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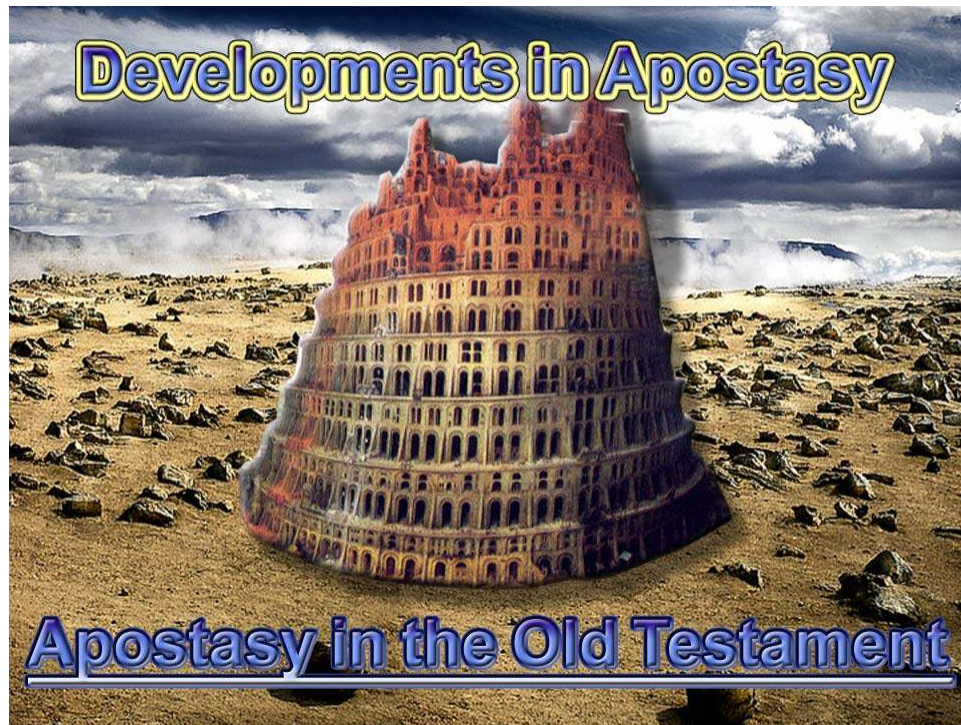
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Apostasy in the Old Testament



The term “apostasy” means to “fall away from the Truth”. It suggests that the person who has apostasized once believed and then rejected God’s Truth. Apostasy is rebellion against God because it is a rebellion against Truth.

All throughout the scriptures are examples of those who rebelled against God’s word and fell away from His Truth, in order to serve as a warning. The New Testament is full of warnings not to fall away from the Truth. Apostasy is a very real and dangerous threat to everyone in the Truth.

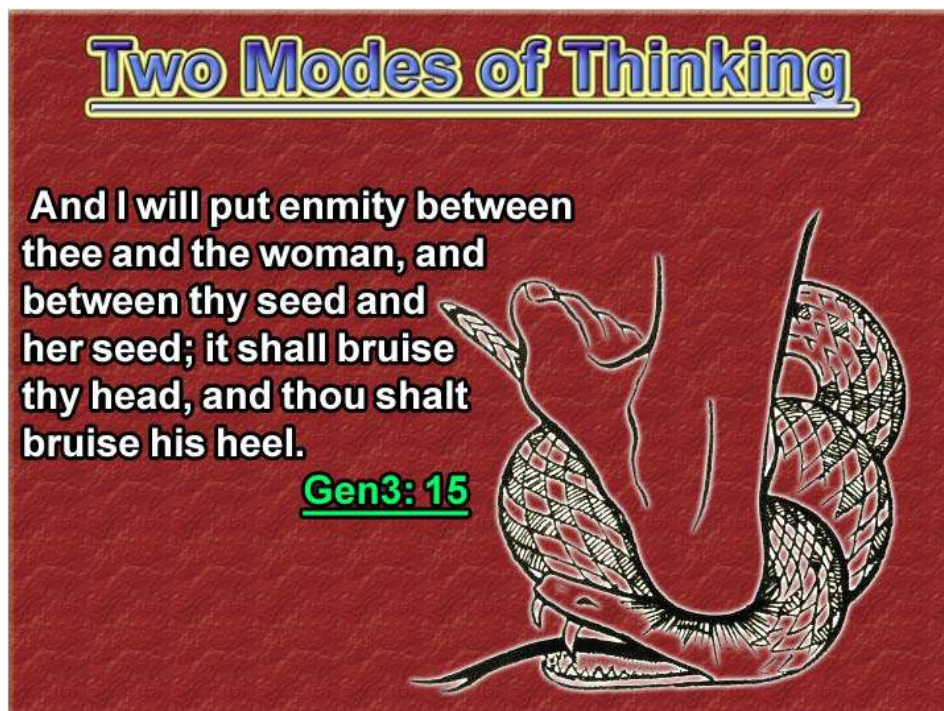
This is why it is so important to understand what apostasy is, how it happens, and who is involved so that efforts can be made to steer clear of it entirely.

First, a look at apostasy in the Old Testament will be undertaken. Although the word “apostasia” is Greek and is only found in the New Testament, the concept was certainly in place right from the very beginning. And when the concept as it is found from the beginning of scripture is fully grasped, an understanding of the framework for the entire Bible which is helpful in correctly interpreting prophecy will be obtained.

Two Modes of Thinking

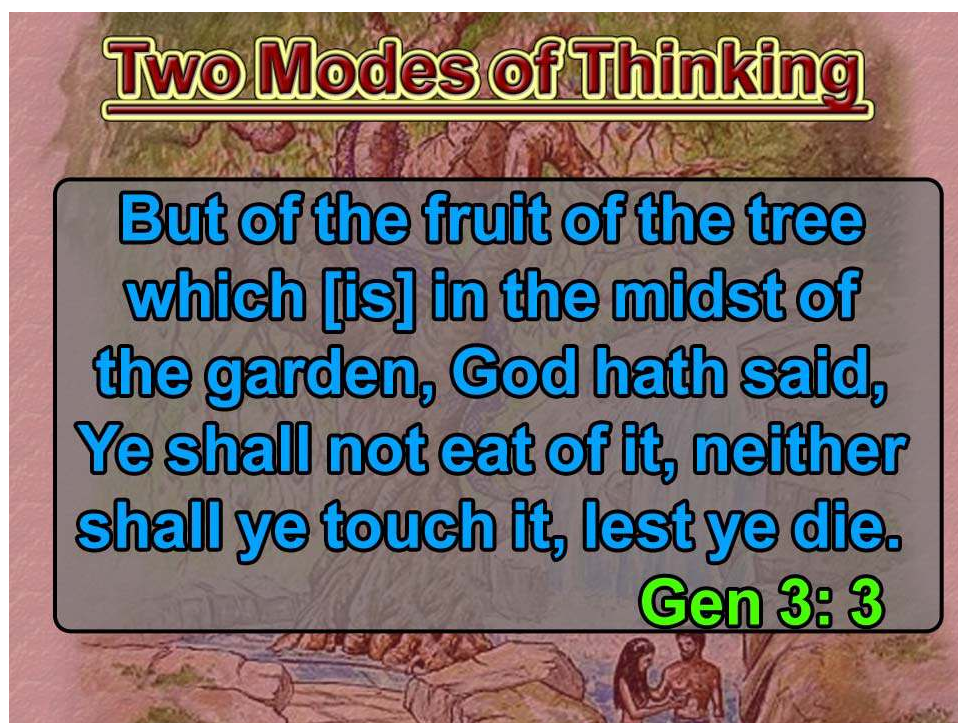
From the foundation of the world, God’s will was that he would be manifested in created beings that would reflect his characteristics, and that the world would be filled with his glory because of this.

Also from the beginning, men began to push their own ambitions and thinking ahead instead of God’s principles and ways. This is the spirit of apostasy.



Gen. 3:13-15 “And the LORD God said unto the woman, What [is] this [that] thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou [art] cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

Here is the beginning of apostasy, of rebellion against God and the truth. The lie of the serpent, that “thou shalt not die” was believed and followed rather than the truth of God, which Eve had initially acknowledged when first speaking with the serpent.



Gen. 3: 2-3 “And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which [is] in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.”

And so in verse 15 of Genesis 3, there are two ways opposed to each other; the thinking of God (or of the spirit), and the thinking of the flesh (or carnal mind), which began as an apostasy, a falling away from the right way.

And what exists is an opposition that runs throughout scripture, all through time, which actually becomes the continuous theme of scripture. It is the seed of the serpent versus the seed of the woman.



What is interesting is that Genesis 3:15 is actually a prophecy or foreshadowing of the opposition, since it says “I

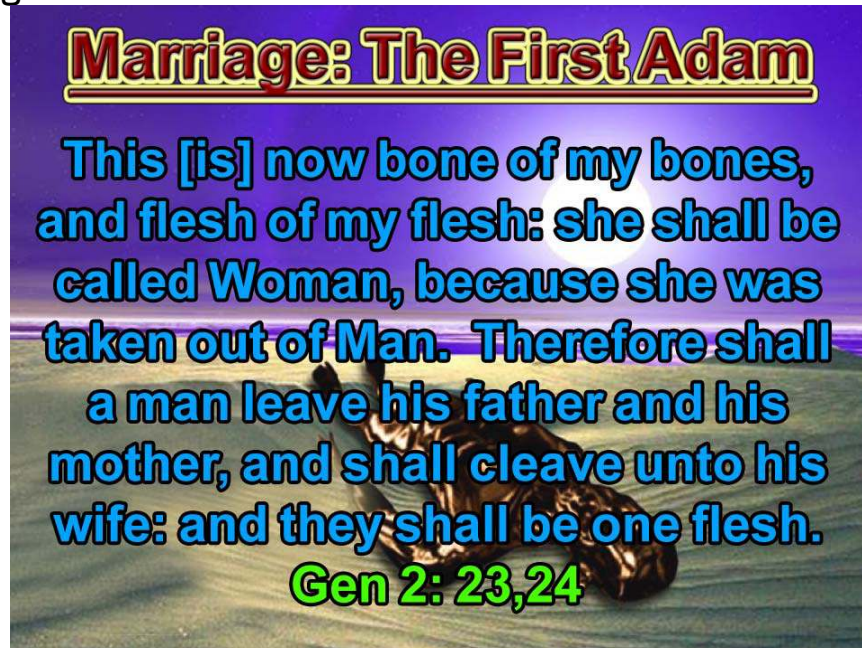
WILL put enmity..., it SHALL bruise thy head, thou SHALT bruise his heel". In New Testament times the believers were given foreshadowing of apostasy as well, as will be evident later.

The very purpose of God has to do with this opposition of thinking, because one day, the thinking of God will triumph over the thinking of man and the apostasy. This opposition was established right at the beginning, it has continued and still continues down through time, and will not be finished until the final triumph at the end of the millennium. The entire Bible is centered on this enmity or conflict or opposition.

Therefore it is obvious why apostasy is so very important to understand.

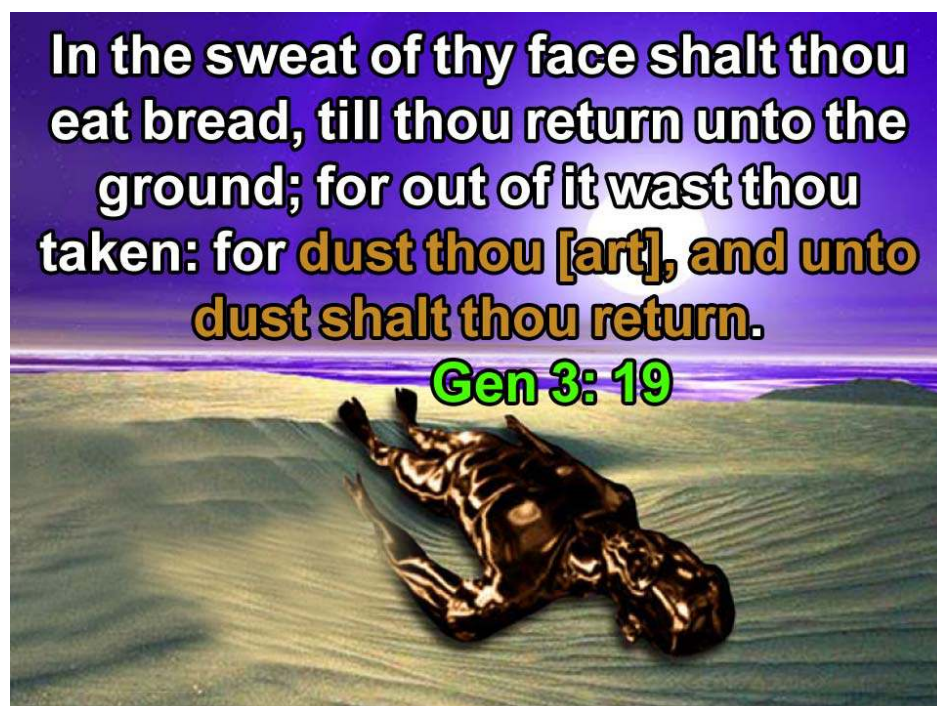
Beginning and End

As a note of interest, a comparison will be made on how the Bible begins in Genesis with how it ends in Revelation.

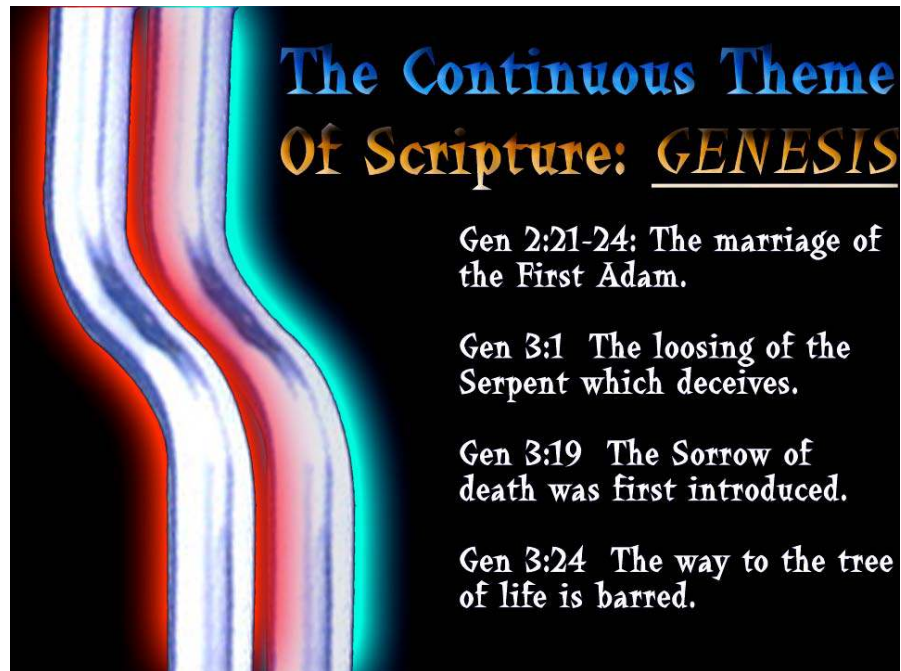


Gen. 2:21-24 “And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This [is] now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”

Right at the beginning of the Bible is the marriage of the first Adam. This of course is a type of the marriage of the ecclesia to Christ. After this point, the serpent is loosened in Genesis 3:1, following which Eve, representing the ecclesia, is deceived and rebels against God's commandment. And then in Gen. 3:19:



Because of the introduction of apostasy, or falling away, from God's ideals, death was introduced, and in verse 24, the way to the tree of life was barred.



**The Continuous Theme
Of Scripture: GENESIS**

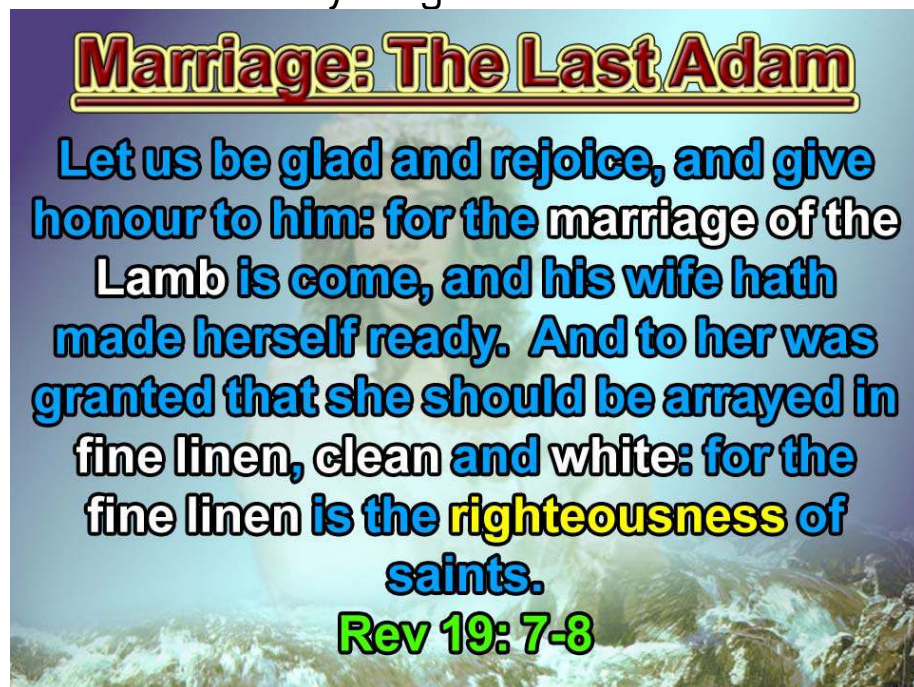
Gen 2:21-24: The marriage of the First Adam.

Gen 3:1 The loosing of the Serpent which deceives.

Gen 3:19 The Sorrow of death was first introduced.

Gen 3:24 The way to the tree of life is barred.

Now a look at how everything ends in the Bible.



Marriage: The Last Adam

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

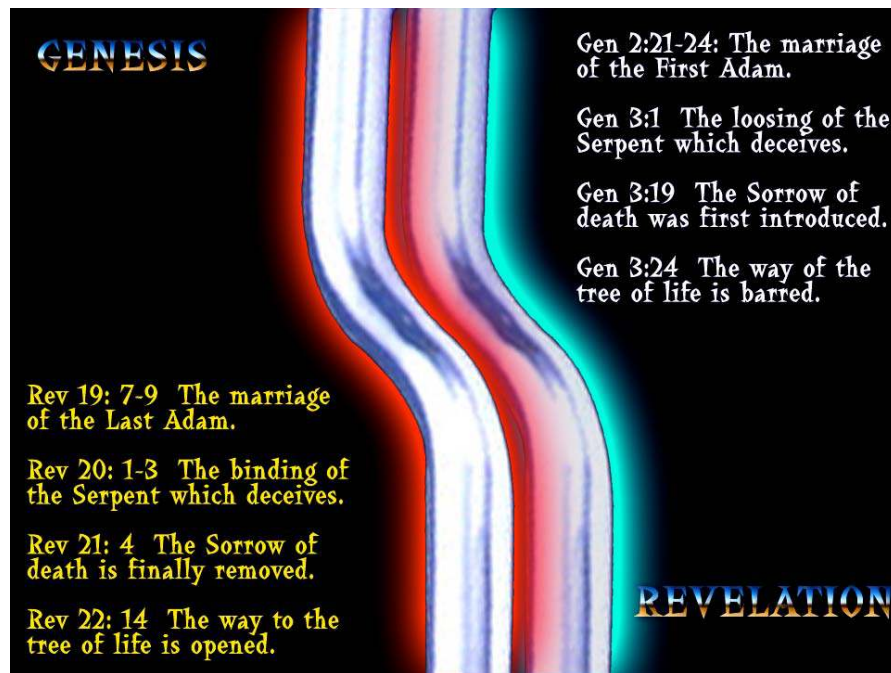
Rev 19: 7-8

Here is the marriage of the last Adam, which at this point involves those from the ecclesia who were NOT involved in apostasy. Then in chapter 20 verses 1-3, the serpent which deceives is bound. This includes the system of apostasy that is spoken about so much in the Revelation, which will be discussed later. But, in verse 2:

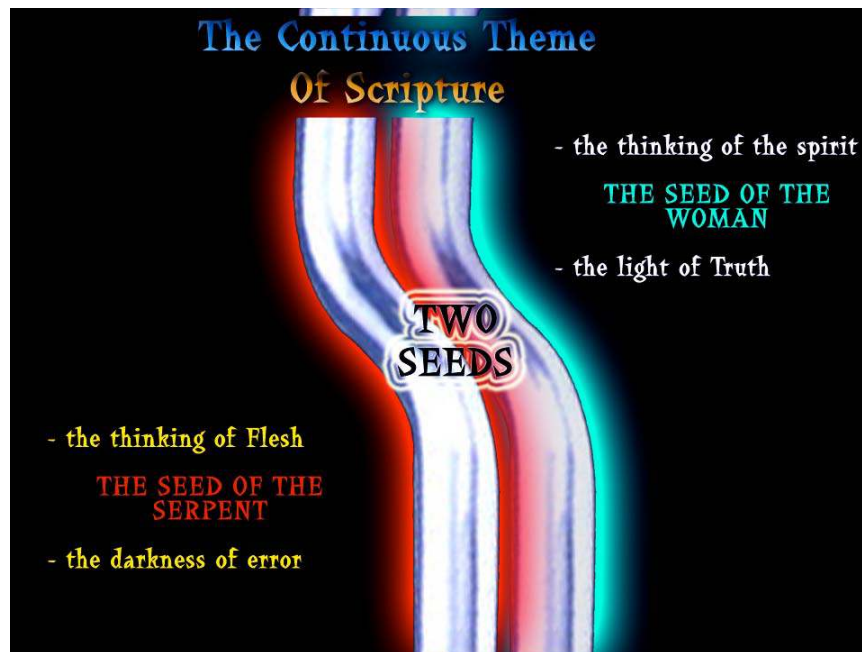


Why is it referred to as the OLD serpent? It is because that way of thinking, that spirit of apostasy and rebellion against God, has been around since Genesis 3.

And finally in chapter 21 verse 4 the curse of death is removed and in chapter 22 verse 14 the way to the tree of life opened for those who remained separate from the apostasy.

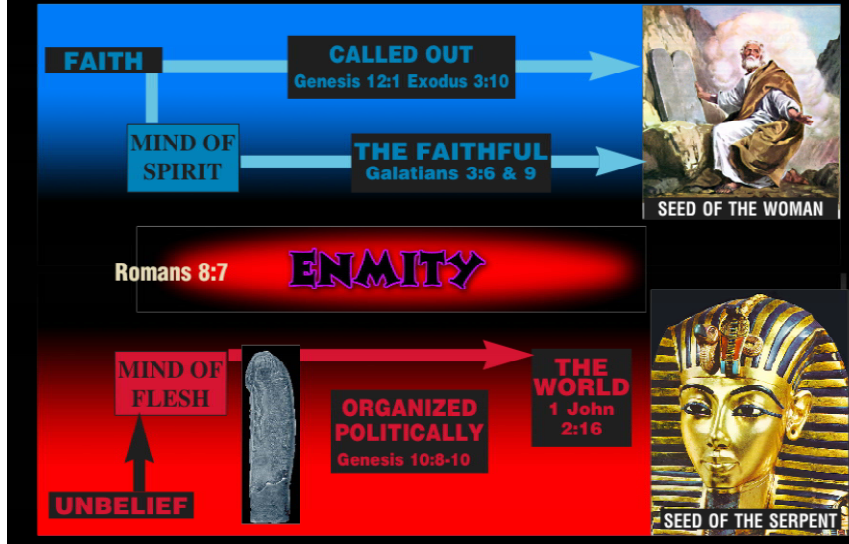


Systems of Rivalry



In Genesis 10 is the beginning of the establishment of two systems which came out of the thinking of the flesh, (or seed of the serpent), and the thinking of God, (or seed of the woman).

"I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed..." — Genesis 3:15.



Gen. 10:8-10 "And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar."

The name “Nimrod” has been suggested to mean “we will rebel”. This was his way of thinking, anyways, because he was determined to build his own power and rebel against the authority of God. Although it could be argued that Nimrod did not apostasize since he likely was not originally in the way of God, he was a descendent of Noah, so at some point in time, an apostasy occurred which carried down to him. The phrase “He was a mighty hunter before God” in verse 9 indicates “in the face of God”, or “in defiance of God”.

Verse 10 indicates that the beginning of his kingdom was Babylon, or Babel, which will feature significantly in this discussion on apostasy. So there exists the kingdom of the seed of the serpent, or the apostasy. It has its own government and its own system of worship as a rival system to the Truth. Nimrod was its king-priest.

Gen. 14:1 “And it came to pass in the days of
Amraphel king of Shinar,...

In Genesis 10 it says that the kingdom established by Nimrod was called Babylon in the land of Shinar. After Abraham regained everything that this king with his allies had taken, including Lot and his family, Melchizedek, who was certainly associated with the thinking of the spirit, meets him.



And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he [was] the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed [be] Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.
Gen 14: 18-20

What is interesting is that Melchizedek speaks of the king of Shinar as Abraham's enemy in verse 20. But the king did not come against Abraham specifically. He came against the king of Sodom and carried away Lot. The apostasy must always be regarded as an enemy of the Truth.

So in Genesis 10 is the king-priest of the Babylonish system, Nimrod. In chapter 14 is the king-priest of what becomes the Israelitish system, Melchizedek. These are enemies of each other. So early in scripture, a type is established. The seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman become "Babylon" and "Israel" in scripture and throughout scripture it can be thought of in this way.

Jeremiah 51:44 and Isa 2:2 illustrate the conflict between the seed of the serpent which became the kingdom of Babylon, and the seed of the woman, which became the kingdom of Israel.

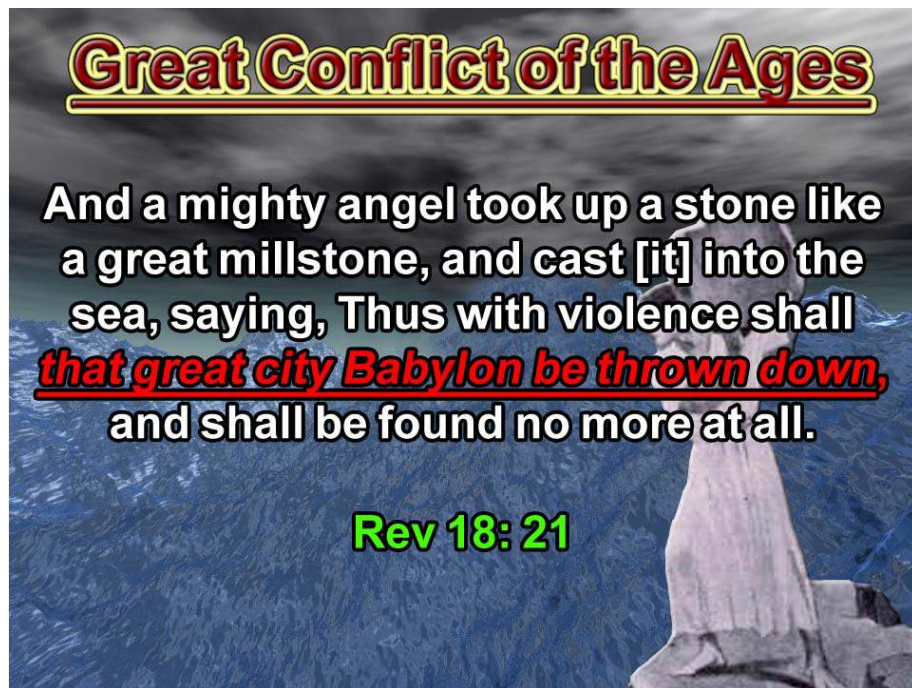


Bel was one of the Babylonish gods, and was in the Babylonish temple, which of course was at the centre of Babylonish worship. The day is coming when the nations will not flow unto Babylon, the apostasy, any more.



In contrast to Bel's house overthrown in Babylon, God's house is established in Israel. At this point, all nations will flow unto it. They won't flow unto the apostasy anymore, but to the house of God, the centre of Truth. The word "flow" is the same in both passages.

The end of the Babylonish, or apostate, system of things is shown in the book of Revelation.



Here it is called a "great city", just like in Genesis 10:12, Nimrod built the first "great city".

And in Rev. 21:10:



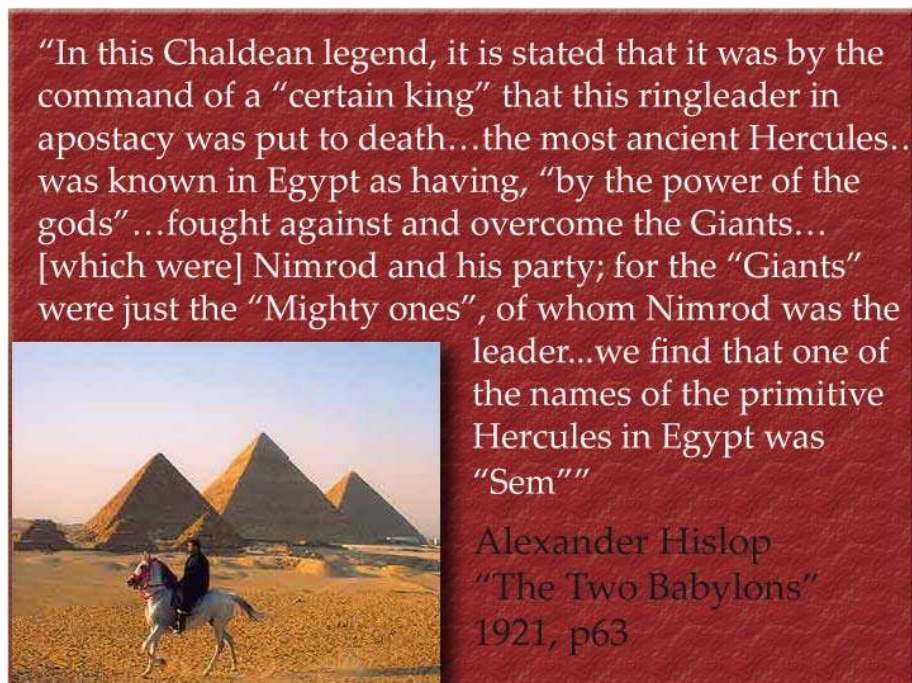
Another “great city”, Jerusalem, is contrasted with the great city of Babylon. One is cast down with violence and destroyed, while the other descends from God and is established forever.

The conflict which began in Genesis with an apostasy is developed further in Genesis, and is still seen in Revelation using the same terminology. This is obviously a continuation of the same system of things throughout time.

Two Leaders

In Genesis the two systems and two cities were led by mighty rulers. Nimrod was the king and priest of Babylon and its system of worship, and Melchizedek, who many agree was likely Shem (a type of the Lord Jesus Christ), was the king-priest in Salem. He worshipped God in the way given by God from the beginning.

There is always an intense conflict between truth and apostasy, and it was no different between Nimrod and Shem. In ancient Babylonish records can be found the death of Nimrod. Some say that he was killed at the orders of a certain king. In an Egyptian record of the Babylonian system, it says that the name of the king who put Nimrod to death was "Sem".



That seems to be much more than coincidence. Shem as the leader of the system of true worship could not tolerate

the apostasy that Nimrod had established in the earth and ordered his execution. A similar judgment will befall the latter-day apostasy:



The story is the same through time; the outcome is the same. Apostasy will eventually be destroyed by the latter-day Shem.

'Babylon' and 'Israel'

The terms 'Babylon' and 'Israel' in scripture refer to much more than just the natural nations of Babylon and Israel. While the purpose of God revolves around the nation of Israel in one sense, it is not entirely true. Because it has to do with a deeper and wider understanding of what true "Israel" is. It must be remembered that from Adam to Isaac, there was no nation of Israel. But there were still faithful men and women who worshipped God in sincerity and truth.

The term 'Israel' can be seen to represent the seed of the woman and for the 2000 or so years before the actual nation of Israel existed, the seed of the woman was very much in existence. And the conflict between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent (the original apostasy) existed.

And again, after the nation of Israel was scattered in AD70 and lost it's identity as a nation, there could not be said to be a nation of Israel, and yet the seed of the woman continued. And the conflict with the seed of the serpent continued.

Israel as a term doesn't just pertain to the nation of Israel but also to the wider application of the seed of the woman through history.



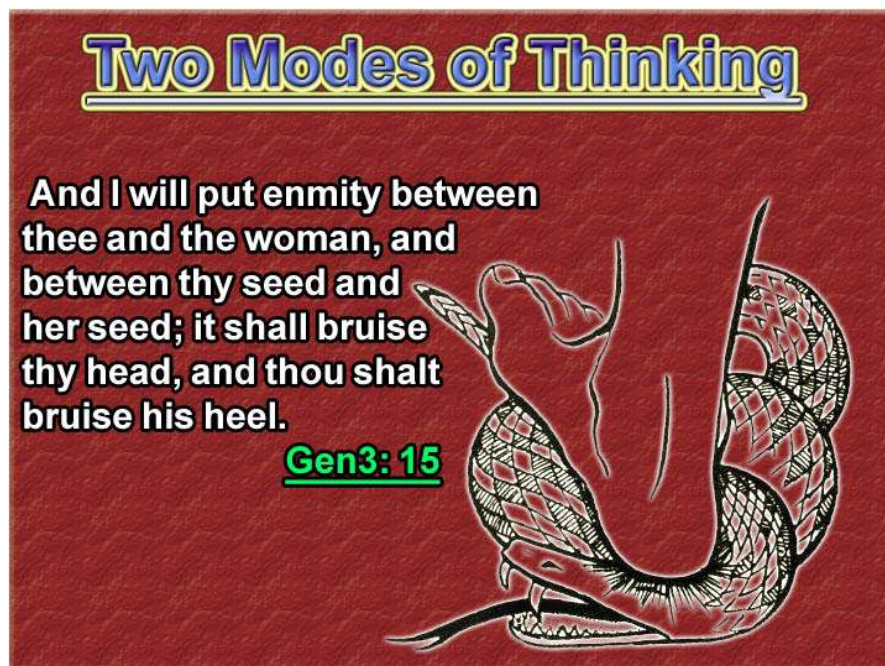
In the time of the Old Testament, this conflict is mainly between a first phase of Babylon (the seed of the serpent), and a first phase of Israel, (the seed of the woman). This

includes the history of the natural nations of Babylon and Israel.

In the New Testament, there is a new and second phase of both Babylon and Israel. The seed of the serpent moves to a new location, but it is still Babylon and is still referred to as Babylon. And the seed of the woman branches out to include Gentiles. These are thought of as “spiritual Israel”. So although the circumstances change over time, the conflict is still between “Babylon” and “Israel”.

God’s purpose was seen in these two phases of the conflict, one of which occurred before the work of Christ, and one after. The time of the changeover between one phase and the next is at the manifestation of the true seed of the woman, the time when Christ enters the scene.

Looking again at Genesis 3:15:



There are two parts to this prophecy. The first, at the time of the first coming of Christ, is “thou shalt bruise his heel”. And the second part, to be fulfilled at the second coming of Christ, is “and he shall bruise thy head”. The complete fulfillment of this prophecy will be the end of the conflict at the second coming of Christ.

Comparison of Daniel & John

There is a very interesting comparison between two prominent prophets that outlines the first and second phases of Babylon and Israel.

The major prophet of the Old Testament whose book reveals the prophetic sequence of God’s purpose through history is Daniel. Think of these facts about Daniel:

**Two Prophets and
Two Phases of Conflict**

<p>Dan 1: 1,21 Dan 1: 1-3</p> <p>Dan 10: 11 Dan 10: 9-10 Dan 7: 15,28 ; 8:27 Dan 10: 19</p>	<p>*Vision as an old man *Banished into exile (by Babylon Phase 1) *Man greatly beloved *Symbolic Death & Resser. *Emotionally Involved *Comforted by Angel</p>	<p>D A N I E L</p>
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Dan 1:1, 21 “In the third year of the reign of
Jehoiakim king of Judah came
Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto

Jerusalem, and besieged it... And Daniel continued [even] unto the first year of king Cyrus.”

Daniel would have been an old man at the end of the visions he received. When the account of Daniel is completed, he is about 85 to 90 years old. In verses 1-6 of Daniel 1 Daniel was banished into exile from the land of Israel by the first phase of Babylon, in this case, natural Babylon. He receives his visions while in exile.

Daniel is described as being greatly beloved:

Dan. 10:11 “And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent...”

He experienced a symbolic death and resurrection in chapter 10, and was emotionally moved by the things prophesied because they involved his people.

Dan. 7:15 “I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of [my] body, and the visions of my head troubled me.”

Dan. 8:27 “And I Daniel fainted, and was sick [certain] days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood [it].”

He was comforted by an angel to be assured that God was with him.

Dan. 10:19 “And said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace [be] unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me.”

Now moving on to the New Testament, who is the major prophet in the New Testament involved with the continuation of the prophetic sequence of God’s purpose through history? John in the book of Revelation.



John was approximately 90 years old or so when he received his visions. He was banished into exile by the Romans, or the second phase of Babylon.

Rev. 1:9 “I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle

that is called Patmos, for the word of God,
and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

He is described in the gospels as the disciple who Jesus loved; so he was also greatly beloved.

John also experiences a symbolic death and resurrection:

Rev. 1:17 “And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:”

He is emotionally affected by the visions he sees:

Rev. 5:4 “And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.”

Rev. 17:6 “And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.”

The word “admiration” is better translated “astonishment”. John certainly didn’t admire this woman. He was astonished at what he saw.

And, like Daniel, John was comforted by an angel, looking at chapter 1 verse 17:

Rev. 1:17 ““And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me,

saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:"

Both the books of Daniel and Revelation are speaking about a conflict. In Daniel, it has more to do with God's people in Israel, nationally-speaking. It is a conflict with Babylon, and although the conflict continues with Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome, it is really all Babylon, all the seed of the serpent, in successive stages. And Daniel's visions extend up until the time of the 4th beast, or Rome.

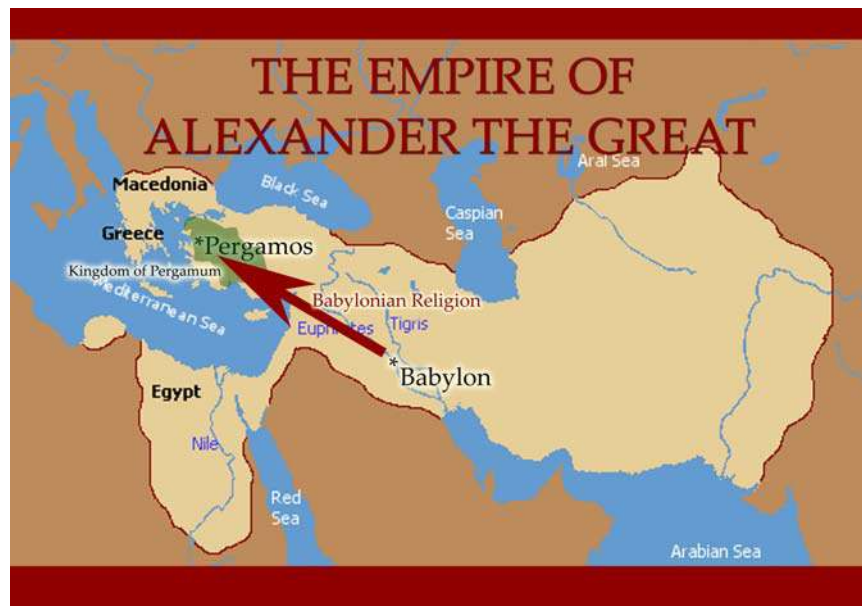
At the time of Revelation, the 4th beast is now in the second phase of Babylon, and John shows the stages of this second phase through history. Revelation outlines the conflict between this second Babylonian phase and the saints, which is the second phase of Israel.

Crossover Period

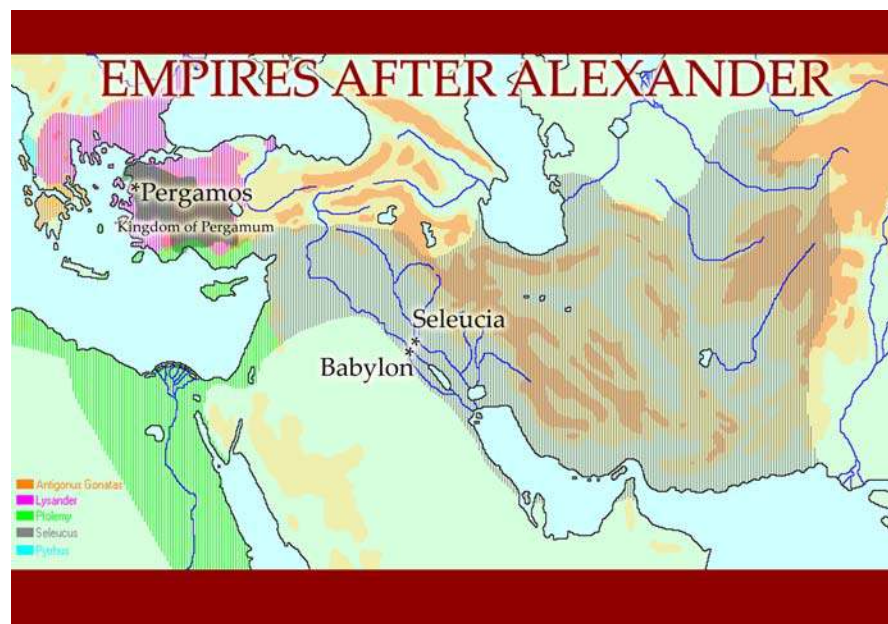


There was actually a period of time when the first phases of Israel and Babylon overlapped with the second phases, so the second phases began before the first phases ended.

In the case of Israel, the ecclesia began about AD30 when Christ died and was resurrected. Here the second phase began. But the first phase of Israel ended when the nation was overthrown in AD70. In this way, the seed of the woman was never broken.



Now, in the case of Babylon, there is a similar situation. When Alexander the Great entered Babylon, the last high priest of Babylon fled with his books and writings to Pergamos, and settled there. It is interesting that in Revelation 2:13, Pergamos is described as "Satan's seat". At this location, the Babylonian religion revived, thus beginning the second phase of Babylon.



After Alexander the Great died, he left his empire to four successors. One of these was Seleucus Nicanor, who became the first king of Syria. About 40 years after the Babylonian religion was brought to Pergamos, Seleucus built a new city called Seleucia, just north of the old city of Babylon. Everyone from Babylon moved there, and the old city fell to ruins. It was at this time that the first Babylonian phase ended.



In Pergamos, the Babylonian religion continued strong for about 200 years. At this time, however, the king of Pergamum had no son to give his kingdom to, and so he gave it to the Roman Empire. The worship involved with the Babylonian religion eventually made its way to Rome itself, with Julius Caesar as the supreme pontiff. The title "Pontifex Maximus" (which literally means the greatest, or highest, bridge-builder) had originally been part of the Babylonian religion, but Caesar took the title for himself and subsequent emperors, as having the highest office in the pagan Roman religion.

Then, emperor Gratian gave up the title in the fourth century AD. At some point after this, it was taken up by the Bishops of Rome. This is how the popes took on the title of the leader of the Babylonian religion.

Conclusion

So hopefully it can be seen how the conflict between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent has always been the same through time. The original apostasy from God's ways became part of Nimrod's system of worship. This system was involved with Babylon of old, and it has been translated to the new Babylon, or Rome. It is the same apostasy, the same rebellion against the things of God.

Later the system of apostasy in its further development just after the time of Christ, through to the present day, will be discussed. This is important because it will help to identify what is important to remain separate from in every way possible way so that there is no danger of being in any way connected with the apostasy.

A Warning for the First Century
[2 Thess 2: Babylon the Great]



Apostasy has always been present throughout history. And while the subject serves as a Biblical framework from which prophecy can be confidently interpreted, conversely, prophecy needs to be studied, and in particular, latter day prophecy, in order to be able to identify and be separate from the apostasy that exists today and will exist at the return of Christ.

The subject of latter day prophecy should be more than a casual interest for all Christadelphians who want to be guided by the "light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn" (2 Pet 1:19). The gentile world lies in "darkness", no doubt, and there should be no contentedness with less "light" than what God has intended is needed to illuminate the path. Therefore, this subject needs most earnest attention. But the problem is, the details are difficult, and

often the voices are conflicting, a common reason for frustration or limited interest in the interpretation of prophecy.

Frustration is often the mother of discovery and even prophets like Daniel experienced such before understanding was given to him (Dan. 10:1-3, 12). There is a process, there is work to be done to unravel prophecy, to understand what God wants known. A disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ can expect frustration but cannot afford to lack interest or commitment. Daniel prayed and applied himself earnestly before his understanding was expanded. It wasn't just something he woke up with the next day. He prayed earnestly. And he studied the prophets, specifically Jeremiah. He studied the scriptures. If this was necessary for Daniel, who was inspired, how much more is required of others?

The greatest threat to Truth is the half lie, not the blatant error. Disciples are far more likely to be drawn from their convictions by beliefs that have some elements of truth rather than by a system of thought that is diametrically opposed to Christadelphian beliefs. It is not often that someone leaves the Christadelphian faith to join something so very opposite. It's usually for something that has an element of truth, which seems attractive because the Bible is not being read, things are not being compared, there is no "proving all things, holding fast that which is good". So religion as a whole will therefore always be a greater attraction to the saints than politics and a false Christianity will always pose a greater threat to believers than will foreign religions. The closer to truth, the greater the power to deceive unwary disciples.

A broad-brush introduction to the prophecy in Zechariah 5 will be undertaken to lay the foundation for 2 Thessalonians 2, being a chapter that speaks of a manifestation of a system that is apostate from God. In verse 1-3 of Zechariah 5,

Zech 5:1-3 “Then I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a flying roll. And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I answered, I see a flying roll; the length thereof [is] twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits. Then said he unto me, This [is] the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth: for every one that stealeth shall be cut off [as] on this side according to it; and every one that sweareth shall be cut off [as] on that side according to it.”

The roll, being 20 cubits by 10 cubits, is the size of the holy place in the tabernacle in the wilderness. Therefore, it's attached to the law in some way. This flying roll was a curse, and it was a mobile curse. It moved to various areas depending on where the judgment of God would be pronounced. There was a problem with Israel, with an apostate system that was growing. There were individuals that had left the truth. God warned them not to attach themselves to other nations because they would be drawn to their false gods. But the leaders of Israel leaned toward foreign nations, and adopted their policies of foreign gods. And the people followed. This is why the responsibility of those speaking God's word is so large, because everything spoken must be according to scripture, to keep the people in the right path.

Zech 5:4 “I will bring it forth, saith the LORD of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name: and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it with the timber thereof and the stones thereof.”

These were the prophets that were saying things that were untrue, swearing falsely in God’s name. And there exists language in verse 4 that reflects back to the law, to Leviticus chapter 14.

Here is the law of leprosy, and what was to be done when leprosy entered into a house. Leprosy is a plague. It is representative of mortality. It is a walking death. And its root is found in sin in the flesh. The instruction of how to rid a house of leprosy in Leviticus 14 includes three inspections to be done by the priest. These three inspections are seen in verses 36, 39, and 44:

Lev. 14:36, 39, 44 “Then the priest shall command that they empty the house, before the priest go [into it] to see the plague, that all that [is] in the house be not made unclean: and afterward the priest shall go in to see the house:... And the priest shall come again the seventh day, and shall look: and, behold, [if] the plague be spread in the walls of the house;... Then the priest shall come and look, and, behold, [if] the plague be spread in the house, it [is] a fretting leprosy in the house: it [is] unclean.”

After the first inspection, there was an opportunity. The house could be cleansed. There were things that were to be done to clean the house, and the priest would re-inspect the house to see if the leprosy was gone. If it was still there, one more chance was given at a third inspection. By then, if the leprosy continued, and was embedded in the house, judgment followed. This judgment on a leprous house is where the language from Zech 5:4 comes from.

Lev 14:45 “And he shall break down the house, the stones of it, and the timber thereof, and all the mortar of the house; and he shall carry [them] forth out of the city into an unclean place.”

This is a principle which carries throughout scripture. Three inspections before judgment. For example, in Genesis 6, speaking of the time just prior to the judgment of the flood, there are actually three inspections where God looked down at the state of the earth at the time, and saw the problems. On the third inspection is when he gave the declaration saying that in 120 years the flood would come. The state of the world was like an unclean house. The apostasy was already moving along.

It's similar to the three-fold proclamation made by John the Baptist and Jesus Christ. There were three proclamations given in the New Testament where the people of Israel were told to clean up their act because they were a leprous house. Upon the third inspection was the judgment, and this judgment is found in Matt 23:37,38.

Matt 23:37, 38 “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, [thou] that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under [her] wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.”

They killed those who were sent to instruct Israel and turn them back from the apostasy. Their leprous house was left unto them desolate. Jesus didn't want that to happen, but it was necessary. He tried to save them, but there were not many that listened to him. This same warning is seen in Zech 5. The nation of Israel had gone so far astray, had not listened to the instruction of God, to all the prophets that were sent, to the point that the curse would be moved, that judgment. He looked upon them three times and now the judgment moved upon them. They would be “consumed with the timber thereof, and the stones thereof”.

Zech 5:5-6 “Then the angel that talked with me went forth, and said unto me, Lift up now thine eyes, and see what [is] this that goeth forth. And I said, What [is] it? And he said, This [is] an ephah that goeth forth. He said moreover, This [is] their resemblance through all the earth.”

What is an ephah? A description is found in Ezekiel, which not only tells us about the ephah, but also about the condition of the rulers that had gone astray and were teaching the wrong things to the people.

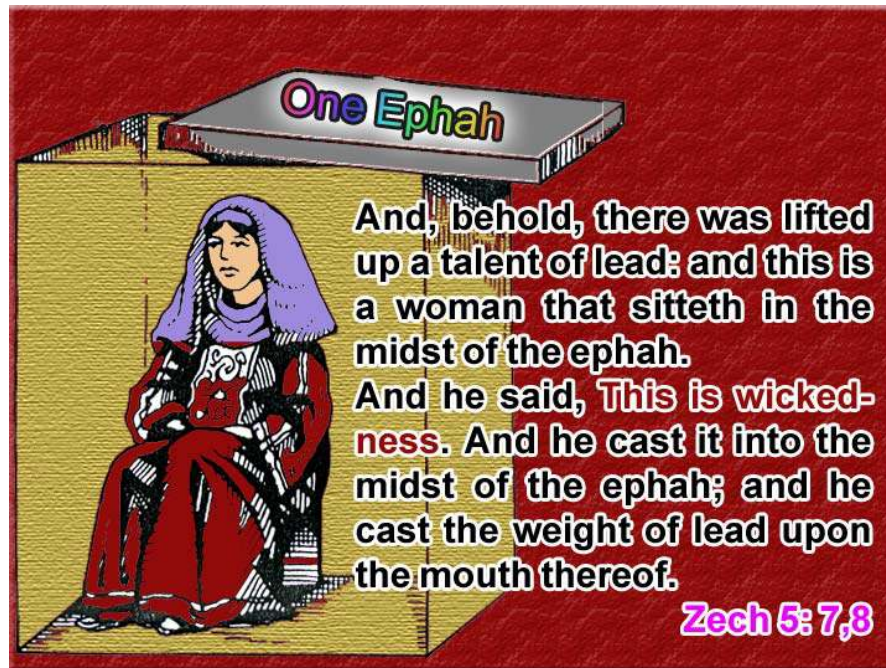
Ezek. 45:9-11 "Thus saith the Lord GOD; Let it suffice you, O princes of Israel: remove violence and spoil, and execute judgment and justice, take away your exactions from my people, saith the Lord GOD. Ye shall have just balances, and a just ephah, and a just bath. The ephah and the bath shall be of one measure, that the bath may contain the tenth part of an homer, and the ephah the tenth part of an homer: the measure thereof shall be after the homer."

The princes of Israel, the leaders of Israel, were oppressing the people. They were exploiting the poor. The commandment was to have just measurements.

What is an ephah? It is a measurement. The difference between an ephah and a bath, is that an ephah is a solid measurement. It was a basket that contained grain for measuring. A bath, on the other hand, is a liquid measurement that contained the same amount of liquid as a ephah contained of solid. A homer is a donkey-load, so an ephah or a bath was $1/10^{\text{th}}$ of a donkey-load. This gives a mental picture of the amount involved.

On a spiritual plane, however, it was a religious measurement. The problem was that they were exacting wrong principles to the people. The symbol of the ephah therefore gets carried to Zech 5, where something other than grain is being measured.

Zech 5:6 indicates that the ephah is their resemblance throughout the earth. This is the commercial aspect where they made business out of religion.



Lead throughout scripture is a symbol of corruption, and there is a talent of lead as a lid, and sitting inside the ephah is a woman. We are told that "this is wickedness". It wasn't the woman by herself (who represents Babylon as will be discussed further) who was wicked. It was the combination of that system sitting in that where they turned religion into commerce. This combination is carried throughout scripture, especially in the New Testament, where Babylon Phase 2 exists. THIS is wickedness, and this word is seen in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2.

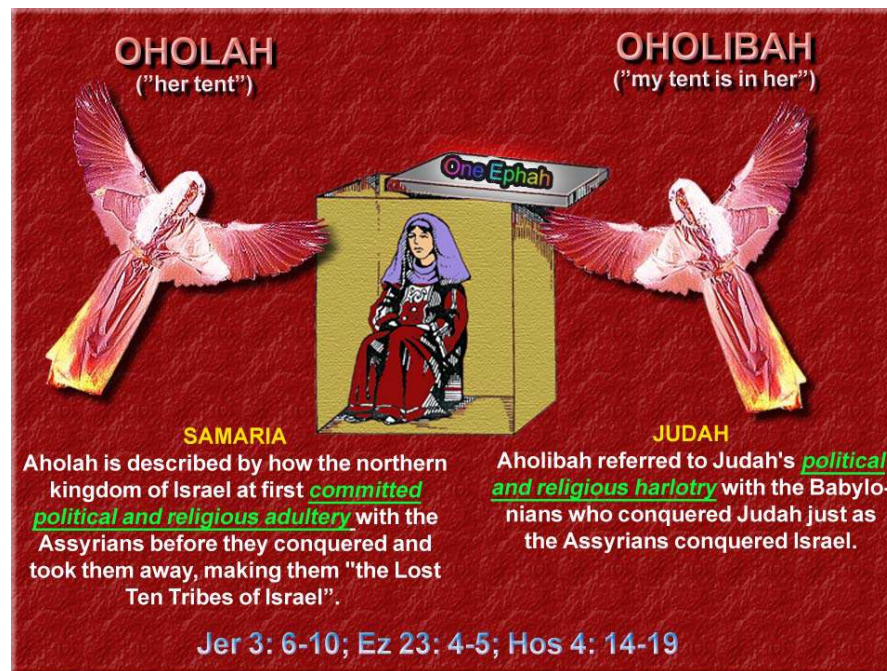
The corrupted weight was sitting on the ephah, holding this woman inside the ephah like a jack-in-the-box. That aspect of Babylon at the time was contained inside the ephah, and slowly over time, the jack-in-the-box arm was being turned. It was contained, but eventually popped out for the world to

see, and be manifest. This containing and manifestation is also seen in 2 Thessalonians 2.

Zech 5:9-11 “Then lifted I up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came out two women, and the wind [was] in their wings; for they had wings like the wings of a stork: and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven. Then said I to the angel that talked with me, Whither do these bear the ephah? And he said unto me, To build it an house in the land of Shinar: and it shall be established, and set there upon her own base.”

Shinar is southern Babylon, so it will be established in the area called Shinar. She will be established there and set upon her own base. The woman in the ephah with the talent of lead on top is contained in this location, but eventually, she will pop out.

The two women are the apostate states of northern and southern Israel. They both went astray, although this happened at different times in scripture.



Three passages in particular lay out the apostasy of the northern and southern tribes of Israel and Judah and how they were likened to two women.

Jer 3:6-10 "The LORD said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen [that] which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot. And I said after she had done all these [things], Turn thou unto me. But she returned not. And her treacherous sister Judah saw [it]. And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also. And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones

and with stocks. And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the LORD.”

In Jeremiah, Israel and Judah were harlots, committing spiritual fornication. They weren't chaste virgins anymore. They had joined the apostasy. Israel was first invaded by Assyria, and God used that as a mechanism, as a refining process, a remedial measurement, hoping that there would be some out of back sliding Israel who would turn back to God. But they returned not to him.

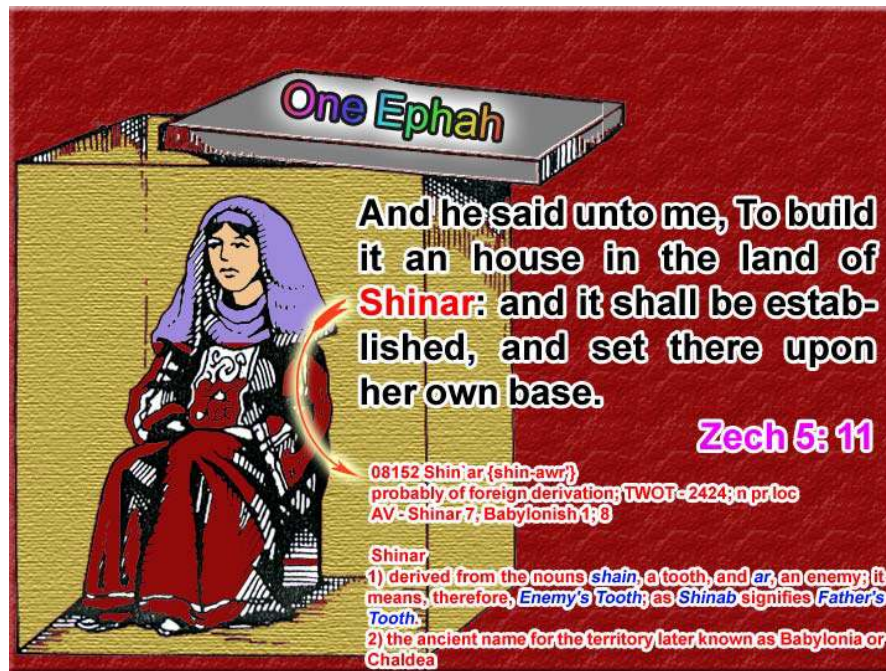
And then the southern two tribes of Judah were invaded later by the Babylonians. They had seen what happened with the Assyrian conquest against the northern tribes, but they did not turn back to God. It was an act, it was feigned; there was an appearance of turning back, but it never actually happened.

Ezek. 23:4-5 “And the names of them [were] Aholah the elder, and Aholibah her sister: and they were mine, and they bare sons and daughters. Thus [were] their names; Samaria [is] Aholah, and Jerusalem Aholibah. And Aholah played the harlot when she was mine; and she doted on her lovers, on the Assyrians [her] neighbours,”

In Ezekiel, it is the same story, but the names of Aholah as Israel and Aholibah as Judah are given.

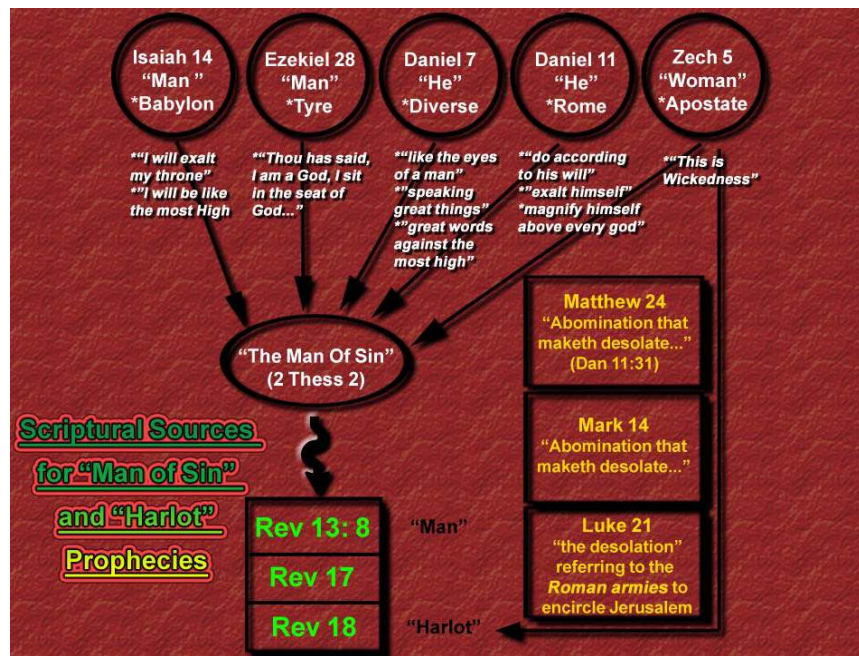
And also in Hosea there is a connection with Zechariah 5, particularly in verse 19 when it speaks of “her wings”.

Hos. 4:14-19 “I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom, nor your spouses when they commit adultery: for themselves are separated with whores, and they sacrifice with harlots: therefore the people [that] doth not understand shall fall. Though thou, Israel, play the harlot, [yet] let not Judah offend; and come not ye unto Gilgal, neither go ye up to Bethaven, nor swear, The LORD liveth. For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer: now the LORD will feed them as a lamb in a large place. Ephraim [is] joined to idols: let him alone. Their drink is sour: they have committed whoredom continually: her rulers [with] shame do love, Give ye. The wind hath bound her up in her wings, and they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices.”



Zechariah 5 has the two women that have gone astray, and they pick up the woman in the ephah and carry her, and carry her to the land of Shinar. This is significant language. “Shinar” means “enemy’s tooth”. The woman in the ephah is moved to the land of the enemy’s tooth, to Shinar, the ancient name of Babylon. In Daniel chapter 7, the 4th beast, which is the Roman beast, is said to have great iron teeth.

There are many different prophecies that are earlier scriptural sources for the man of sin and harlot prophecies later in scripture.



A comparison of the language of 2 Thessalonians 2 with the Septuagint version of Zechariah 5 shows that four times in 2 Thessalonians, the apostle Paul uses the same Greek word to describe the man of sin as is used to describe the wicked woman in the ephah who eventually flees to Babylon or to Shinar.

<u>Zechariah 5 vs. 2 Thessalonians 2</u>	
Zechariah 5	2 Thessalonians 2
"This is their <u>iniquity</u> in all the land" (v.6 RV. mg.)	With all deceivableness of <u>unrighteousness</u> " (v.10)
"A woman that <u>sitteth</u> in the midst of the ephah"	" <u>Sitteth</u> in the temple of God" (v.4)
"He cast her down into the ephah: and he cast the weight of lead upon the mouth thereof" (v.8 RV.)	"that which <u>restraineth</u> (v.6 RV.) "There is one that <u>restraineth now</u> " (v.7 RV.)
"This is <u>wickedness</u> " (v.8 RV.)	"The mystery of <u>iniquity</u> doth already work" (v.7) "Then shall that <u>wicked</u> be revealed (v.8)

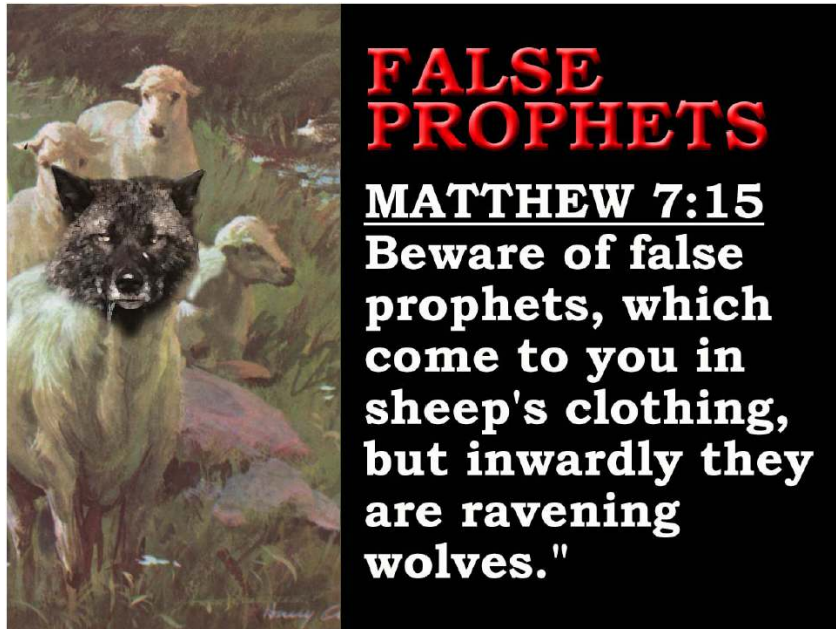
The Septuagint rendering really helps in understanding the connection between the woman in the ephah who now comes over, and Paul explains further exactly what is going to happen, giving a warning to believers to watch out for that system.

2 Thessalonians 2 indicates a problem that was happening to the ecclesia.

2 Thess 2:1-3 “Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and [by] our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for [that day shall not come], except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;”

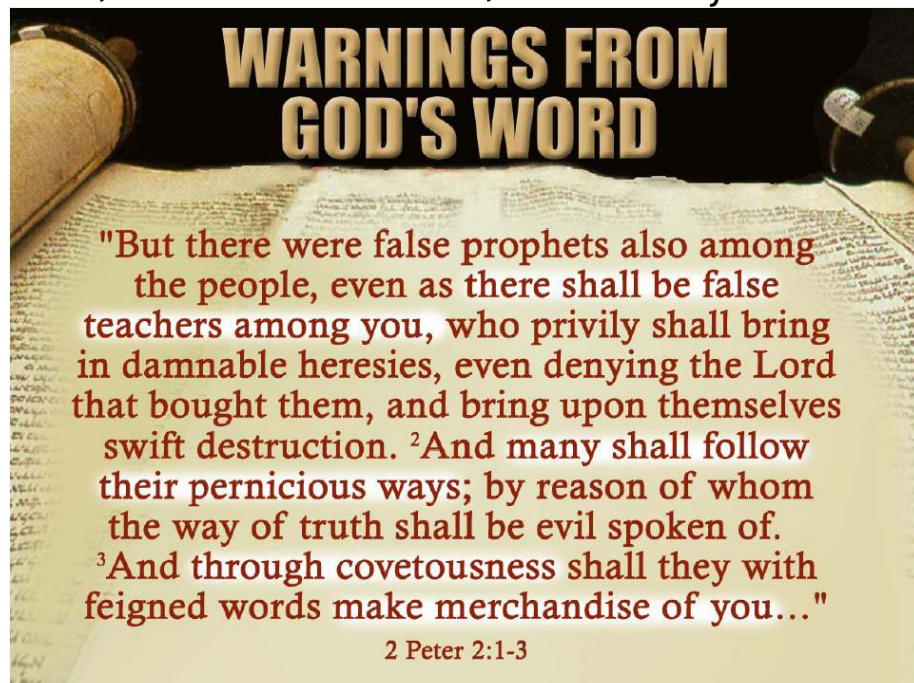
There were letters being sent around as if they were written by Paul, saying that Christ had come. He is explaining here that there would be a falling away first. This is the Greek word “apostasy”. The day of the Lord will not come until that apostasy is here, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.

All through the New Testament there were warnings to the believers not to be fooled.



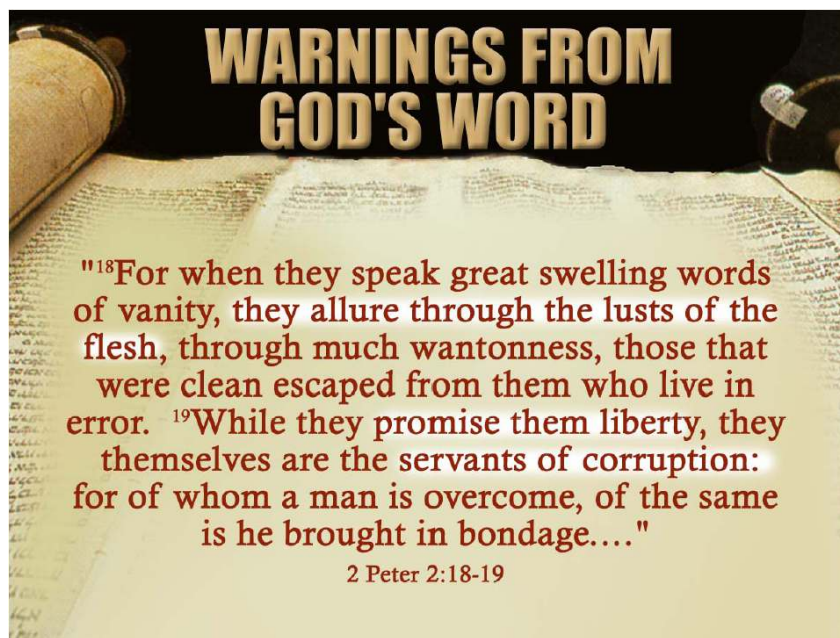
The word "false" is the word "pseudos", lying wonders, falsehood. It is where we get our word "pseudo" for something that is not real, fake. There would be pseudo-prophets with lying wonders.

In 1 Peter 2 there is more information about the false teachers, to beware of them, and to stay clear of them.

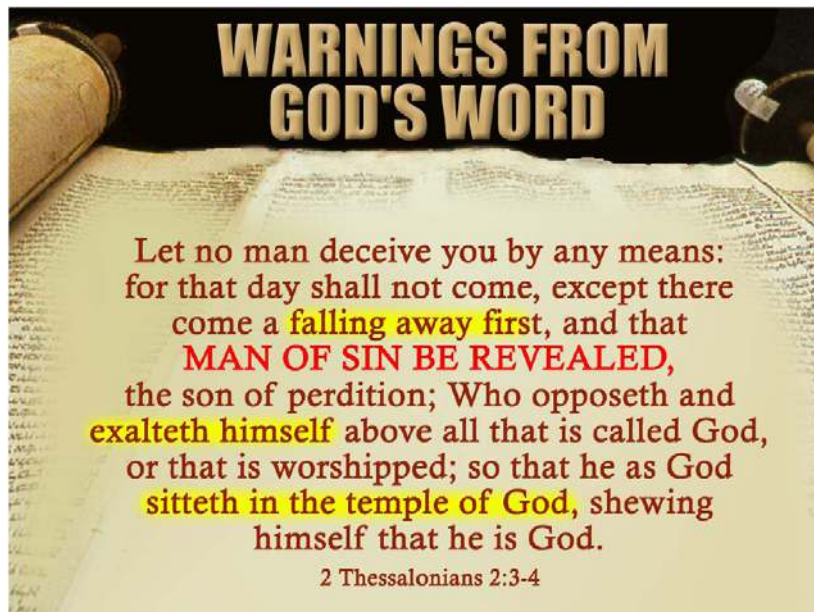


The sad thing about it is that there is a number of people who would follow these false prophets. "Pernicious", where we get the term "son of perdition", means "damnable". Many would follow their damnable, false ways.

The idea of the system is "buying and selling souls". Taking their religious beliefs and everything that goes along with that, and deceiving the people. 2 Peter 2 has more warnings.

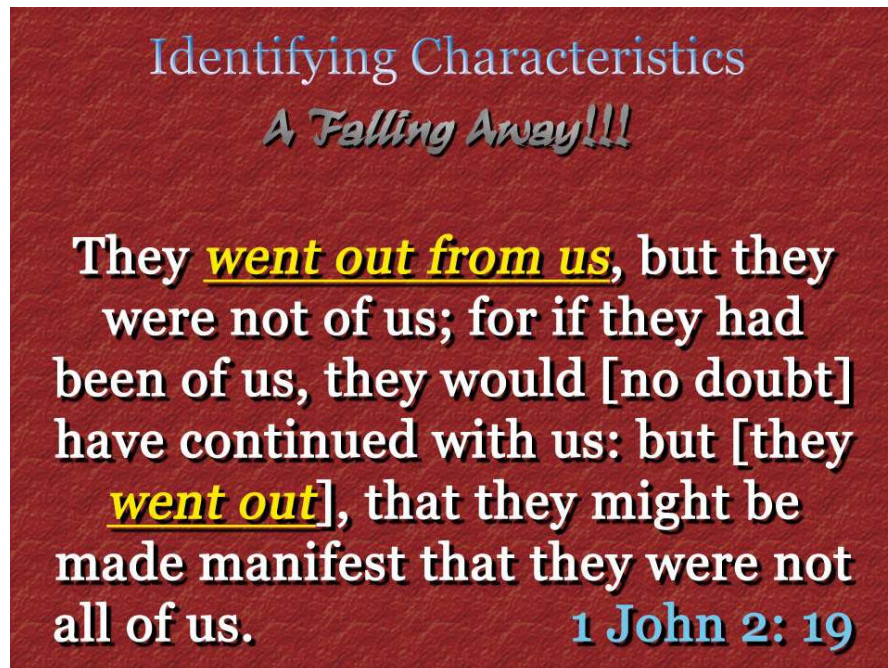


The lust of the flesh indicates the carnal thinking again. Who is going to be allured? "Those that were clean escaped from them who lived in error?" They were in the truth. They were at one time "clean escaped", but now are allured from the carnal thinking from this system.



That is why Paul warns against the deception. The day would not come except there first be that apostasy, that falling away, and THEN the man of sin would be revealed, would be made manifest.

There are some identifying characteristics of this apostasy.



The apostasy was once part of true Christianity.

There is a connection between apostasy and lawlessness, a cause-and-effect. If there is one, it leads to the other.

Apostasy leads to lawlessness, or a state of lawlessness.

Apostasy is simply the falling away, or departing from, God's laws and His way of life. The meaning of lawlessness comes from the Greek "anomia".

APOSTASY & LAWLESSNESS

apostasía

**to fall away or depart from*

**from God's laws and way of life*

lawlessness

meaning of sin in Greek = 'anomia**';*

*'nomos' meaning law and '**a nomia**'*

meaning lawless"

***One who leaves God's laws is living without them;
he/she is "lawless".***

"Nomos" simply means "law", and the Greek preposition "a" means "without", so "anomia" is "without law", or lawless. One who leaves God's laws is living without them. He or she becomes in a state of lawlessness. It is a cause-and-effect.

This aspect is also seen in Isaiah 50:1, in the Septuagint version.

APOSTASY & LAWLESSNESS

“Thus saith the LORD, where is the bill of your mother’s divorcement [apostasion]...Behold, for your iniquities [anomia] have ye sold yourselves:”

Isa 51:1 (Septuagint)

The word “divorcement” in the Greek is “apostasion”, the same as “falling away”. In other words, “Where is the bill of your mother’s apostasy?...for your lawlessness have ye sold yourselves.”

Thinking about how this can work in the ecclesias, a link can be seen with Judas.

APOSTASY & LAWLESSNESS LINK WITH JUDAS

2 Thess 2 speaks of apostasy and the son of perdition

Judas was one who departed or fell away (apostasised) and he was the “son of perdition” (John 17:11)

Judas was part of the ecclesia. He was one of the twelve, and was connected closely with the teachings of Christ himself. In John 17, Judas went out, went out from the truth. He apostasized, and was called the son of perdition. Furthermore, at the breaking of bread, the memorial table, it is said he went out into the darkness. He was with the truth, and he left the truth.

The following is a summary chart of the man of sin, which can be used to identify it with Rome.

THE MAN OF SIN: HIS IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS

How does your list of clues compare with this one?

A) MOVEMENT

1. Apostate - (2:3)
2. Lawless (Sinful) - (2:3)
3. Existed In 1ST Century - (2:7)
4. Was Restrained - (2:6)
5. Later Revealed - (2:8)

B) FOCALIZED IN A MAN


6. Lawless - (2:3)
7. Opposes - (2:4)
8. Exalts Self - (2:4)
9. Has a Seat - (2:4)
10. "In the Temple of God" - (2:4)
11. Proclaims himself "GOD" - (2:4)

C) CONVERTS SEDUCED BY:

12. Satanic Activity - (2:9)
13. Power - (2:9)
14. Pretended Signs - (2:9, RSV)
15. Wonders - (2:9)
16. Belief of Lies - (2:11)
17. Pleasure in Unrighteousness - (2:12)
18. A Strong Delusion from GOD - (2:11)

D) THE END

19. "Son of Perdition" - (2:3)
20. Destroyed by Christ - (2:8)
21. Followers Condemned - (2:12)




We know the falsehood and the apostasy within the Roman church, that's been carried down throughout history, with a number of false apostate beliefs, such as:

- pre-existence of Christ
- trinity
- immortality of the soul
- heaven as the reward of the righteous
- hell as eternal torment
- sprinkling of infants

These doctrines are very foreign to the word of God.

2 Thess 2:4 “Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.”

Some more clues to identify who this apostasized system is include, that it is one who “opposes God”. The council of Trent Council of Trent (1545-1564) placed the Bible on the list of prohibited books & forbade any person to read the Bible without license from a Roman Catholic bishop or inquisitor. It “sitteth”, which is the word “cathedra” in Greek. The Roman Catholic pope speaks “ex cathedra”, meaning “from the seat”. The man of sin “shows himself that he is God”.



Identifying Characteristics
“shewing himself that he is God”

“All the earth is my diocese, and I am the ordinary of all men, having the authority of the King of all kings upon the subject. I am all in all and above all, so that God Himself, and I, the Vicar of God, have but one consistory, and **I am able to do almost all that God can do**. In all things that I list, my will is to stand for reason: for I am able by the law to dispense above the law, and of wrong to make justice in correcting laws and changing them... Wherefore if the things that I do be said not to be done of man, but of God, **what can you make me but God?** Again, if prelates of the Church be called and counted of Constantine for gods, I then, being above all prelates, seems by this reason to be above all Gods. Wherefore, no marvel if it be in my power to **change time and times**: to alter and abrogate laws, to dispense with all things, yea, with the precepts of Christ: for where Christ biddeth Peter put up his sword, and admonishes His disciples not to use any outward force in revenging themselves, do not I, Pope Nicholas, writing to the Bishops of France, exhort them to draw out their material swords?”


Pope Nicholas V, 1455

The phrase “change time and times” is found in Daniel 7:25.

There was a change in law. Jesus Christ said to not fight against opposition, while Pope Nicholas in effect said that he

was above Christ, was above every god, and all aspects of religion, and therefore could command that the sword be taken up.

Verse 4 of 2 Thess 2 continues: "showing himself that he is a god".



Identifying Characteristics
"shewing himself that he is God"

"The pope **takes the place of Jesus Christ on earth**. . . . He is the infallible ruler, the founder of dogmas, the author of and the judge of councils; the universal ruler of truth, the arbiter, the judge of all, being judged by no one, **God himself on earth**."

The New Catechism (under Pope John Paul II), under the section of the pope.

2 Thess 2:6,7 "And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth [will let], until he be taken out of the way."

The pagan form of government in Rome which was in power at the time this epistle was written prevented apostate Christianity from being in the forefront. But there was a time coming when it would be revealed. And it would be already at work; it just wasn't made manifest yet.

The Roman Catholic catechism is full of this word “mystery” in verse 7. No other religion uses the term “mystery” more than this so-called “Christian” organization.

In an online search of the catechism, 183 entries are found with the word “mystery”.


Identifying Characteristics “Mystery”

Result	Search Result - Paragraph #	Snippet	Progress
1	CCC Search Result - Paragraph # 234 (661 bytes)	The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life. It is the mystery of God in himself. It is therefore the source of all the	94%
2	CCC Search Result - Paragraph # 2558 (666 bytes)	8 "Great is the mystery of the faith!" The Church professes this mystery in the Apostles' Creed (Part One) and celebrates it in the sacramental liturgy (Part Two).	94%
3	CCC Search Result - Paragraph # 261 (192 bytes)	The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of the Christian faith and of Christian life. God alone can make it known to us by revealing himself	94%
4	CCC Search Result - Paragraph # 1066 (662 bytes)	6 In the Symbol of the faith the Church confesses the mystery of the Holy Trinity and of the plan of God's "good pleasure" for all creation: the Father accomplishes	94%
5	CCC Search Result - Paragraph # 1068 (473 bytes)	8 It is this mystery of Christ that the Church proclaims and celebrates in her liturgy so that the faithful may live from it and bear witness to it in the world.	94%
6	CCC Search Result - Paragraph # 1085 (963 bytes)	5 In the liturgy of the Church, it is principally his own Paschal mystery that Christ signifies and makes present. During his earthly life Jesus announced his Paschal	94%
7	CCC Search Result - Paragraph # 1037 (477 bytes)	The Trinity is a mystery of faith in the strict sense, one of the "mysteries that are hidden in God, which can never be known unless they are revealed by God". To	94%
8	CCC Search Result - Paragraph # 772 (380 bytes)	2 It is in the Church that Christ fulfills and reveals his own mystery as the purpose of God's plan: "to unite all things in him." St. Paul calls the nuptial union	94%
9	CCC Search Result - Paragraph # 1027 (371 bytes)	7 This mystery of blessed communion with God and all who are in Christ is beyond all understanding and description. Scripture speaks of it in images: life, light,	93%
10	CCC Search Result - Paragraph # 1174 (791 bytes)	4 The mystery of Christ, his Incarnation and Passover, which we celebrate in the Eucharist especially at the Sunday assembly,	93%

<http://www.scborromeo.org>

2 Thess 2:8 “And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:”

The “lawless one” would then be revealed.




Identifying Characteristics
"that wicked", or "the lawless one"

"Innocent III laid down as a maxim that out of the plenitude of his power he might lawfully dispense with the law"

(*"The Middle Ages", Henry Hallam, Vol. II, Page 209*)
 Beginning of 13th Century, A.D.

John Thomas, in Eureka, quotes Paul II from 1463 AD:



Identifying Characteristics
"that wicked", or "the lawless one"

Paul II: "Thou bring us before the Judges? Wouldst thou know, that all laws are placed in the repository of our breast?... I am Pontiff: and upon the pleasure of my mind it depends both to rescind, and approve the acts of others."

(*"Eureka, an exposition of the Apocalypse", J. Thomas, Volume II, Page 618*) 1463 A.D.

According to the Roman Catholic popes, the law is at their disposal, to do with as they please.

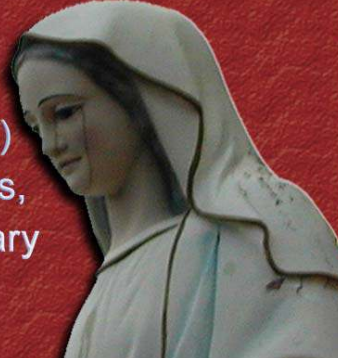
When did the “revealing” of verse 8 take place? In 312-313AD, Constantine liberated the so-called Christian church from persecution by pagan Rome. And then later, this apostate Christianity was given political power. So it was first liberated, then given political power. The book of Revelation goes through this manifestation, revealing how this system would gather followers until its destruction when Christ returns.

2 Thess 2:9 “[Even him], whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,”

There is a list of power and signs and lying wonders in the Roman Catholic church.

Identifying Characteristics
“with all power and signs and lying wonders”

- * Eucharist: Transubstantiation
- * Confession of sins to a priest
- * Extreme unction
- * Plenary indulgences
- * Trinity
- * Exorcisms (casting out devils)
- * Healing waters, crying statues, healing by relics, images of Mary or Jesus
- * Etc....



Transubstantiation

The Council of Trent declared:

“Because Christ our Redeemer said that it was truly his body that he was offering under the species of bread, it has always been the conviction of the Church of God, and this holy Council now declares again, that by the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood. This change the holy Catholic Church has fittingly and properly called transubstantiation.”

In other words, the Roman Catholic church teaches that once an ordained priest blesses the bread of the Lord's Supper, it is transformed into the actual flesh of Christ, and when he blesses the wine, it is transformed into the actual blood of Christ.

Confession

The Roman Catholic Church bases their practice of confession to a priest on Catholic tradition - and point to the Bible passage in which Jesus tells his disciples (and His church) that whatever they shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatever they shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven (Matthew 16:19; 18:18). However, confession of sin is nowhere mentioned in that passage. The concept of confession of sin to a priest is nowhere taught in Scripture. They teach that we do not need to go through a mediator; they are the mediator and one can do what one wants as long as they confess to a priest. This is another

great lying wonder, the fact that one would go to a priest, rather than God, to have sins forgiven.

Extreme Unction

Extreme unction is the Roman Catholic sacrament of anointing of the sick. It is performed on a seriously ill person for spiritual and physical strength or upon one close to death as preparation for heaven. The priest anoints the sick person with oil and prays over them. When combined with confession and the Eucharist, it is called the last rites. At one time it was reserved for those extremely ill and thought close to death.

The Roman Catholic Church states that the biblical basis for the sacrament is the following passage: "Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" (James 5:13-16).

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that... "Sacraments are outward signs of inward grace, instituted by Christ for our sanctification" (taken from the Catholic Encyclopedia. In order to qualify as a sacrament, the Roman Catholic Church states that it must meet the following three criteria: "a) the external, that is a sensibly perceptibly sign of sanctifying grace: b) the conferring of sanctifying grace: c) the institution by God or, more accurately, by the God-Man Jesus Christ." Thus, sacraments

are not merely a symbol, but are believed to actually confer sanctifying grace upon the recipient.

Plenary indulgences

The Roman Catholic Church established a doctrine many centuries ago claiming that a person must undergo purgatorial discipline after death as a necessary stage of justification and sanctification for eternal life in heaven. They professed that it is in purgatory the soul/spirit is prepared over a period of time to be purified for the vision of God.

When a Catholic begins doubting their salvation or feeling guilty about their sinning they simply meet with a priest in private confession, contribute the dollar amount he assesses based upon the type, level, and/or degree of the sin[s], and then the priest prays to God on the person's behalf which always results in meritorious forgiveness and a full pardon. Throughout life a Catholic can continue to request these sessions as many times as they deem necessary making sure they have more than enough merits to be saved for eternal life.


The Roman Catholic Church teaches that this sacrament is made possible because God has treasures stored up in heaven called merits, in a "Treasury of Merits". Merits consist of the grace accumulated by Christ's sacrifice and the meritorious deeds of the old saints in heaven. They claim God charges every person a certain amount of "merits" they will need to earn during their lifetime to either be exempt from purgatory after they die or to work their way out of purgatory. Merits are earned by Catholics either working for the Lord in service, through purchase, or by a combination of both. But the objective is to have more merits than demerits before death so eternal life in heaven is possible.

Exorcism – Casting out of devils (doctrines of devils – 1 Tim. 4:1)

Catholic World News - Jan. 1999
Vatican Releases New Rite for Exorcism

VATICAN (CWNews.com) - The Devil exists. That unpopular reality is brought into sharp focus by the promulgation of a new rite of exorcism for the Catholic Church.

[A document on exorcism], approved by Pope John Paul II on October 1, 1998, was formally released by the Vatican on January 26, [1999]. The document sets out a new and precise liturgical form for the rite of exorcism.



This new Vatican document clearly recognizes both the existence of the Devil and the reality of diabolical possession...

The new ritual for exorcism replaces one which was promulgated as part of the Roman Ritual of 1614.

2 Thess 2:11 “And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:”

What does this mean? Does that mean that God causes them to be deluded?

Identifying Characteristics

"God shall send them strong delusion"

James Macknight (18th Cent. minister of Edinburgh) has observed on biblical idioms (figures of speech):

"Active verbs were used by the Hebrews to express, not the doing, but the permission of the thing which the agent is said to do" (*Apostolical Epistles, Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1954, p. 29*).

God is said to actively do that which, in reality, he merely allows in human beings – to whom he has granted freedom of will.

Pharaoh:

"I will harden his heart..." (*Ex. 4:21*)

BUT he hardened his own heart (*Ex. 8:15*)

God made demands upon the ruler that he resisted, and, exercising his own stubborn will (*cf. 7:14*), he refused to obey. God permitted it, i.e., did not overrule the king's power of choice, thus, in a figurative sense, the Lord was said to be the cause.

In Jeremiah: "Lord God, surely you have deceived this people" (*Jer. 4:10*).

The people were determined to follow lying ways; God let them proceed. Sometimes it is the only way people can learn.

"So I let them go after the stubbornness of their heart, that they might walk in their own counsels" (*Psa. 81:12*).

The phrase "believe a lie" from verse 11 should be "believe the lie", there is a definite article. THE lie is the serpent's lie – "ye shall not surely die".

Ultimately, there are a few that "come out of her, my people", that see what the scriptures have laid down, to identify that system and to stay separate from it.

Summary:

1. *The main duty of the ecclesial presbyters was to feed the ecclesia with the word.*
2. *False leaders would arise who would abuse their office and neglect their duty for lust of power and money.*
3. *These "false apostles" would arise from both within the ecclesia and without*
4. *They would lead the ecclesia astray by teaching false doctrine.*
5. *This "falling away" would climax with the revealing of the "man of sin"*

A comparison between 2 Thess 2 and the Revelation continues to show how the man of sin is identified with Babylon the Great:

2 Thessalonians 2	Revelation
v.3 "Man of sin"	Rev 12:5 "a <u>man</u> child" Rev 13: 18 "number of a <u>man</u> "
v.3 "revealed [apocalypsis]"; (also v.5,8)	Rev 1:1 "the revelation of Jesus Christ" [...concerning the development of the beast system especially]
v.3 "the son of <u>perdition</u> "	Rev 17:11 [the beast] "...that goeth into perdition" *only other reference is (Jn.17:12) "the son of perdition" referring to Judas who gave the pretence of belonging to Christ's faithful!
v.7 "mystery"	Rev 17:5 "Mystery, Babylon the Great"
v.9 "power [dunamis]"	Rev 13:2 "the dragon gave him his power"
v.9 "signs [semeion]"	Rev 13:13 [earth beast]: "...that doeth great wonders"
v.9 "working of satan"	Rev 12:9 "that old serpent...satan"
v.10 "deceivableness"	Rev 13:14 [earth beast]: "deceiveth them that dwell on the earth"
v.11 "lie" (cp. "lying wonders". v.9)	Rev 21:27 "neither whatsoever maketh a lie"
v.12 "damned"	Rev 19:2 "...for he hath judged[damned]the great whore"

Finally:

2 Thess 2:12 "That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

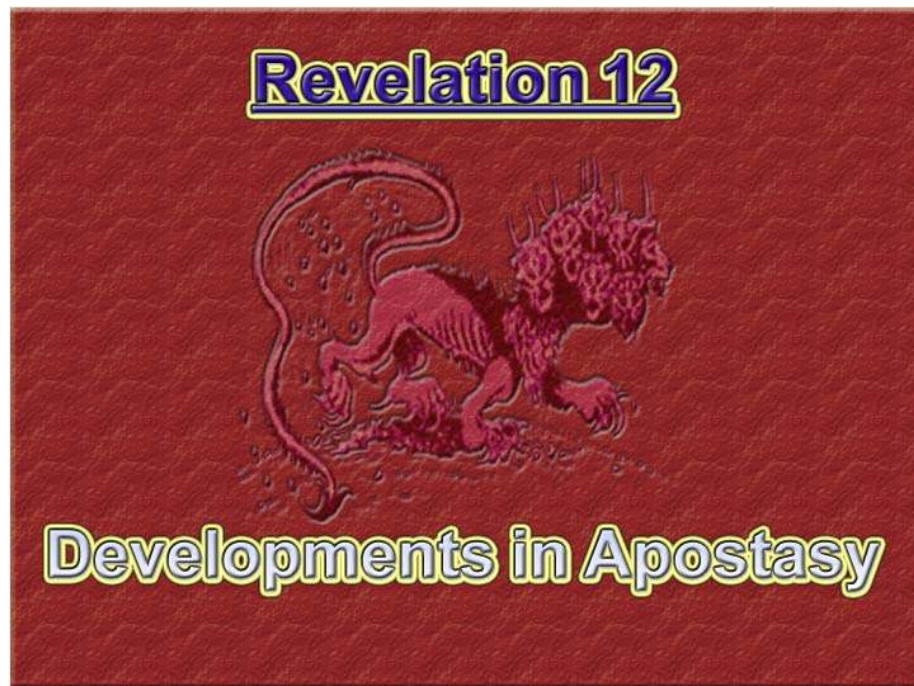
This end of this system is that it will be condemned.

Conclusion

Many Christadelphians would have no problem understanding and accepting that the Roman Catholic church today is an apostate system of worship. However, care must be taken that there is no association with it and its practices in any way. Many other religions that used to be separate from Catholicism [that is where the word "Protestant" came into being, are now becoming more and more associated with it.

The greatest threat from apostasy is the subtle errors that over time can slowly become assimilated into one's beliefs, if no guard is taken against them. Apostasy does not only include false religions, but any teaching that strays from the Truth.

Revelation 12



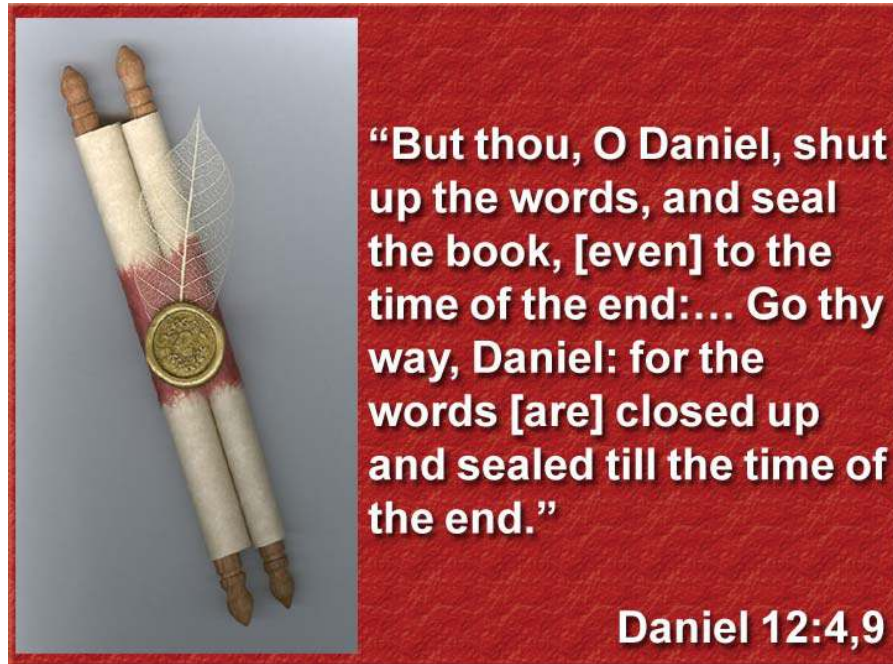
Previously the origins of apostasy in the Old Testament was discussed, as well as the form the apostasy has taken on since the time of Christ and the warning signs to help in identifying it. Now, a more specific look will be taken at how the current-day apostasy formed from the original ecclesias, how the Truth was mixed with error, and what has become of that system today.

The purpose of the book of Revelation will first help us in our study.

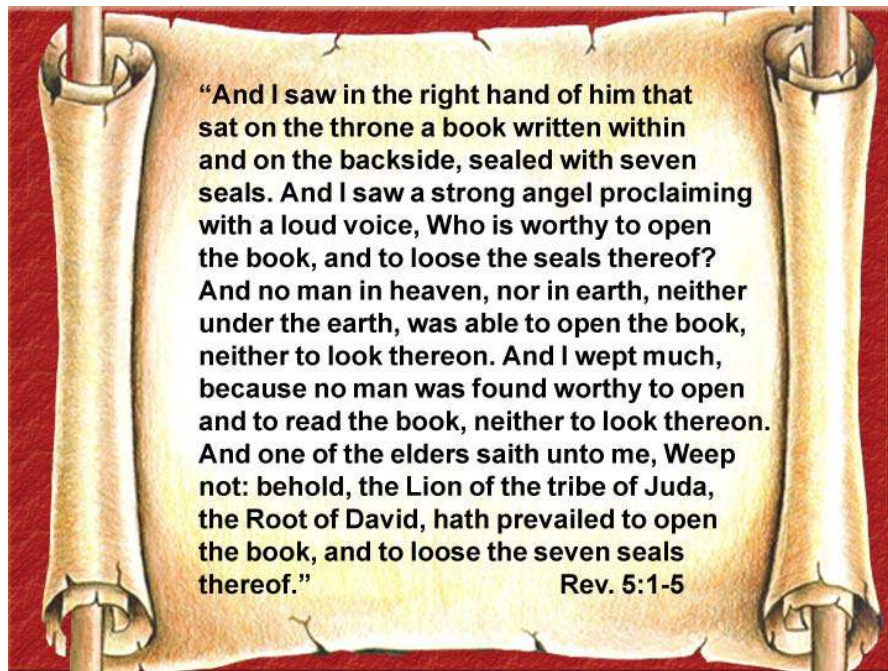
Back in the book of Daniel, the prophet was given visions of the major world kingdoms that were yet to arise. In chapter 7 these kingdoms were represented as four beasts, with the last beast, or Roman empire, to be “dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly” [v7]. Daniel then sees the

thrones of these kingdoms cast down, and Christ and the saints given power and dominion over the earth.

But Daniel was not given any information about how everything would be accomplished. He was instead told:



The Revelation, on the other hand, is just what its name means. It is a “revealing” of the things which were sealed at the time of Daniel.



The things which had been sealed in the time of Daniel, concerning the Beast system and the Little Horn of the Goat in chapter 8, were now unsealed by the Lord Jesus Christ. The Revelation was given to provide information to the servants of God about the times, seasons and signs which had previously been kept hidden.

Rev. 1:1 "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass;"

It was given to John by Jesus Christ so that his servants would be able to understand the things which would subsequently occur on the world stage. It must be studied, therefore, in order to avoid being surprised the things which have yet to occur.

It is important to first realize when studying Revelation that the book contains signs and symbols.

To Rightly Discern the Signs of the Times

Olivet prophecy-Lk 21:25 "there shall be **signs** in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars...."

vs 28 - "when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh"

WHAT THINGS?

4592 semeion {say-mi'-on}

AV - sign 50, miracle 23, wonder 3, token 1; 77

Rev 1:1 "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants **things** which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and **signified** it by his angel unto his servant John:

Rev 12:1 "And there appeared a great **wonder(sign)** in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun..."

:3 "And there appeared another **wonder(sign)** in heaven... a great red dragon"

Rev 13:3 "And he(the earth-beast) doeth great **wonders(signs)**"

:14 "And he deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by ... those **miracles(signs)**"

Rev 15:1 "And I saw another **sign** in heaven...seven angels having the seven last plagues"

Rev 16:14 "For they are the spirits of devils, working **miracles(signs)**"- gathering the nations to Armageddon.

Rev 19:20 "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought **miracles(signs)**." This is after Christ's return.

The Olivet prophecy found in Luke 21:25 states that "there shall be **signs** in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars...."

- vs 28 - "when **these things** begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh"

What **things** was Christ referring to here? What **signs**?

The very first verse of the Revelation gives us the answer:

Rev. 1:1 "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and **signified** it by his angel unto his servant John:"

"Signified" is the verb from the noun "Signs". What are the signs(or symbols) and what are their significance?

4592 semeion {say-mi'-on}

AV - sign 50, miracle 23, wonder 3, token 1; 77

The signs show that these are the days of the 7th seal, the sounding of the 7th trumpet, and the 6th vial. These are the days of the end. This is at the end of "the times of the Gentiles." The time is nearly up[from Adam to Abraham- 2000 years, from Abraham to Christ- 2000 years, from Christ to the kingdom- 2000 years]. Six days of God's work are nearly complete; the last day; the Millennium is almost here. If there was ever a generation that should know the significance of the signs and symbols of Revelation, it is this one.

Turning to revelation the same word "sign" that Jesus used in his warning in the Olivet prophecy, is used 7 times in his final Revelation to Bible believers:

Rev 12:1,3 "And there appeared a great wonder(sign) in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun...And there appeared another wonder(sign) in heaven... a great red dragon"

Rev 13:3,14 "And he(the earth-beast) doeth great wonders(signs)...And he deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by ... those miracles(signs)"

Rev 15:1 "And I saw another sign in heaven...seven angels having the seven last plagues"

Rev 16:14 "For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles(signs)"- gathering the nations to Armageddon.

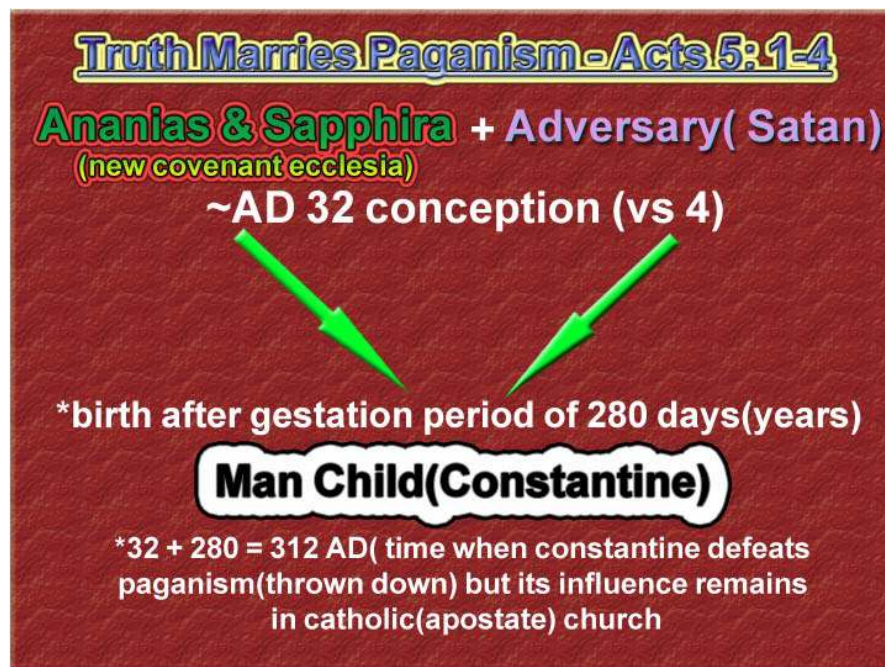
Rev 19:20 "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles(signs)."
This is after Christ's return.

Do we know the significance of:

The sign of the woman? The sign of the great red dragon?
The sign of the beast of the earth? The sign of the miracles
this beast works? The sign of the 7 angels with 7 plagues?
The sign of the spirits of devils at work in this day and age?
These are the signs that Jesus left in order that his
servants might know the things which must shortly come to
pass.

Keeping this in thought, the apostasy will again be looked at
from the time of the New Testament.

In the New Testament, the very first mention of an apostasy,
or rebellion against God in the early ecclesia is found in Acts
5, verses 1 to 4.



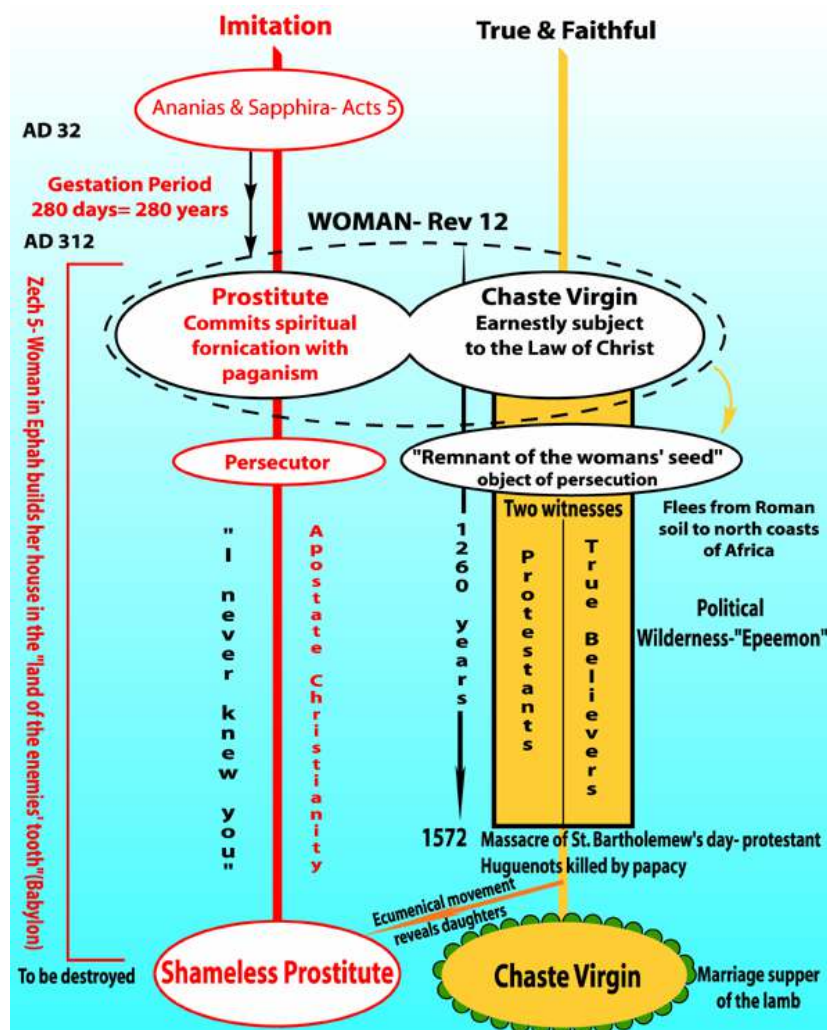
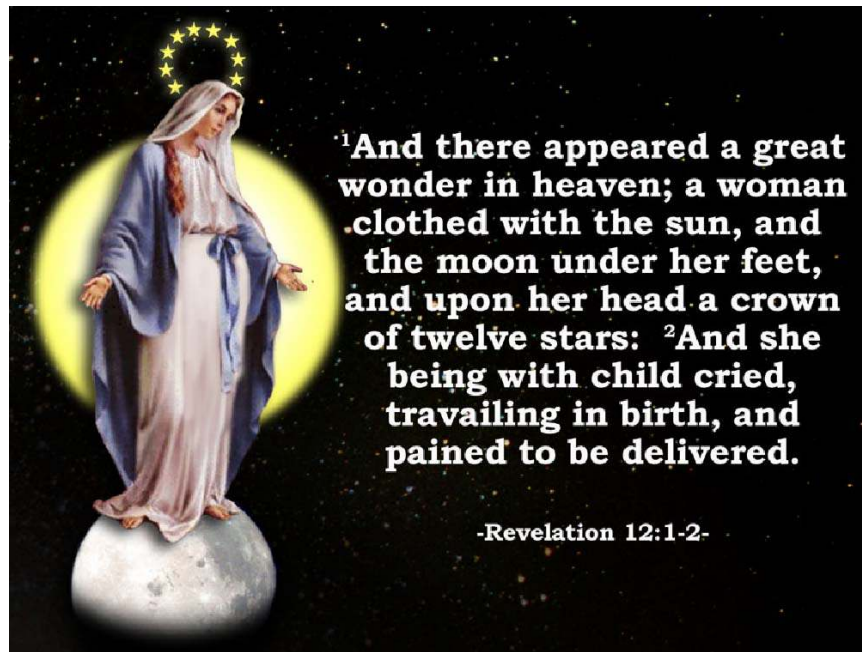
Acts 5:1-4 “But a certain man named Ananias, with
Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, And kept
back *part* of the price, his wife also being privy
to it , and brought a certain part, and laid *it* at

the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God."

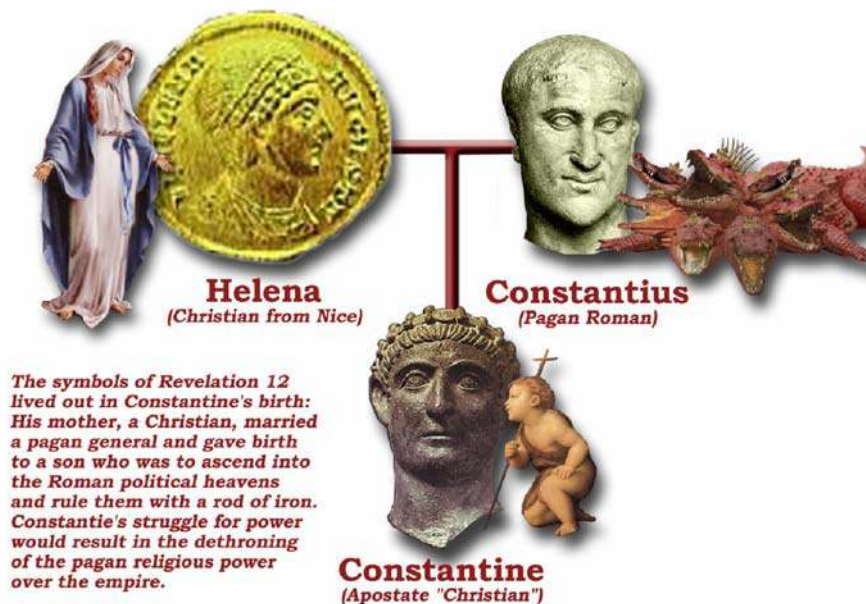
The deception by Ananias and Sapphira, is the first sin recorded of the new covenant ecclesia. In verse 3 is the deceiving of a satan. In verse 4 there is a conception... "why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart?".

A pregnancy of sorts resulted from the sin of Ananias and Sapphira, when they allowed wrong ideas to conceive in their hearts. This conception, occurring around AD32, led to a birth after a gestation period of 280 days (which is the natural human gestation period), or 280 years on the basis of the day-for-a-year principle. Taking AD32 and adding 280 years to it, equals 312AD, which is the time of Revelation 12 when Constantine arrived on the scene to overthrow paganism.

Looking at the symbolism of Revelation 12, an introduction is made to a pregnant woman.



The pregnancy, beginning with the sin of Ananias and Sapphira, has culminated with the birth of a man-child. While the true ecclesia is the “chaste virgin” espoused to Christ, this pregnancy is instead the apostate church. The Roman Emperor Constantine was this man-child, the result of the true church becoming impregnated with falsehood. In fact, his mother was Christian and his father was a pagan.

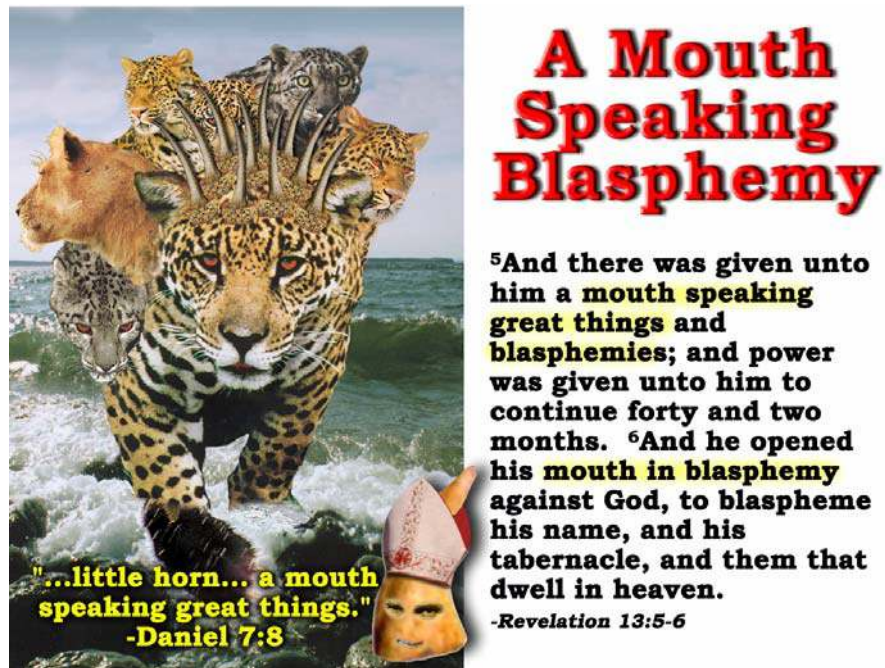


At the time of Revelation 12, which was the time of the 6th seal in Revelation 6:12, Constantine as the man-child defeated paganism and set up Christianity as the official Roman religion. But as history will show, pagan influences remained in the Catholic apostate church, building upon the apostasy which conceived with Ananias and Sapphira.

The apostasy had always been present, but it had not yet been fully manifest because in 2 Thessalonians 2, we read that **“the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth [will let], until he be taken out of the way.”** It was the pagan government which restrained the apostasy from

being fully manifested until it was overthrown by Constantine. But at this time, the lead cover was taken off the ephah of Zechariah 5, and the apostasy was free to develop unhindered.

As this system developed over time, it is said to “speak blasphemies”:



Rev. 13:5-7 “And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty *and* two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.”

The Old Testament contains an interesting parallel to the idea of truth marrying paganism to produce offspring which blasphemes God and wars against the true sons of God.



Lev 24:10,11 "And the son of an Israelitish woman, whose father *was* an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel: and this son of the Israelitish *woman* and a man of Israel *strove* together in the camp; And the Israelitish woman's son blasphemed the name *of the LORD*, and cursed. And they brought him unto Moses: (and his mother's name *was* Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan:)"

The fact that this blasphemer was the son of an Israelitish woman is repeated over and over for emphasis. Twice he is called the "Son of an Israelitish woman" and once the "Israelitish woman's son". His father was an Egyptian. In

this case, Truth married paganism, and this man strove with a man of Israel, a type of the saints of spiritual Israel.

Where else in scripture is there a woman, a serpent, and the birth of a child? In Genesis 3 and 4.



Again, there is a woman [Eve], a serpent [a similar creature to a dragon], and a man-child [Cain].

Eve is beguiled and deceived by the serpent in Genesis 3.
Compare 2 Cor 11:1-4:

2 Cor 11:1-4 "Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me. For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity

that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.”

In verse 2, there is a chaste virgin, who in verse 3 is beguiled by a serpent and in verse 4 preaches another Jesus. Here is the apostasy, described in verses 13 and 14 as wolves in sheep’s clothing. The Truth married paganism and in Revelation 12 the Roman church resulted from the chaste virgin [which is used in scripture as a symbol of the true ecclesia] marrying paganism. Also here is the serpent equated with the dragon of Revelation 12.

How about the man-child, who equals Cain in Genesis?

Gen. 4:1 “And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she ***conceived***, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.”

The literal Hebrew says “I have gotten the man Yahweh”. Eve was waiting for the promised seed (saviour), promised in Genesis 3:15, but Cain turned out to be the seed of the serpent who kills Abel. He ***strives*** with his brother, like the blaspheming son of the Israelitish woman in Leviticus strove with his Israelitish “brother”.

“In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth



not his brother. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, [who] was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.”

1 John 3:10-12

There is a lesson here as well in detecting those who are apostasizing (i.e. straying from the truth). Those in the ***process*** of departing are often “slaying” their brothers and sisters with their blasphemous words.

Cain first began the persecution of the saints by killing his brother, Abel, whose works were called righteous by God.

In Revelation 13, the man-child has changed in form and is now represented as a beast, who blasphemes God.

There is a connection here with Nebuchadnezzar:



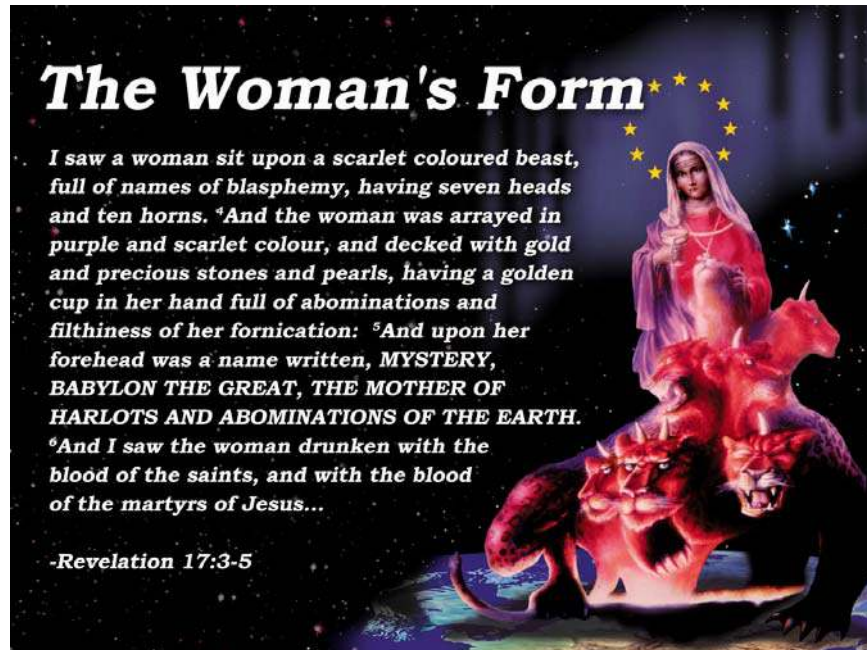
What happened to Nebuchadnezzar? He turned into a beast.

Dan 4:32,33 “And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling *shall be* with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' *feathers* , and his nails like birds' *claws* .”

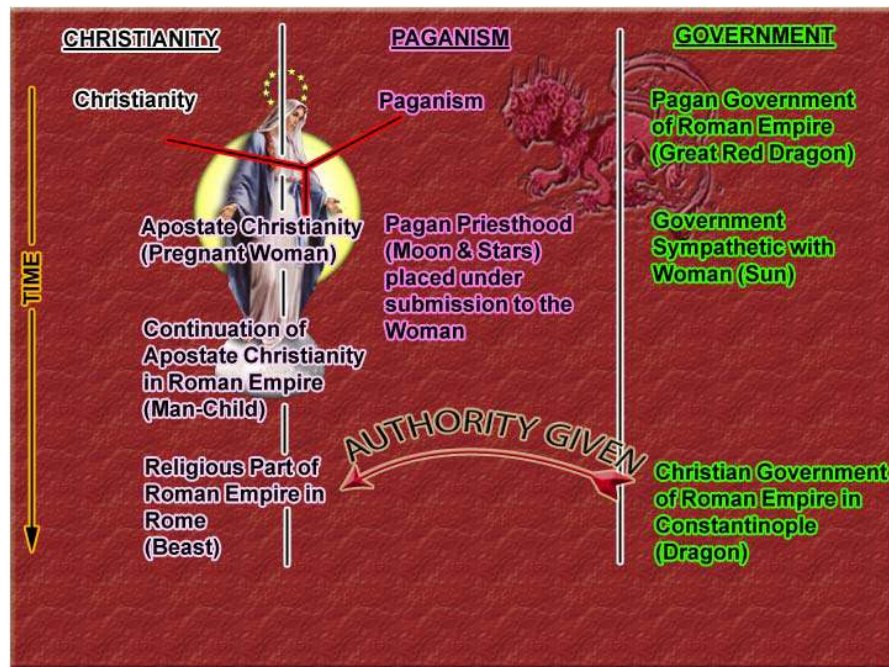
So therefore there exists this man child from Revelation 12 having turned into a beast. Although his mother is

Israelitish in nature (as in the parallel with Leviticus), he also has pagan roots (as with the Egyptian father).

Continuing through to Revelation 17, the woman, a harlot by this time, is now riding the beast.



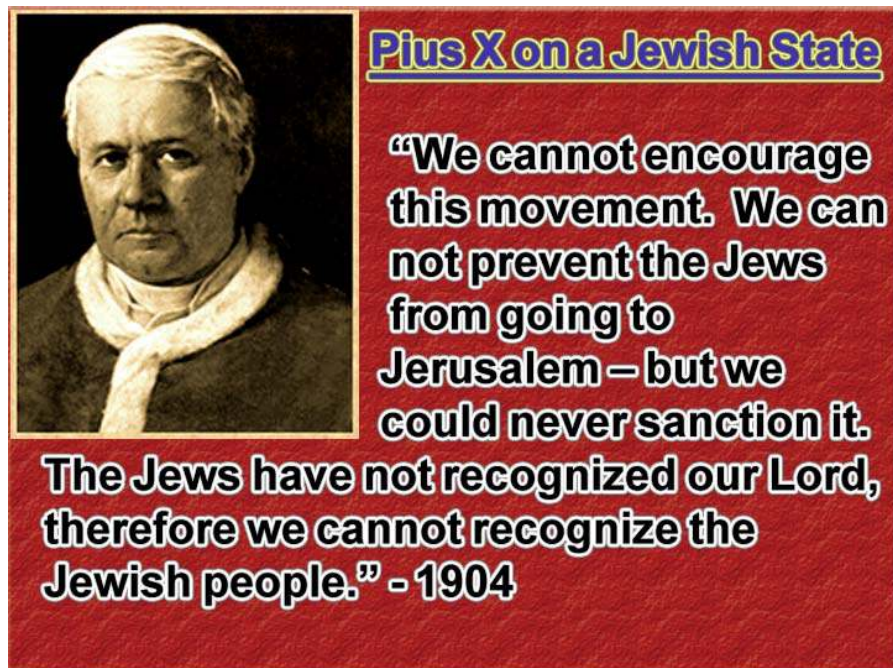
The apostate church, the woman, is now FULL of names of blasphemy. The apostasy has fully developed by this time and is in complete control of the beast governmental system. She “rides the Beast”, and therefore is in control at the time of the end.



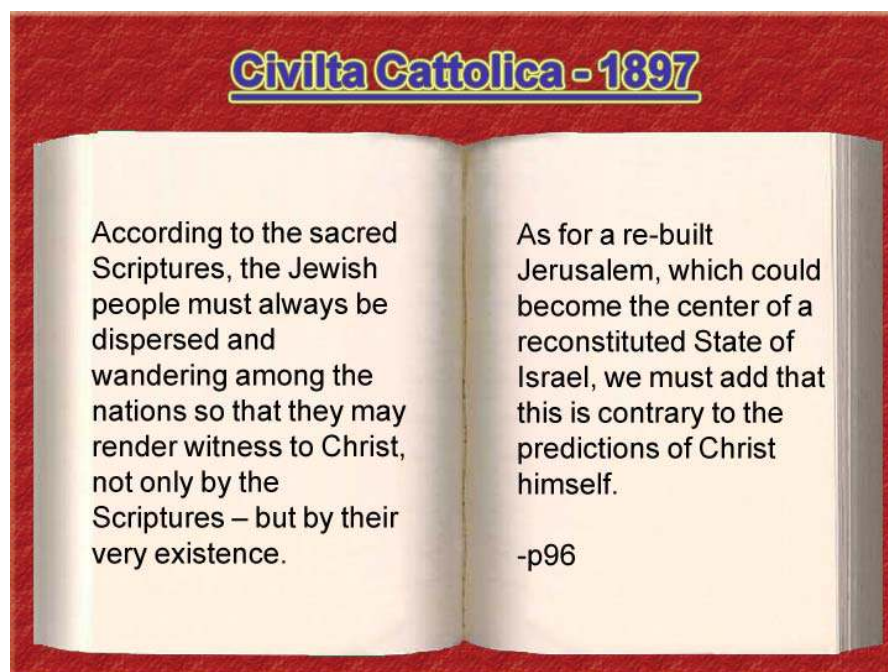
What's Happening Now?

For example, the Catholic view does not see the importance of a return of the Jews to the land of Israel. In fact, historically, the Vatican has not looked with favour upon this.

When Theodore Herzl was looking for support for a Jewish State, he was told by Pope Pius X in 1904:



It is incredible that in a Jesuit journal, Civiltà Cattolica in 1897, it said:



Someone was obviously not reading his Bible, to think that. So it is evident how far astray the apostasy in the Roman Catholic system has come from the truth of the Bible.

Even more recently, Pope John Paul II had 14 audiences with the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat before he even had one with a Jewish prime minister. The reason behind this is no surprise – the Vatican is, and always has, been interested in making Jerusalem an internationalized city. And the Catholic church feels it is the most qualified to oversee the city.

Vatican muscling in on Jerusalem

Headline Jerusalem Newswire January 4

The Roman Catholic Church says the Jewish state cannot be trusted to exercise control over the city of Jerusalem...the Vatican's legal advisor in Israel, David Jaeger, told an international conference...that Jerusalem was too important a city to leave in the hands of either "Palestinians" or Jews.

Jaeger's view was that the status of Jerusalem required the approval of the international community as a whole.

Since 1947 [the Vatican] has sought to have Jerusalem internationalized, confident that with Rome's massive global constituency the pope will be able to exercise substantial control over the city.



A headline in the Jerusalem Newswire on January 4 of this year read:

Vatican Muscling in on Jerusalem

The article read as follows:

“The Roman Catholic Church says the Jewish state cannot be trusted to exercise control over the city of Jerusalem – ancient and eternal capital of the people of Israel. In a statement whose arrogance and contempt he seemingly could not see, the Vatican’s legal advisor in Israel, David Jaeger, told an international conference in Haifa Tuesday that Jerusalem was too important a city to leave in the hands of either “Palestinians” or Jews.

Jaeger’s view was that the status of Jerusalem required the approval of the international community as a whole.

Ironically the Vatican, which claims to be spiritual home to one billion of the world’s Christians, rejects the biblical stipulation granting everlasting possession of ancient Canaan, inclusive of Jerusalem, to the Jewish people. Since 1947 it has sought to have Jerusalem internationalized, confident that with Rome’s massive global constituency the pope will be able to exercise substantial control over the city.”

In addition to the ignorance the Catholic church has about the Jews in the land, they also, along with many Protestant churches, are looking for an anti-christ to come.

According to Hippolytus, a Catholic Church father in the early third century AD, in his work entitled “Treatise of Christ and Antichrist”, the antichrist would have the following characteristics:

Antichrist According to Hippolytus

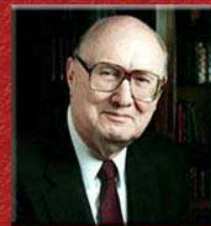
- would liken himself in all things to Christ
- would be a king
- would be a Jew
- will take the form of a man
- will raise the temple in Jerusalem
- will gather the Hebrew people from their dispersion
- will promise to restore their country
- will establish again their kingdom and nation
- will be worshipped by them
- will love the nation of the Jews
- For those who do not worship him, "the heavens will not give their dew, the clouds will not give their rain, the earth will refuse to yield its fruits..."



This all sounds familiar, doesn't it? But from the Bible, these are the things that are attributed to Christ himself.

It is not just a Catholic belief. John Walvoord, an author for the [Zondervan](#) Publishing House, says that anti-christ will:

Antichrist According to John Walvoord



will:

- Be responsible for a mid-east peace agreement
- Make a covenant with the Jews
- Commence the rebuilding of a Jewish temple
- Destroy the armed forces of Russia
- Claim to be Jesus Christ
- Ruthlessly put down all opposition

Again, all things that can be confidently affirmed from scripture that Christ himself will do when he returns to the earth.

What is dangerous in all this is that *Zondervan* is a leading publisher for many bible believers today, with access to a very wide market and supported by good media relations. The promotion of this coming Antichrist theory, as presented in the books of these authors, is bound to have a considerable impact on bible believers.



As well, the image of the Pope and the Catholic church is given very prominent and favourable publicity in the media. The Vatican policy on world issues is fully expounded in all the forums available, whether it be newspapers, television, or other media.

In fact, the head of the BBC, Mark Thompson, is a Catholic, and he follows several other former Catholic heads. This

puts the Catholic viewpoint out for all to see, and often in a biased way.

In the recent war in Lebanon, on July 14, 2006, Pope Benedict XVI condemned what he called Israel's "attack" on Lebanon, and the media presented it exactly that way, even to the point of carrying an anti-Israel bias.

We see the "mouth speaking great things" of Daniel 7:8, broadcast throughout the world.

This means that caution must be exercised, even when reading or watching the news that everything is taken with a grain of salt. The apostasy has a hold on a lot of what everyone is being told, so caution must be taken that the media is not automatically taken as being fact. Only the Bible is truly factual.

Conclusion

The most important thing to understand, however, is that although it can be identified who has been associated with the apostasy throughout history and through to today, it must be understood that apostasy can develop, and in many cases, has already started to develop, in the ecclesias.

Anything that rebels against the commandments of God is apostasy. It is important to remain firm in true convictions and continue to study the Bible to ensure that the Truth is being maintained. The "new and exciting" ways of looking at the Truth need to be put down if it means compromising true doctrines.

There are two sections in the New Testament that are excellent in providing what can be described as the “antidote” to being involved with or taken into apostasy, in any form. Of course, the whole Bible is useful in explaining how to stay on the right path, but two sections that are particularly useful are in Romans 12 and 1 Thessalonians 5.


In Romans 12, is the following:

Antidote to Apostasy
Romans 12

Verse 2 – “...be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind...”

Verse 3 – “...not to think [of himself] more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly...”

Verse 9 – “...abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good”



Caution must be taken not to “join in” with the world and its pursuits. Humility about one’s own self must be undertaken. And the language of verse 9 is quite strong. Abhor, or utterly detest, that which is evil. And cleave to, which carries the sense of holding onto with all our ability, that which is good. This is the idea of holding on as tightly as possible, because it is easy to slip.

And then in 1 Thessalonians 5:


Antidote to Apostasy
1 Thessalonians 5

Verse 6 – “...let us not sleep, as [do] others; but let us watch and be sober...”

Verse 14 – “...warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak...”

Verse 17 – “pray without ceasing...”

Verse 21 – “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”



It is everyone's responsibility to warn those who are straying, and to help those who are spiritually weak so they do not. And finally, prayer and the study of the word will always be one's strongest allies in the fight against succumbing to apostasy.