

Who Is The Image Of The Beast? #5

Ezra 7:11-12

Revelation 13:14-15

2 Thessalonians 2:4

April 21, 2013

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In the previous sermon, time was spent demonstrating in what ways the Papal Antichrist was accurately designated by the Apostle Paul as “that man of sin” in transgressing God’s Moral Law. It was mentioned that one significant aspect of the apostasy from the faith that was perpetrated by the Papacy in history was its abominable prohibition of the God-ordained institution of marriage to its priests (contrary to Peter’s own marriage in Mark 1:30 and 1 Corinthians 9:5, whom they falsely allege to be their first Pope upon whom the Church of Christ would be built; contrary to Paul’s clear instruction that bishops or ministers in the Church were to be the “husband of one wife” in 1 Timothy 3:2; and contrary to Hebrews 13:4). Listen to the words of A.W.R. Sipe, a mental health counselor and author who spent 18 years as a Benedictine monk and priest. He taught on the faculties of Major Catholic Seminaries and colleges, lectured in medical schools, and served as a consultant and expert witness in both civil and criminal cases involving the sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests. He writes in an article, dated April 28, 2010 (emphases in bold added):

Celibacy was a voluntary ascetic practice of early Christian monks and some clerics, but not universally required of Roman Catholic priests until 1139 CE.

Roman Catholic priests now are mandated to make a promise or vow of celibacy before they can be ordained. Clerical celibacy precludes absolutely any willful sexual release.

To the average person this demand of canon law [Footnote ii: Canon 277] imposes a seemingly impossible task, *perfect and perpetual continence*. Although the church propagates **the myth** that bishops and priests are celibate **this is not based on fact**. Several modern studies have used various methods to measure the degree of celibate observance. [Footnote iii: Cf. A.W.R.Sipe, *A Secret World: sexuality and the search for celibacy*. 1990; Fr. V.T. Kotze, *Stress Among Roman Catholic Clergy in South Africa*, 1991; Sipe, *Sex, Priests and Power*, 1995; Pepe Rodriguez, *Clerical Celibacy in Spain*, 1996.]

No researcher so far has assessed that more than fifty percent of Roman Catholic clergy at any one time are in fact practicing celibacy.

<http://www.richardsipe.com/Media/2010-04-28-ncr.htm>

And the Papal Antichrist continues under the newly elected Pope Francis I to require this violation of God's Law in prohibiting the lawful, biblical institution of marriage within its priesthood. For that reason (and many like it), the Papacy here is called "that man of sin" (2 Thessalonians 2:3).

This Lord's Day, we continue to consider the inspired words of the Apostle Paul in regard to "that man of sin" and "son of perdition" in 2 Thessalonians 2:4. The main points from our text are the following: (1) The Son of Perdition Professes Christ, But Actually Opposes Christ; (2) The Son of Perdition Sits in the Temple of God as God.

I. The Son of Perdition Professes Christ, But Actually Opposes Christ ("Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped" 2 Thessalonians 2:4a).

A. It is not so much what a man says, but what he does that reveals the sincerity of his profession ("They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him" Titus 1:16). And though the Papal Antichrist professes to be the Vicar of Christ, his actions reveal him to be that Man of Sin and Son of Perdition who opposes Christ. What is described by Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:4 are the actions (and not the mere profession) of the Papal Antichrist, who bears the same name as Judas Iscariot (Son of Perdition). Dear ones, if the Pope is the successor of an apostle of Jesus Christ, it is certainly not Peter, but is rather Judas (for Judas as the Son of Perdition points to the Papacy as the Son of Perdition). Let us consider the stated actions (and not mere profession) of the Son of Perdition.

B. First, the Son of Perdition opposes God.

1. Despite whatever the Papal Antichrist may say in word, in deed and in reality he opposes Christ. In fact, the word, “opposeth”, in our English text is translated in other places as “adversary” (Luke 13:17; Luke 21:15; Philippians 1:28; 1 Timothy 5:14). He claims to be the Representative and Vicar of Christ, but actually, he is the Adversary of Christ.

2. How does the Papal Antichrist and Son of Perdition oppose God?

a. **He opposes God by perverting the Gospel of Jesus Christ** (by changing faith alone in the righteousness of Christ alone to faith plus something in man or performed by man—contrary to Galatians 2:16). Dear ones, never in the debate between Protestants and the Papal Antichrist did either the Reformers or the Papacy deny that sinners must be justified by faith—the Roman Catholic Church has and still believes that faith is necessary in order to be justified. The debate was rather over whether sinners were justified by faith ALONE. The Protestant Reformers made that little word “ALONE” absolutely necessary to one being justified by God; whereas the Papal Antichrist declared faith ALONE in the righteousness of Christ to be anathema.

If any one saith, that justifying faith is nothing else but confidence [i.e. trust—GLP] in the divine mercy which remits sins for Christ’s sake; or, that this confidence alone is that whereby we are justified: let him be anathema (“Canon XII on Justification”, Council of Trent, Sixth Session, January 13, 1547).

But justifying faith alone looks to the obedience and sacrifice of Christ alone and not to any grace worked within man or obedience performed by man. The righteousness of one who is justified is at God’s right hand in heaven in the person of the only Mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ—the righteousness of one who is justified is not on earth within the believer. The ground and basis for our justification before an absolutely Holy God is the substitutionary work of Christ for us, and not

the gracious work of the Spirit of God within us. The righteousness of Christ upon which we are justified is imputed to us (credited to our spiritual bank account in heaven), and not infused within us personally. The declaration of God that the believing sinner is righteous is legal, not experiential. Justifying faith is a free gift bestowed upon an unworthy sinner, and not the result of a sinner preparing himself to receive it. The Papal Antichrist (who is the Son of Perdition) opposes God by making Christ's objective righteousness to be insufficient to justify an unworthy sinner, and by anathematizing and persecuting those who have stood firmly upon justification by faith alone in the righteousness of Christ alone.

b. **The Son of Perdition opposes God by the sacrilege of idolatry**—the bowing down to images (contrary to the Second Commandment), the introduction of man-made hymns and holy days into the worship of God (contrary to the Second Commandment and Fourth Commandment), the setting forth of mediators in heaven (especially Mary) to hear with God-like omniscience and Divine-like omnipresence the prayers of those on earth (contrary to Christ alone being the Mediator between God and man, 1 Timothy 2:5), and the addition of sacraments never appointed by God (seven sacraments rather than two).

c. **The Son of Perdition opposes God by opposing God's commandments in so many ways**—claiming headship over the Church, alleging infallibility, replacing the commandment and doctrine of God in Scripture with the tradition of man (like the immaculate conception of Mary, the bodily assumption of Mary into heaven after her death, purgatory, indulgences and penance for the cleansing and forgiveness of sin), and binding the consciences of men to the decrees of the Papacy (when God speaking in Scripture is alone lord of the conscience, 2 Corinthians 1:24).

C. The Son of Perdition exalts himself above all that is called God.

1. The Papal Antichrist (as the Man of Sin and Son of Perdition) has historically exalted himself in pride above the authority of all magistrates and emperors. He has claimed an unrivaled authority above all kings and emperors, "deposing some, and advancing others, obliging them to prostrate themselves before him, to kiss his toe, to hold his stirrup, [or] to wait barefooted at his gate . . ." (Thomas Newton, *Dissertations on the Prophecies*, 2:113). For example, Pope Gregory VII (who was later canonized as a saint) deposed Henry IV and made him wait barefooted at his gate in the snow for three days (1076).

Pope Gregory VII's *Dictatus Papae* (c. 1075) claimed for the Pope "that it may be permitted to him to depose emperors" (12) and asserted the papal power to "absolve subjects from their fealty [i.e. loyalty—GLP]" [to kings who were under the excommunication of the Pope—GLP] (27).

The principle behind deposition was that the Pope, as the ultimate representative of God from whom all oaths draw their force, could in extreme circumstances absolve a ruler's subjects of their allegiance, thereby rendering the ruler powerless.

Some prominent papal depositions:

Pope Gregory VII deposed Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV, February 22, 1076

Pope Innocent III deposed King John of England, 1212

Pope Innocent IV deposed Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II, July 17, 1245

Pope Pius V declared Elizabeth I of England deposed, February 25, 1570

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Papal_deposing_power

2. The Papal Antichrist (as the Man of Sin and Son of Perdition) has exalted himself in pride above God, who alone is lord of the conscience, in matters which can pertain only to God himself, and which only God can legislate (James 4:12). Thus, the Pope (as the alleged head of the Visible Church) claims to be infallible when instructing in faith and morals. He forbids what God has authorized—as marriage for the clergy, as justification by faith alone, as a lawful divorce upon the grounds of adultery and desertion that cannot be remedied, as eating meat which is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer. The Pope also commands what God prohibits—as bowing down to images, as having more

mediators than Christ alone, as having seven sacraments rather than the two appointed by Christ, as assuming titles and honors that belong to God alone (as head of the Church, and as having the power to forgive sins).

3. The Papal Antichrist has claimed authority over all that is called God and is worshipped. For he has even claimed and been given by others the very titles of God and has been worshipped as God on earth.

a. Christopher Marcellus in Oration addressed Pope Julius II in the Fifth Lateran Council, Session IV (1512) accordingly,

Take care that we lose not that salvation, that life and breath which thou hast given us, for thou art our shepherd, thou art our physician, thou art our governor, thou art our husbandman, ***thou art finally another God on earth*** (Council Edition. Colm. Agrip. 1618, [Sacrorum Conciliorum, J.D. Mansi (ed.), Vol. 32, col. 761], (also quoted in History of the Councils, vol. XIV, col 109, by Labbe and Cossart).

b. Cardinal Bellarmine (one of the greatest teachers of the Church of Rome lived from 1542 to 1621 and was canonized as Saint Bellarmine in 1930) affirmed that every title which is in Scripture given to Christ appertains also to the Pope:

All the names which are attributed to Christ in Scripture, implying His supremacy over the church, are also attributed to the Pope (*Disputationes*, "On the Authority of Councils," Book 2, Chap. 17).

c. Among the twenty-seven propositions known as the "Dictates of Hildebrand," who, under the name of Gregory VII, was Pope from 1073-1087, occur the following:

18. That his sentence is not to be reviewed by anyone; while he alone can review the decisions of all others.

19. That he can be judged by no one.

22. That the Romish Church never erred, nor will it, according to the Scriptures, ever err (*Annals of Baronius, 1076, Vol. XI, col. 506. See Gieseler's "Ecclesiastical History," third period, div. 3, par. 47, note 3; and Mosheim's "Ecclesiastical History," book 3, cen. 11, part 2, chap. 2, par. 9, note).*

d. From *The Gloss of Extravagantes of Pope John XXII*:

But to believe that **our Lord God the Pope** the establisher of said decretal, and of this, could not decree, as he did decree, should be accounted heretical (*The Gloss of Extravagantes of Pope John XXII, Cum. Inter*, title 14, chapter 4, "Ad Callem Sexti Decretalium", Column 140 [Paris, 1685]. In an Antwerp edition of the *Extravagantes*, the words, *Dominum Deum Nostrum Papam* ["Our Lord God the Pope"] can be found in column 153).

e. Pope Boniface VIII (*Unam Sanctam*, 1302):

Furthermore, we declare, we proclaim, we define that it is absolutely necessary for salvation that every human creature be subject to the Roman Pontiff.

f. Pope Leo XIII (*Sapientiae Christianae*, 1890):

We [i.e. the Papacy—GLP] hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty . . .

g. Pope John Paul II wrote in 1995 a book (*Crossing the Threshold of Hope*), and in it, he was asked 35 questions by Vittorio Messori, to which questions he responded. In the first Chapter (entitled, "The Pope: A Scandal and a Mystery"), the following question was asked:

Confronted with the Pope, one must make a choice. The leader of the Catholic Church is defined by the faith as the Vicar of Jesus Christ (and is accepted as such by believers). The Pope is considered the man on earth who represents the Son of God, who "takes the place" of the Second Person of the omnipotent God of the Trinity (p.6).

In Pope John Paul's response, he does not take exception to the language used by Mr. Messori, but rather responds,

Have no fear when people call me the "Vicar of Christ," when they say to me "Holy Father," or "Your Holiness," or use titles similar to these, which seem even inimical [contrary—GLP] to the Gospel. Christ himself declared: "Call no one on earth your father; you have but one Father in heaven. Do not be called 'Master'; you have but one master, the Messiah" (Mt 23:9-10). These expressions, nevertheless, have evolved out of a long tradition, becoming part of common usage. One must not be afraid of these words either (p.7).

<http://www.2heartsnetwork.org/Crossing.the.Threshold.of.Hope-PopeJPII.pdf>

4. Dear ones, finally (under this first main point) it is historically accurate to note that the hierarchy (particularly the Cardinals) of the Papal Church of Rome first elect the Pope (thus giving life to the Pope), and then they worship him (by pledging to him absolute obedience) in fulfillment of the prophetic words in Revelation 13:15. In fact, there have been preserved two commemorative medallions honoring the election and coronation of Pope Martin V (in 1417) and of Pope Eugene IV (in 1431), which depict two Cardinals crowning the Pope and two Cardinals worshipping the Pope, with this Latin inscription,

Quem creant adorant (“Whom they create, they adore [or worship]”
(www.sits7.com/v02/r/quem_medal.pdf).

5. I submit that such representative (though not exhaustive) claims to titles and prerogatives that belong to God and Christ alone demonstrate that the Papal Antichrist (who is the Man of Sin and the Son of Perdition) has exalted himself in pride by his own claims and by the claims of others that he is “above all that is called God, or that is worshipped” (2 Thessalonians 2:4). The Papacy of the Harlot Church of Rome fully fulfills the words of this prophecy from the pen of the Apostle Paul.

II. The Son of Perdition Sits in the Temple of God as God (“So that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God” 2 Thessalonians 2:4b).

A. Here is just one more unmistakable prophetic utterance that I submit connects the Papacy to the Man of Sin and Son of Perdition. For the Son of Perdition sits enthroned as God (not because he believes or states that he is the God who created all things, but in the way that he requires what God prohibits and in the way that he prohibits what God requires—he usurps the authority of God). He lays claim to the titles,

offices, and prerogatives of Christ (who is the Son of God), and thus “as God” (in robbing God of His glory) he sits as head of the Visible Church upon earth, claiming to rule over it, and claiming to rule over all magistrates and nations as well (as if he were King of kings and Lord of lords). So much of what we have already referenced in this sermon by way of the titles and prerogatives assumed and stolen by the Papal Antichrist likewise demonstrate that he and his kingdom are “the little horn” in Daniel 7:25 (who speaks great things against God and changes laws that God has appointed).

B. How precise is the fulfillment of Paul’s prophecy in the Papal Antichrist, for the Pope claims to teach infallibly in matters of faith and morals when he speaks from his chair (*ex cathedra*) of supreme authority over all Christians. That is exactly what Paul states concerning the Son of Perdition as well—once again an unmistakable match between the Son of Perdition and the Papal Antichrist. The following declaration comes from Vatican I (which opened December 8, 1869, and adjourned October 20, 1870).

We teach and define that it is a dogma Divinely revealed that the Roman pontiff when he speaks *ex cathedra* [i.e. from the chair—GLP], that is when in discharge of the office of pastor and doctor of **all Christians**, by virtue of his supreme Apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith or morals to be held by **the universal Church**, by the Divine assistance promised to him in Blessed Peter, is possessed of that **infallibility** with which the Divine Redeemer willed that his Church should be endowed in defining doctrine regarding faith or morals, and that therefore such definitions of the Roman pontiff are of themselves and not from the consent of the Church **irreformable** [i.e. they cannot be reformed—GLP] (Sess. IV, *Const. de Ecclesia Christi*, c. iv). [Emphases added in bold—GLP]

C. But don’t miss the very place and location in which Paul prophesies the Son of Perdition will sit enthroned as God upon the earth: “so that he as God sitteth **in the temple of God**” (2 Thessalonians 2:4b, emphases added).

1. The temple of God in the Old Testament was God's earthly throne (as it were), as manifested by the shekinah glory that appeared between the two cherubim over the ark of the covenant within the temple.

2. But as we turn from the temple (and its priesthood, sacrifices, and ceremonies) of the Old Covenant (which Hebrews 10:1 calls a "shadow of good things to come"), and turn to the temple (its ministry, sacraments, and ordinances) of the New Covenant, we see a glorious and remarkable change. The temple (*naos*) as used and described by the apostles in the New Testament refers not to a building of bricks, stones, and mortar, but rather refers to the Church of Jesus Christ (collectively), each member being a living stone that is built upon the foundation of Christ (1 Corinthians 3:16,17 [2x]; 2 Corinthians 6:16 [2x]; Ephesians 2:21; 2 Thessalonians 2:4; Revelation 3:12; Cp. also 1 Peter 2:5). Clearly, the Son of Perdition has usurped the place of Christ in sitting and ruling over the Universal Church of Christ (this he even declares to do, as we have seen from the various citations by the Papacy itself, cp. the declaration of Vatican I above). Dear ones, what could be more clear? Remember that these are the claims made by the Papacy and others, not the lawful, biblical authority that the Papal Antichrist possesses to rule over the Universal Church.

D. But finally note by way of confirmation that Revelation 11:1-2 gives to us a prophecy using the figurative symbol of the temple (*naos*) of God. Here the temple is divided into two parts in which there are faithful worshippers (the faithful Church of Christ) in Revelation 11:1 (these are to be measured as belonging to Christ), and in which there are corrupt worshippers (the Harlot Church of Rome) in Revelation 11:2 (these are not to be measured as belonging to Christ, but are rather to "leave out" —literally, "cast out", *ekballo*, i.e. excommunicate as in John 9:34,35; 3 John 10). In other words, the angel in this vision (who is Christ, the

same angel as in Revelation 10) calls part of the temple unholy and to be excommunicated as defiled for 42 prophetic months (1,260 years using the Scriptural Day-Year Principle). I submit to you that this is the defiled portion of the Temple of God over which the Papal Antichrist rules for 1,260 years (cp. Daniel 7:25).

Dear ones, in application of these truths, you will recall that Christ cleansed the temple two times during His earthly ministry (at the beginning of His ministry in John 2:15, and at the end of His ministry in Matthew 21:12; Mark 11:15; Luke 19:45). In all of these accounts, it is stated that Christ “cast out” (*ekballo*) the moneychangers and animals that had been brought into the temple court in order to make a profit from the sale of animals and the exchange of money. Dear ones, zeal for God’s House had consumed Christ. It was not zeal for God’s House that had consumed the moneychangers and the priests (that permitted these abominations), but rather pride for man’s exaltation over God. The same sin of pride in exalting man over God is that which is at the root of idolatry and human innovation in worship. Pride is not pleased to worship God by what God has authorized in the New Covenant alone. The pride of the Papal Antichrist is manifested in all Protestant and Reformed Churches that promote or allow any act of worship to be brought into the worship of God for which there is no, “Thus saith the Lord.” It is bringing in the moneychangers into the Temple (or Church) of the Lord Jesus Christ (whether the moneychangers be called New Calvinism, or the Orality Movement, or the Emerging Church, or the Roman Catholic Church). At the root of all acts of idolatry is man’s pride in forming an image of his own preference in the worship of Almighty God.

But dear ones, our bodies are also the temple of God (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). We, too, have in our pride brought into our lives moneychangers

that defile us. I submit, dear ones, that pride is at the root of our self-righteousness, our discontentment, our rebellion, our lusts, our discouragement and depression, our impatience, our contention with others, our unwillingness to be easily entreated by others, our robbing God of His glory, our unthankfulness, our worries and fears etc. For in each case, we have exalted ourselves in thought, word, or deed above the authority of God, rather than submitting ourselves in trust and love to the authority of God. Dear ones, we need our hearts to be cleansed by the Lord Jesus Christ. We need for Him to turn over the tables and cast out the many moneychangers that we have allowed to freely operate in our lives out of pride in exalting ourselves (rather than humbly submitting ourselves to the authority of God). We need to realize that the pride of the Papal Antichrist who exalts himself above the authority of God is living and abiding in our lives. Beloved, only Christ (by His death and resurrection) can drive those moneychangers out of our lives, and He will do so as we cry out to Him to do so through faith and repentance. He has not changed. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Do you want to be cleansed? He is ready to forgive and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). Don't delay. Come to Christ.

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