

One True Church Series
8 – How Papal Rome Gained Power As An Apostate
Bible Sermon Notes by Pastor Otis Cary Rodgers, Jr.

How did Papal Rome gain power to grow into a monarch and ecclesiastical power over the people? What tactics and methods did they use that are still used today to deceive billions of people?

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

1 Timothy 4:1 - 5

1 Now the Spirit speaketh **expressly** [Gk “Distinctly” – clear and separate – not confusing], that in the latter times **some shall depart from the faith**, giving heed **seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils**;

Seducing spirits: Impostors, deceivers, lead others to error, wandering

- 2** Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron [**insensitive to truth**];
- 3** Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats [food], which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.
- 4** For every creature [product, created thing] of God *is* good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving:
- 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

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 versus ERROR, faithful versus rebellious, Godly versus claims godliness, lives holy versus outward show of holiness, those who remain true to the law and testimonies versus those who reject the law and the testimonies, but both classes are called “Christians”.

Let's briefly look at the history of how this split happened and how Satan was successful in establishing a counterfeit NT Testament church, known as Papal Rome.

34 AD to 65 AD

After the time Stephen was stoned the church grew with periods of intense persecution from both the Jews and the Romans. A few years after 34 AD the Romans and the Jews tolerated each other even though the Jews still wanted to be independent from the Romans. But at the time they had a common enemy, the Christians. The Jewish leaders

saw that the Christians in which many were still Jews would threaten the power of the leadership of Israel and destroy its opportunity to be free from Rome. They thought, "What if the great majority of Jews would become Christians? This would be disastrous." With the "blind eye" of the Roman government they persecuted and killed many Christians. Rome saw that the growth of the new Christians was a threat to their pagan way of life. Many Greeks were also converting to Christianity. Rome saw this not only as a threat to their national sovereignty, but also their economy. Paganism in the Roman Empire brought in a lot money with the sale of its idols and other pagan accessories. Many who converted to Christianity no longer practiced the ways of paganism, idol worship or witchcraft they left all behind.

Acts 19:17 -19

- 17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.
- 18 And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds.
- 19 Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all *men*: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.

This made the Roman Government and the businesses that relied on selling the accessories, books and idols of paganism, VERY WROTH. Matter of fact what did some of the businesses says about it

Acts 19:24 - 28

- 24 **For a certain *man* named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen;**
- 25 Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.
- 26 Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands:
- 27 So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshipping.
- 28 And when they heard *these sayings*, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians.

Also Rome reasoned that persecuting the Christians in which the Jewish leaders hated would help stop the Jew's quest of wanting to become an independent nation again. Rome saw that their execution of Christians pleased the Jews.

Acts 12:1 - 3

- 1 Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth *his* hands to vex certain of the church.
- 2 And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.
- 3 And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also.

Persecution against the Christians was coming from both the Jews and Romans, but the more they persecuted the stronger and greater the church grew. It remained pure from corruption.

66 to 70 AD

Around the years getting close to 70 AD, the relationship between the Jewish nation (Israel) and Rome was very tense. Israel demanded independence from Rome. Wars between the two got very intense and ruthless! The persecution during this time to the Christians was intense at times but also had periods of rest. It was during this time of rest that some of the NT christian leadership began to make compromises in order to avoid further persecution. Some NT Christian leaders began to downplay the testimonies, especially the prophecy of Christ that revealed that the Jewish temple would be destroyed. But those who held on to the truth continued to preach truth.

66 AD: Abomination of Desolation surrounds Jerusalem

In 66 AD during the war between Israel and Rome, the Roman soldiers led by Cestius Gaius surrounded the city of Jerusalem, the ABOMINATION of DESOLATION as prophesied by Christ. They saw the clear sign that this was time to flee to the mountain, when the army retreated. Those NT Christian leaders who compromised God truth begin to mock at it and believed that God would protect Jerusalem and that they had nothing to worry about. Some believed them and stayed, but the remnant held on by faith to the Law and the Testimonies. They believed the prophecy of Jerusalem's destruction, and when **Cestius Gaius** and army suddenly retreated ALL the true NT Christians got out and fled to the mountains! Those who were convinced by the apostate NT leadership stayed behind. For a moment it appeared that Israel would actually win its independence from Rome. When Cestius retreated, Israel chased them and killed many Roman soldiers. Israel was victorious! They and many of the apostate Christians were celebrating.

70 AD: Destruction of Jerusalem

About four years later, the Roman army came back to Jerusalem in full force under a new army general by the name of Titus. They surrounded the city with no intentions of retreating. Their main goal was to take the capital city of Israel and stop Israel's rebellion once and for ALL. When the signal was given, Rome attacked the city with no intentions of destroying the temple, but it was completely destroyed in the fight. History reveals that over 1 million Jews lost their lives in the fight and another 97,000 were taken as captives.

100 AD - Forward

After Israel's great defeat until around 100 AD they were not a factor in the persecution of the Christians. But the continued tension between the Jews and the Romans put the Christians in an awkward situation. Many NT Christians were Jewish and still kept 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 were "distracted" by Satan's 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 keeping the seventh-day Sabbath as the Jews did.

Alexandria and Rome

Two of the greatest and wealthiest cities in the Roman Empire were **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 a trading post for much commerce throughout the empire I can image that many wavering Christians would come and learn the heresies and compromises and take them back with them to their own home churches.

202 AD: Seminary in Alexandria!

One of the greatest catalyst that helped established 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 man-made ideas rather than the Word of God. The mixture of worldliness and pagan beliefs and practices were 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.

Before in the book of ACTS the leadership of the church were workers not kings. They did not have a worldly 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.

At the time of a compromising church in Rome, they took on the character of the Roman government. They literally bullied other NT churches that opposed them. In Rome the compromised leadership established a new counterfeit church. They adopted the pagan ways and "christianized" it to grow the church in numbers. Over time they identified themselves as the mother universal church with its headquarters in Rome.

Over time they compromised on many Bible doctrines taking false doctrines such as:

- 1) **Changing the seventh-day Sabbath to Sunday worship**
- 2) **Indulgences (buying forgiveness on credit in advanced)**
- 3) **Purgatory**
- 4) **Eternal torment**
- 5) **Idol Worship**
- 6) **Worshiping the dead**
- 7) **Priests have the power to forgive man from sin**
- 8) **Priests and nun forbidding to marry**
- 9) **Priest called holy father**

10) Head of church called pope and a substitute god on earth to be worshiped as God!

Because of the Roman church's influence and great success in adding many church people and emperors such as Constantine to the churches throughout the Roman empire, they submitted to the authority and apostasy of Papal Rome.

Daniel and Revelation

In the book of Daniel and Revelation it is prophesied that this counterfeit church would not only have religious power but also governmental power over many people for 1260 years. Daniel identifies the false church as the little horn and in Revelation John identifies the false church as the beast.

5th Century (400's AD)

In the 5th Century the Roman Empire was crumbling and Rome was getting desperate in trying to hold on to power. They reasoned that this league between them and the church bishops of Rome could help. Emperor Justinian decrees the bishop of Rome to be the head of the church and the corrector of all who opposed Rome.

A.D. 476: The power to rule and great authority was taken away from the Roman Emperors. 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"). By 538 AD Papal Rome began its 1260 year reign as prophesied by Daniel and Revelation.

Seventh-day Sabbath and Second Coming of Jesus goes DARK!

Papal Rome totally compromised God's truth of the LAW and the TESTIMONIES. For 1260 years from 538 to 1798 the people were in gross darkness. Two key doctrines of the LAW and the TESTIMONIES were lost, the Seventh-day Sabbath and the second coming of Jesus Christ. The Seventh-day Adventist message of the OT and NT was in gross darkness. Papal Rome hid the truth from millions for centuries! They persecuted and killed millions who opposed them. Bibles were illegal.

Light and Restoration of Law and Testimonies (True Sabbath and Second Coming of Christ)

Even though Satan was successful through Papal Rome of hiding the truth for centuries, God prophesied that it was time to come to an end! The Papal Roman empire ended in 1798 as prophesied!

What amazing things happened after 1798 that restored God's Law and Testimonies (especially the Seventh-day Sabbath and the Second coming of Jesus)?

To be continued.....

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