

A Tale of Two Churches

When I was growing up, most claimed that their church was the "true church" because they believed that the teachings of their church were closest to what the Bible said. Today, there are so many denominations that some are beginning to wonder, is there really a "true church?" According to the Bible, there is. In the book of Revelation, we find two major prophecies of women. Since women are symbols of the church (2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:23), these are prophecies of two very different churches. Let's take a look at them.

The first church we will look at in the book of Revelation is identified as "Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots" (Rev. 17:5). Babylon is not hard to identify. First, she is a "woman," which is a symbol of a church (Rev. 17:3). Second, she is called a "mother" church (Rev. 17:5). Third, she is not only a church, but she is also a "great city" (Rev. 17:18). Fourth, the city she is located on has "seven mountains" or hills (Rev. 17:9). Fifth, she is wearing purple and scarlet" (Rev. 17:4). Sixth, she fornicates with "the kings of the earth" (Rev. 17:2). Seventh, she becomes "drunk with the blood of the saints" (Rev. 17:6). Ironically, the Catholic Church was the first Christian church, which is why she calls herself the mother church. She is also city. Ironically, Vatican City, owned by the Catholic Church, is located in Rome, the city of seven hills. Her primary colors are purple and scarlet. She fornicated with the "kings of the earth" when Catholicism united with the Roman Empire. And she was drunk with the blood of the saints all through the middle ages as she was ruthlessly killing those who refused to accept her doctrines, like during the inquisition.

Abominations of Babylon

Prophecy tells us that this church holds a cup full of "the filthiness of her fornication" (Rev. 17:4). The filthiness of her fornication represents the false teachings that entered as a result of her union with pagan Rome. Foremost among her false teachings was the change of the Sabbath. Because the pagans of Rome worshipped the sun

god on the first day of the week, "the venerable day of the sun," the Catholic Church changed the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday, openly admitting, "We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church in the Council of Laodicea (A.D. 336) transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday" (Rev. Peter Geierman, *The Catechism of Catholic Doctrine*, pg. 50). Cardinal Gibbons adds, "You may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we never sanctify" (Cardinal Gibbons, *Faith of Our Fathers*, page 111).

In light of these clues, Martin Luther, founder of Protestantism, was among the first to identify the Catholic Church as Babylon, "a view that was to become dogma for all Protestant churches" (Newsweek Magazine, Oct. 31, 1999). As a result, the cry went out, "Babylon the great is fallen...Come out of her, My people" (Rev. 18:2, 4). From this cry, masses left Babylon, giving birth to thousands of Protestant denominations and yet, among all these denominations that emerged from the fall of Babylon, many are left in confusion regarding the true church. Would God only show us the false church while leaving us in confusion about which Protestant church is the true church? Of course not.

The True Church

In Revelation we see another woman, or church. Revelation 12:1 reveals a "woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars." While the previous woman was a bad church, we know this woman is a symbol of God's true church because she is clothed with the sun, a symbol of Jesus, "the Sun of righteousness" (Mal. 4:2). The moon under her feet is a symbol that the old covenant, with its "new moons" and feasts, was passing (Isa. 1:14). The twelve stars represent the twelve apostles of the new covenant church, but notice that this church is forced to escape "into the

wilderness" (Rev. 12:6). This represents God's faithful people like the Waldenses, Albigenses, Hussites and others who resisted joining the false church through the ages of persecution.

As God's people fled the persecution of Catholicism for 1,260 years (Rev. 12:6; Eze. 4:6), the prophecy says that the dragon "spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood" (Rev. 12:15). Since "waters" represent "peoples" (Rev. 17:15), these waters represent the flood of people persecuting God's faithful church during the middle ages. Fortunately, we are told that eventually "the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood" (Rev. 12:16). As the flood of persecution came against God's faithful people, America was discovered, a place where people could worship freely, and people flocked to the new nation, safe from persecution. Of course, when America swallowed the flood we are told that "the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus" (Rev. 12:17).

The Test of Truth

Bible prophecy identifies this remnant as a group of people who love Jesus enough to "keep the commandments" (Rev. 12:17). Because there have always been counterfeit Christians, God has made obedience to the commandments the test of true believers. John says, "by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments" (1 John 2:3). Ironically, while the true church is identified as those who keep the commandments, the prophecy contrasts those in Babylon with those who "keep the commandments of God" (Rev. 14:8), implying that those in Babylon do not keep all of the commandments. Of course, the Catholic Church has admitted to this. They openly state that they changed the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday without any support from the Bible and yet many Protestants remain in denial over this, claiming that the change of the Sabbath is found in the Bible. As a result, the majority of

churches continue to break the fourth commandment, which says that Saturday "the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God" (Ex. 20:10). In spite of this violation even from most Protestant churches, God still has a church which keeps the commandments. All ten of them.

Identifying the True Church

God's true church is simple to find. The Bible has clearly identified God's remnant as a group who "keep the commandments and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 12:17), adding, "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10). According to the Bible, God's true church not only keeps all ten commandments, but also has the spirit of prophecy. Of course, since Satan is "enraged" with this church, he will do anything he can to turn people away from it, leading people to view this church as a cult with a false prophet, even though they believe in many of the fundamental teachings of Christianity, such as the Bible as their rule of faith, the trinity, Jesus as God, salvation through faith alone, and at the same time, upholding the Ten Commandments, including the Sabbath. In spite of the fact that some have labeled God's true church as a cult, many have identified the false church as Catholicism and the true church as the Seventh-day Adventist Church, one of the last churches which remains faithful to all ten of the commandments, including the command to keep the seventh day Sabbath. The fact is, while many today remain in darkness, unaware that Sunday worship is an invention of Rome, God is shedding His light to the world in these last days. The Bible says, "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30). God is now sending a final appeal into the Sunday churches, warning His faithful people to "come out of her, My people, lest you share in her sins" (Rev. 18:4).

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