target. Then “fan” the target asleep spiritually. Then he tempts the target to doubt the evidence of God's TRUTH, His explicit Word. Then Satan is able to deceive the target and then take total possession!

Stealth Attack Diagram:



REMEMBER!

Satan wanted to allure God's people from the TRUTH and prevent others from getting the TRUTH. In order to allure people away from the NT Church of Acts to create a new counterfeit church, who did you think Satan attacked first? THE LEADERSHIP!

During the time of Paul's ministry before he was martyred, Satan was working with stealth among the leadership in the NT Testament Church and God clearly revealed this to Paul.

What warning did Paul give to the church leadership in his day to expose Satan's stealth attack plan on the NT church?

Act 20:29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous [burdensome- cruel] wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

Act 20:30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse [distorted, corrupt, perverted] things, to **draw away disciples** after them.

Paul saw the handwriting on the wall. If the leadership was allured away from truth, they will be used by Satan to allure others in the NT church away from God's truth. God revealed that it was ALREADY at work in Paul's day. That is the reason why Paul taught the importance for all those in God's church to know the Word of God for themselves so they can see the stealth attacks of Satan.

What PREVENTS you from being swept away by TIDAL WAVES of APOSTASY?

2Ti 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Ephesians 4:14-15

14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

Isa 8:20 To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, *it is* because *there is* no light in them.

ALL groups who have apostatized in the past NEVER reformed! It like trying to stop a locomotive training coming downhill with one hand! IMPOSSIBLE! Get out of the way before you get ran OVER!

If you are in a church or group that is spreading apostasy what do you need to do?

1 Timothy 6:5 - "Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself."

2 Thessalonians 3:14 - "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed."

Revelation 18:4 - "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

2 Corinthians 6:14 - "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"

Amos 3:3 - "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"

Apostate leadership that leads others into apostasy is the blind leading the BLIND

How does Paul describe this new counterfeit church that Satan would established?

2Th 2:3 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;**

2Th 2:4 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, shewing himself that he is God.

Paul revealed that this counterfeit church would be known as the SON of perdition (destruction). In other words, the son of Satan, known as the man of sin. What clearly identifies this church is that it would opposes the truth of God and evaluate himself to be a substitute of God and to be worship as GOD!

Peter also warned the NT church and the leadership of this counterfeit church that will allure many of God's people from the LAW and TESTIMONIES - from God's true Sabbath and evidence of second coming of Christ. Peter also gives descriptions of this counterfeit.

2Pe 2:1 But there were **false prophets also among the people**, even as there shall be **false teachers among you**, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

2Pe 2:2 And **many shall follow** their pernicious (destructive) ways; by reason of whom the **way of truth shall be evil spoken of.**

2Pe 2:3 And through **covetousness** shall they with feigned words (crafty lies) make **merchandise** of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

2Pe 2:14 Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling **unstable** souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:

2Pe 2:15 Which have forsaken the right way, and are **gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor**, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

2Pe 2:19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

As prophesied by Paul and Peter decades after their death many from the NT Church split from its purity and established a new corrupt church known as Papal Roman. **The leaders of this new organization did not MAKE an official decree that they have split from the truth of God's word.** They deny that there was a split. They believed then and still believe now that they are the true church of the NT lead by God. **They still call themselves “Christian”. Matter of fact they claim to be the “catholic” church, “catholic”, meaning “universal” church of God.**

Paul also prophesied that this church in the last days will cause many to depart from the truth and also gives us some identifying characteristics of this apostate church.

1Ti 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall **depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;**

1Ti 4:2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

1Ti 4:3 Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats (foods), which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

1Ti 4:4 For every creature (plant foods) of God *is* good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving:

1Ti 4:5 For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

The Papal Roman forbids the Catholic church priests and nuns to marry as clearly identified by Paul as prophesied decades before the church was formed. In centuries past Papal Rome required its ministers and believers to abstain from certain foods for long periods of time known as 40 days of Lent. This was also accurately prophesied.

Church Split in GREAT CONTROVERSY

The Bible warned that this split of the NT church would happen and history reveals how it happened. Over the decades the NT church of ACTS split into two classes TRUTH and ERROR, faithful and rebellious, Godly and claim of godliness, lives holy and outward show of holiness, those who remain true to law and testimonies and those who rejected the law and the testimonies, but both called “Christians”.

100 AD - Forward

After Israel's great defeat in 70 AD until around 100 AD the NT church was not a factor in the persecution of the Christians. But the continued tension between the Jews and Romans put the Christians in an awkward situation. Many NT Christians were still Jews but still keep the holy Sabbath.

As the years continued Rome still persecuted the Christians with some periods of intensity and rest. It was in the period of rest that some of the NT Christian leadership either went to “sleep” or was “distracted” by Satan deceptions. They compromised God's truth in order to keep the peace with Rome. They did not want to be identified with the Jewish nation by keep the seventh-day Sabbath as the Jews did.

Alexandria and Rome

Two of the greatest and wealthiest cities in the Roman empire was Alexandria, Egypt and Rome, Italy.

Christianity grew in both cities. But many of the NT Christian leadership and members compromised God's truth in order to stop persecution and have more influence on the Roman government. To prove that they were not Jews, they adopted many worldly and pagan practices in the church. Because these cities were trading post for much commerce throughout the empire I can image that many wavering Christian would come and learn the heresies and compromises and take them back with them to their own home churches.

Historically, in the book of ACTS the leadership of the church were workers not kings. They did not have a world kingdom structure in which they were the rulers over the membership. The NT church structure was designed to have ALL the church membership involved in the work of Christ.

The bishops of the church of Rome compromised in order to gain power and influence throughout the empire.

“To secure worldly gains and honors, the church was led to seek the favor and support of the great men of earth; and having thus rejected Christ, she was induced to yield allegiance to the representative of Satan--the bishop of Rome.” GC – 50

In Revelation 13 Papal Rome is identified as the beast and in Daniel chapters 7 and 8, it is identified as the little horn. They have the same characteristics.

What did leadership in Rome do in order to keep the people ignorant of the TRUTH? It is prophesied in Daniel 8:12 where Papal Rome identified as the little horn.

Daniel 8:12

12 And an host was given him against the daily *sacrifice* by reason of transgression, and it **cast down the truth to the ground**; and it practised, and prospered.

“In order for Satan to maintain his sway over men, and establish the authority of the papal usurper, he must keep them in ignorance of the Scriptures. The Bible would exalt God and place finite men in their true position; therefore its sacred truths must be concealed and suppressed. This logic was adopted by the Roman Church. For hundreds of years the circulation of the Bible was prohibited.” GC - 51

Seventh-day Sabbath to Sunday Compromise

With the detector of truth out of the way, papal Rome was able to led millions of people to spiritual darkness.

“Think to change times and laws.” - Daniel 7:25

Change the ten commandments to suit their idolatrous ways of the pagan religion. Deleted the second commandment. Sabbath commandment became the third. Deleted 90 percent of the Sabbath commandment. Split the tenth thou shalt not covet in order to keep ten.

190 AD Pope Victor I – forces church to honor the SUN – day through the Easter Controversy

“In the second century the aims of the sun worshipping emperors and those of the theologians [bishops of Rome] ran parallel. There was an ambitious scheme on foot to blend all religions into one of which the sun was to become the central object of adoration. The bishops of Rome decided to eclipse any public attraction which pagan festivals could offer. They determined to bring together Easter, a yearly festival, and Sunday, a weekly holiday sacred to the sun, to make the greatest church festival of the year.” Truth Triumphant by **B. G. Wilkerson.**

Victor I [The bishop at Rome]...issued a decree ordering the clergy everywhere to observe Easter on the first Sunday following the first full moon after the spring equinox. [The eastern bishops refused worship on a Pagan Sun Day.] Never before Victor I, had any bishop dared to...command the clergy to obey his decrees... “doing what his fathers had not” [The Churches of the East resisted Rome, which caused the formation of the Eastern Orthodox Churches. They were anathematized, and excommunicated.] This was the first assay of “Papal” usurpation [the bishop of Rome **taking supreme power as “Head” over all Christian churches]**...” Ibid.

Note: In the early Christian Church the resurrection had been celebrated at the time of the Passover each year. The lunar Hebrews calendar caused the celebration of the Messiah's death and resurrection to fall on any day of the week. But the Romans had introduced a new calendar, and the bishop of Rome were determined to set a new rule for the date of the celebration to fall on the "first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox. They called this celebration "Easter" after the goddess of fertility, Ishtar, Astarte, or Estra, from which is named the female hormone, Estrogen.

Victor I, through the Easter Controversy, exalted himself and the Roman office over all Christian churches. That was the first step toward Papal power.

During this time many local church groups compromised and kept both the seventh-day Sabbath and the first day of the week. They eventually made the seventh-day Sabbath a day of fasting and Sunday a day of celebration and festivities. Sunday was adopted as the "new" Sabbath in celebration of Christ's resurrection.

202 AD: Seminary in Alexandria!

One of the greatest catalysts that helped establish compromise and move toward setting up a counterfeit NT church was the seminary at Alexandria, Egypt. In around 202 AD Alexandria was the largest Christian seminary that trained many ministers. The seminary in Alexandria was the pride of the church especially in Alexandria and Rome. They prided themselves in worldly philosophies and made man's ideals rather than the Word of God. The mixture of worldliness and pagan beliefs and practices was interwoven in the training of the seminary students. After graduation many of these would go to other churches and spread the compromised doctrine.

The head pastor in Rome gladly adopted these false doctrines and demanded that other Christians churches would do the same. Because of their government influence and wealth the church leadership in Rome took it upon themselves to be the authority of the Christian church worldwide.

312 AD – "Conversion" Emperor Constantine

Many historians credit Roman Emperor Constantine as the one who helped Papal Rome to gain political prominence after his questionable conversion experience to Christianity in 312 AD during the battle of the Milvian Bridge.

313 AD – "Catholic" Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire

In 313 AD he made Christianity an official religion of the Roman Empire, led by the papacy. The papacy was also given the right to receive gifts from the citizens of Rome in which Constantine personally donated large sums of money and land that greatly enriched the papacy. Church leadership had gained favor with Rome and political power that was able to extend throughout the Empire, especially the western part of the Roman Empire.

321 AD - Roman Emperor Constantine's Sunday Law

The Roman Emperor Constantine, a pagan priest sun-worshiper and professed convert to Christianity, named himself Bishop of the Catholic Church and enacted the first civil law regarding Sunday observance in 321 AD. His "conversion" appeared to be more of a political move than a genuine heart change.

Excerpts of the Sunday Law said, "On the venerable day of the sun let the magistrate and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. In the country however, persons engaged in agricultural work may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits; because it often happens that another day is not so suitable for grain growing or for vine planting; lest by neglecting the proper moment for such operations the bounty of heaven should be lost." - Schaff's History of the Christian Church, vol. III, chap. 75

The Roman Emperor made this law at the time when the Christian church of Rome, now known as the papacy had already compromised God's seventh-day Sabbath truth and honored the first day of the week, Sunday. It was no coincidence that Sunday was also revered by the pagan sun-worshipers in Rome. It was a day that they gathered together for public worship of their sun god. In order to unite the pagans and Christians for the

“common good,” Constantine set up a “legal holiday” on Sunday. This was pleasing to both the pagans and Christians. They put away their conflicting interests and became a united religious-power, known as Papal Rome. Papal Rome kept the name “Christian” but adopted many of the traditions, customs, and idol worship of paganism and sun-worship.

330 AD – Papacy (church leaders in Rome) has Rome all to itself!

What added to the papacy’s power was when Constantine relocated the capital of Rome to the eastern part of the Roman Empire, Constantinople, in 330 AD. This move allowed the papacy to fill the political void that Constantine left behind in Rome and to freely operate and grow in the western part of the Roman Empire. The pope, the leader of the papacy, was not only seen as one with supreme spiritual authority, but also of great political influence.

364 AD – Council of Laodicea Officials reject Seventh-day Sabbath – location of the seventh church in the book of Revelation.

The **Council of Laodicea** was a regional synod of approximately thirty clerics from [Asia Minor](#) that assembled about 363–364 AD in [Laodicea](#), [Phrygia Pacatiana](#). Outlawed “the keeping of the [sabbath](#) (Saturday) and encouraging rest on the Sunday.” - Wikipedia

476 AD – Western Roman Empire totally collapses, but Eastern Roman Empire continued. Papal Rome filled the void in Rome.

The power to rule and great authority was taken away from the Roman Emperors (Western). The Bishop of Rome became a “Pope”, by establishing his throne and taking to himself the titles of the Emperor, such as: “Pontius Maximus.” (“Chief Bridge Builder”).

At the height of the Roman Empire’s power, the emperors were revered as “Pontifex Maximus” which means “Chief bridge builder” or “constructor of ways.” They assumed this title “Pontifex Maximus” because they had power as an absolute monarch and head of the pagan religion of Rome. When Papal Rome grew into power the popes assumed the same title of “Pontifex Maximus” as absolute ruler over civil and religious affairs.

533 AD – Pope recognized as the official “head” of all churches

The decree of the emperor, Justinian (eastern Roman Emperor), issued in A.D. 533, recognized the pope as the “head of all the holy churches.” This was one of Justinian’s strategies to try to reunify the western and eastern parts of the Roman Empire. Most of the west was already divided. The papacy had already had great influence in the western part of the former western Roman Empire (known as Europe today)

“It is one of the leading doctrines of Romanism that the pope is the visible head of the universal church of Christ, invested with supreme authority over bishops and pastors in all parts of the world. More than this, the pope has been given the very titles of Deity. He has been styled “Lord God the Pope” (see Appendix), and has been declared infallible. He demands the homage of all men. The same claim urged by Satan in the wilderness of temptation is still urged by him through the Church of Rome, and vast numbers are ready to yield him homage.” GC-50

538 AD – Roman Papacy becomes and official empire (religious monarch)

After the destruction of the Ostrogoth tribe in 538, Papal Rome had sole power over most European countries. All the kings of the various nations was subject to the papacy.

538 is the beginning of the 1260 year reign as prophesied in Daniel and Revelation.

Papal Rome is PAGANISM in disguise

In the 4th century the pagan idols that were dedicated to false god were adapted into the church. The idols that were dedicated to false god's became characters of the Bible.

For example:

The statue of Tammuz became baby Jesus.

Pagan statue of Jupiter became St. Peter

Another example: Babylonian was a worshiper of the fish god known as Dagon.... Kings wore fish hat.... Rome pope and priest today are a modernized version!

Ancient Kingdom of Babylon spoken about in the Bible was the center of pagan religion who worshiped many false gods and supports many forms of false teachings and false worship. Literal Babylon was also the center for idol or image worship.

Eucharist “Catholic mass” is pagan Sun worship and very blasphemous!

It is a ceremony and a sacrifice that is suppose to commemorate the Lord’s Supper in the New Testament. All priests believe that they are given ecclesiastical powers as a man to call Jesus down from heaven and slay him as a “victim” on the “altar” and literally turn the bread and the wine served in the mass into the actual flesh and blood of Christ. Through the mass they believe they are the “creator of the Creator.”

“The saint assigns the reason of the superiority of the priesthood over Mary; she conceived Jesus Christ only once; but by consecrating the Eucharist, the priest, as it were, conceives him as often as he wishes... Thus the priest may, in a certain manner, be called the creator of his Creator, since by saying the words of consecration, he creates, as it were, Jesus in the sacrament, by giving him a sacramental existence, and produces him as a victim to be offered to the eternal Father.” Alphonsus de Liguori, Dignity and Duties of the Priest or Selva, pp. 32, 33

SUNDAY WORSHIP is centered on the Eucharist and Pagan SUN WORSHIP

“2177 The Sunday celebration of the Lord’s Day and his Eucharist is at the heart of the Church’s life. ‘Sunday is the day on which the paschal mystery is celebrated in light of the apostolic tradition and is to be observed as the foremost holy day of obligation in the universal Church.’ ”

“2181 The Sunday Eucharist is the foundation and confirmation of all Christian practice... Those who deliberately fail in this obligation commit a grave sin.”

Sun worship: Show pictures comparing Eucharist and Pagan Sun worship. The papacy true object of worship is the SUN!

Papal Rome – Dark Ages – Full of Corruption and Murder

Suppress Truth

During Papal Rome's rule from 538 to 1798 AD it was known as the Dark Ages because they were successful in keeping all under its dominion in the dark of God's truth from kings to slaves.

False Doctrines = \$money for the church / keep people in darkness

As a result of keeping the people ignorant of God's truth, they were able to enforce laws and doctrine that kept the people oppressed. They enforced false doctrines that raise a lot of money for the church and keep them in gross darkness.

Indulgences

For example they sold certificates of indulgences that allows a person to buy “forgiveness” even before they sin. In other words, a sin gift card that credits automatic forgiveness when you sin.

Purgatory

Also Papal Rome made up the doctrine of purgatory, a place a limbo between heaven and hell. The doctrine of purgatory allows a living person to pay money to the church to buy their dead love one's way from purgatory to heaven. If they don't pay enough or at all they may go to hell!

Salvation by works

Papal Rome teaches you can attain salvation through acts of penance, pilgrimages, rosaries, hail marys, masses, etc

Blasphemous Titles of the head of the papacy

- 1) Pope (Italian for "papa" which is an abbreviation of pater patrum which means father of fathers or principal father)
- 2) Most Holy Father
- 3) Vicar of Christ ("vicar" = a person who acts in place of another; substitute. Dictionary.com)
- 4) Supreme Pontiff (Latin = Pontifex Maximus = greatest "bridge builder" or "constructor of the way")
- 5) His Holiness

Other false doctrine include Spiritualism, Idol Worship, Infant Baptism, claim they have power to forgive sins.

REMNANT SHEEP of TRUTH Persecuted

During the Papal Roman Emperors God truth was carry on through his Remnant sheep, but they were persecuted by the papacy and hunted like dogs.

"The dragon had given to the beast "his power, and his seat, and great authority." Revelation 13:2. And now began the 1260 years of papal oppression foretold in the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation. Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13:5-7. (See Appendix.) Christians were forced to choose either to yield their integrity and accept the papal ceremonies and worship, or to wear away their lives in dungeons or suffer death by the rack, the fagot, or the headsman's ax." - GC - 54

"In the thirteenth century was established that most terrible of all the engines of the papacy--the Inquisition...The mangled forms of millions of martyrs cried to God for vengeance upon that apostate power." - GC-59

"Popery had become the world's despot. Kings and emperors bowed to the decrees of the Roman pontiff. The destinies of men, both for time and for eternity, seemed under his control. For hundreds of years the doctrines of Rome had been extensively and implicitly received, its rites reverently performed, its festivals generally observed. Its clergy were honored and liberally sustained. Never since has the Roman Church attained to greater dignity, magnificence, or power. " GC - 60

"But "the noon of the papacy was the midnight of the world."--J. A. Wylie, The History of Protestantism, b. 1, ch. 4. The Holy Scriptures were almost unknown, not only to the people, but to the priests. Like the Pharisees of old, the papal leaders hated the light which would reveal their sins. God's law, the standard of righteousness, having been removed, they exercised power without limit, and practiced vice without restraint. Fraud, avarice, and profligacy prevailed. Men shrank from no crime by which they could gain wealth or position. The palaces of popes and prelates were scenes of the vilest debauchery. Some of the reigning pontiffs were guilty of crimes so revolting that secular rulers endeavored to depose these dignitaries of the church as monsters too vile to be tolerated. For centuries Europe had made no progress in learning, arts, or civilization. A moral and intellectual paralysis had fallen upon Christendom." GC – 60

ARE YOU A SHEEP or worship the BEAST?

Sheep to BEAST was a result of compromise with worldliness and sin! No one is except from apostasy! The remnant people of God keep the commandments of God and the testimonies of Jesus. They remain unspotted with the world through abiding in Christ Jesus daily and Christ abiding in them.

Remember anyone who compromises TRUTH will worship the BEAST and HIS IMAGE.