**THE NEW POPE IN ROME**

**2 THESSALONIANS 2**

Jesus warns against false prophets (**Matthew 7:15-23**). By their fruits you shall know them (**v.20**).

**Corrupt** teachers & teaching produce **bad** fruit (**1 Tim. 4:1-4**—doctrines of demons…forbidding to marry). **Devils’ doctrine** of **celibacy of priests** has **produced** the **fruit** of **sexual abuse** (**Colossians 2:20-23**). Workers of **lawlessness** (**unauthorized** activity)will be **lost** (**v.23**), **e**ven if they claim to do good works in His name (**v.22**).

**2 Thessalonians 2:1-12**

The “mystery of lawlessness” (**v.7**) was present in the First Century **2 Thess. 2:7, Acts 20:28-31**

**lawlessness** is **sin** (**1 John 3:4**)

Some **thing** was restraining it from being worse **v.6** (**persecution** kept apostasy from growing)

Some **one** restrained it **v.7**

THE falling away (Greek E APOSTASIA) is **change** within the **church** (**v.3**)

Corruption of organization…until **one** **man** sits as **God** in **apostate** **church** (**v.4**). The “man of sin” is the Bishop of Rome (**Pope**).

**Fulfillment of Scripture About Changes in God’s Plan**

**A.D. 30-100** independent churches, led by **pastors** (also called **bishops** and **elders**)

**A.D. 100-150 one elder** began to be commonly recognized by a local church as **leader over** the other elders

**A.D. 150-200** the lead elder was distinguished by the word **bishop** over the eldership

**A.D. 200-250** some bishops begin to oversee affairs in some of the smaller churches in the surrounding area (**diocese**)

**A.D. 250-300** after this breach in congregational autonomy, bishops in larger **cities** (with its diocese) gained **more prominence** and wielded **more influence**; they were **metropolitan** bishops

**A.D. 300-400** the bishops in the 5 largest **cities** (with the largest churches) had the **most prominence** and wielded the **most influence**;these **metropolitans** were called **patriarchs** in **381**

**A.D. 400-588** the **five** patriarchs of Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Rome, and Constantinople have the most influence over the church on earth; **Rome’s** and **Constantinople’s**  prominence **reflected** the cities’ **political power** in the divided **Roman Empire**

**A.D. 588** the patriarch of Constantinople took the position of “**universal bishop.**”Gregory, the patriarch of Rome, **objected**

**A.D. 606** the patriarch of Rome, Boniface III, assumed the position and title of universal (**catholic**) bishop. Constantinople and the other three eastern patriarchates **did not acknowledge** this claim though they continued to have communion with Rome until **1054**.

The government of the Roman Catholic Church now exactly mirrored that of the Roman Empire

**Catholic Claims Examined**

Catholics claim history, tradition and some scripture support authority for the Pope

But **scripture says**:

Peter was married **1 Corinthians 9:5**

Peter **refused** worship **Acts 10:24-26**

James mentioned before Peter in **Gal. 2:9.** Paul was not behind Peter (**2 Cor. 11:5**). In **Gal. 2:11-21**, Paul is superior to Peter in regard to truth.

**Acts 15** shows **Jerusalem** as place where doctrine was determined (not Rome). **James**, not Peter, suggested the action taken by the church and had the final say. Peter himself interprets **Matt. 16:16-19** in **1 Peter 2:3-8. Jesus** is the **foundation rock** of His spiritual house (church).

**Catholic Claims Examined by Frank N. Westcott, Anglican Cleric**

Even by the Roman Catholics’ standard of “the whole church has always believed the truth,” the eastern church’s non-acceptance of the Pope proves the authority of the Pope is not true. The eastern church continues to operate as it did since the Fifth Century. Islam effectively wiped out Christianity in Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria and later Constantinople (Istanbul) and made the eastern church “irrelevant” in opposing western (Roman) innovations.

“When Victor, Bishop of Rome, AD 196, undertook to excommunicate the Asiatic Churches, because they disagreed with him about the time of the observance of Easter, he was rebuked by the other Bishops, including Irenaeus, and his excommunication was ignored, and had no effect whatever. In the fourth century, the Council of Sardica allowed a condemned Bishop to appeal to Rome for a new trial, not as a recognized right, but as conferring a privilege. This canon of Sardica, was misquoted by the Bishops of Rome as being a canon of the Council of Nice in a controversy with the African Bishops...But the latter consulted the Eastern Patriarchs, and, so discovering the misquotation, replied to the Patriarch of Rome through his legates, ‘We find it enacted in no council of the Fathers, that any person may be sent as legates of your holiness . . . . Do not therefore at the request of any, send your clergy as agents for you, lest we seem to introduce into the Church of Christ, the ambitious pride of the world.’

“The great Arian heresy which denied the divinity of our Lord, was settled by the Nicene Council, which was called, not by the Pope, but by the Emperor Constantine. Hosius presided, and the heresy was finally refuted, not through the pronouncement of the Pope, but through the argument of Athanasius; while Pope Liberius (bishop of Rome) himself became a heretic. Then the heresy denying the divinity of the Holy Ghost, was settled at the Council of Constantinople in 381, at which the Nicene Creed was reaffirmed, and the sentences defining doctrine concerning the Holy Ghost added, and the Roman Bishop was not present either in person or through his legates. Meletius of Antioch presided at the council, and was succeeded by Gregory Nazianzen, Patriarch of Constantinople; and so in the settlement of the two greatest heresies, the authority of the Bishop of Rome counted for little or nothing; and it is interesting to note that the Bishops assembled in council at Constantinople in 381, in their Epistle to the Western Bishops assembled at Rome, called the Church of Jerusalem the ‘Mother of all Churches.’”

**Papal Titles**

**“His Holiness The Pope;** “Pope” means “father” **Matthew 23:5-12, especially v.9**

**No** Christian is **more holy** than any other Christian is in Christ **1 Peter 1:15-16**

 **“Bishop Of Rome And Vicar Of Jesus Christ;** Holy Spirit is “vicar” of Christ **John 14:15-18, 16:12-15**

**“Successor Of St. Peter, Prince Of The Apostles;** Only Judas had a successor(**Acts 1:21-26**). **2 Peter 1:12-15** implies Peter had no successor. Paul was not behind Peter (**2 Cor. 11:5**).

**“Supreme Pontiff Of The Universal Church;”** “Pontiff Maximus” means “high priest” in Latin. This is Jesus! **Heb. 4:14-8:1**

 **“Patriarch Of The West;** unscriptural office

**“Servant Of The Servants Of God;**

**“Primate Of Italy;** Jesus apparently does not have preeminence in Italy (**Col. 1:18**).

**“Archbishop And Metropolitan Of The Roman Province;** like patriarch, a lawless office

**“Sovereign Of Vatican City State;”** only accurate title; Pope is a political office obtained politically

**“Vicar of Christ”**

By Richard Bennett

**“**To begin with, the Bishop of Rome claimed to be the vicar of Caesar and his successors the rightful heirs to the Caesars. The city that had been the seat of power for the Roman Empire became the city for the Bishop of Rome to exercise his authority. Gradually other Bishops and national monarchs accepted him as vicar and successor to Caesar with the same supreme title of “Pontifex Maximus”

 “Next the Bishops of Rome claimed to be ‘The vicar of the prince of the apostles’, that is, the vicar of Peter. Thus in the early fifth century Bishop Innocent I (401-417AD) insisted that Christ had delegated supreme power to Peter and made him the Bishop of Rome…

 “Following this he held that the Bishop of Rome as Peter’s successor was entitled to exercise Peter’s power and prerogatives. Boniface III, who became Bishop of Rome in 606, established himself as “Universal Bishop”, thus claiming to be vicar and master of all other bishops.

 “It was not until the **eighth century**, however, that the particular title “Vicar of the Son of God” was found in the **fraudulent document** called ‘The Donation of Constantine’. Although this notorious document was proven false in the early sixteenth century, the Bishops of Rome have used the title ‘Vicar of Christ’ since the eighth century. This title has been the Pope’s supreme claim to spiritual and temporal supremacy.”

**Direct Papal Claims of Divinity**

***“The Lord our God no longer reigns: He has******resigned all power to the Pope****.”* TETZEL, Vendor of Indulgences to obtain money for the repair of St. Peters Basilica: Cited in “THE HISTORY OF PROTESTANTISM”, Vol. I pages 255-260

*“The Pope is* ***not*** *only the* ***representative*** *of Jesus Christ, but* ***he is Jesus Christ himself*** *hidden under the veil of the flesh. Does the Pope speak? It is Jesus Christ who speaks...”* Pope Pius X, when Archbishop of Venice; Quoted by “Catholique Nationale”, July 13, 1895

 *“It is certain that the Pontiff was called a God by the Pious Prince Constantine.”* Canon Law, published by Gratianus, 12th Century

*“The Most Holy and Most Blessed One, who hath Divine Judgment, who is* ***Lord on Earth****, successor of Peter, the Lord’s Christ,* ***Lord of the Universe****, Father of Kings, Light of the World, the* ***Chief Pontiff Pope Martin****.”* Annunciation of Pope Martin at the Court of the Greek Emperor. 13th Century.

**REMEMBER 2 THESSALONIANS 2:4!**