



In Search of the True Church

Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. Rev. 12:1.

A Tale of Two Churches

In the past, most Christians claimed that their church was the "true church" because they believed 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 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 a "mother" church (Rev. 17:5). Third, she is not only a church, but 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 the colors "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. The colors

worn in the mass are purple and scarlet. She fornicated with "kings of the earth" when Catholicism united with the Roman Empire. And she was drunk with the blood of the saints 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 or Rome worshipped the sun on the first day of the week, the Catholic Church changed the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday, admitting, "We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church in the Council of Laodecia (A.D. 336) transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday" (Rev. Peter Geierman, *The Catechism of Catholic Doctrine*, p. 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*, p. 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

While Babylon the harlot is identified as the false, or fallen 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 faithful 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 "the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood" (Rev. 12:16). As persecution arose, America was discovered, swallowing the flood and becoming a refuge for persecuted Christians. This only angered the devil who "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

The true church loves Jesus enough to "keep the commandments" (Rev. 12:17). Because there

have always been counterfeit Christians, God 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). That's why the true church is identified as those who "keep the commandments," while the false church is contrasted with those who "keep the commandments" (Rev. 12:17; 14:8-12), implying that those in Babylon do not keep all of the commandments. Of course, the Catholic admits to this, stating that they changed the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday without biblical support, while most Protestants remain in denial, 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, "the seventh day," Saturday, "is the Sabbath of the Lord" (Ex. 20:10). In spite of this violation, God still has a church which keeps the commandments.

Identifying the True Church

God's true church is simple to find. The Bible has 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 the 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 it believes 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. While some have labeled God's true church as a cult, this is only more evidence that this is the church Satan is warring against.

In light of the prophecy, many have identified the false church as Catholicism and the true church as the Seventh-day Adventist Church, one of the last churches to remain faithful to all ten commandments, including the command to keep the seventh day holy. The fact is, while many remain in darkness, unaware that Sunday worship is an invention of Catholicism, 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 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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