

## **Catholicism – History of the Roman Church**

### **Catholicism and What Has Been the Role of the Roman Church**

**What about Catholicism and the role it has played and will play during the end times.** Mystery Rome. The Roman Empire has gone through several incarnations. There was the political Rome of Jesus' day. As it declined, the spiritual Roman Empire of the Popes replaced it. They virtually ruled over the kings of Europe for the next 1000 years. The era was befittingly called "the Dark Ages." During the Dark Ages, a European king could not hope to retain his kingdom unless he had the blessing of Rome.

Anyone who claimed to be a Christian during those days also had to acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope or face the Inquisition. The Roman Church burned tens of thousands of true Christians at the stake for refusing to accept that doctrine.

Following the Protestant Reformation, the authority of the Papacy waned in some parts of Europe, but not all. Both Charlemagne and Napoleon claimed their intent to restore the Holy Roman Empire as justification for their military conquests. After Napoleon's defeat, the power of the Papacy declined. The Popes of Rome no longer dictate to kings, they retain their influence over populations. To this day, the "Kings" of the earth still kneel in audience with the Pope.

Even admitted atheist Mikhail Gorbachev knelt in the presence of Pope John Paul II in 1991. Papal pronouncements affect more than a billion Catholics worldwide. It would be stretching a point to refer to Roman Catholicism as an "empire" in the secular sense of the word. But as a spiritual empire, it has no equal. It was as if the secular empire went "underground", so to speak, from the physical to the spiritual, physically dead, yet spiritually alive!

With respect to sincere Roman Catholics who have personally received Christ as their Savior and Lord and to those who are evaluating the claims of Christ on their lives, I must point out that the Church of Rome today does not teach "the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints" (Jude 6). Instead, they have added the baggage of 1500 years of tradition to the original doctrines of Christianity. Most or all that added teaching originated in pagan or "mystery Babylon." Today the Church of Rome is doctrinally a mixture of Babylonian paganism and Christianity. That is why it is a far cry from "the faith ... once for all entrusted to the saints" (Jude 1:3b).

There is more on this subject in Tim LaHaye's book entitled Revelation Unveiled. "I suggest this a must read for those interested."

**The Pre-Christian Practices of the Roman Catholic Church:** Many of the changes in the Church of Jesus Christ began to surface after the bishop of Rome became dominant over other Babylonian practices were brought into the church. These practices had one thing in common: They existed before Christ and were not taught by Him. For example, prayers for the dead, not instituted until (300 A.D.), are nowhere taught in the Scripture but are a regular part of the ancestor worship of the Chinese, who practiced it hundreds of years before Christ. In addition, the worship of Mary and Christ as a baby was conceived in the same form with other names by most of the major religions of the world hundreds of years before Christ.

Easter and Lent observances with 40 days' fasting were practiced for the benefit of Tammuz 500 years before Christ. To prove that Tammuz was worshiped before Christ, just turn to Ezek. 8:7-14). The worship of Tammuz was so extensive by that time that even the women of Israel were seen "mourning for Tammuz." The title "Queen of Heaven," given to Mary, is certainly not Christian. In fact, good Roman Catholics should be horrified to find that this expression is found in the Old Testament. (Jeremiah 44:17), points out that it was used to describe the mother of Tammuz, the mother goddess of Babylon, over 500 years before Christ.

The practice of establishing a celibate priesthood and having nuns is not of Christian origin; nothing in the Bible teaches this. Indeed (1 Tim. 3:1-3), forbids it. Hundreds of years before Christ it was incorporated by the Buddhists and Hindus, who practice it to this day. Where did they get it? From Babylon mysticism, the "mother of prostitutes." The sign of the cross used on the end of a pole is likewise not of Christian derivation. It was used in the worship of Tammuz 500 years before Christ.

We have already seen that making confession, not taught in the Scripture, was practiced in Babylon, and we can go on to include prayer beads, purgatory, and many other pre-Christian practices of the Church of Rome. Thinking people can scarcely deny the fact that Rome today is a form of Babylonian mysticism. And that does not even begin to mention what is happening in the Roman Catholic Church today!

**Rome is Not the Only Form of Babylonian Religion:** Tim LaHaye and his wife made a trip around the world many years ago and visited some 50 temples and religious shrines of the major religions of the world. They were appalled to find the strange chords of similarity in all these forms of religion. Mystery, darkness, incense burning, superstition, ignorance, immorality, priesthood, nuns, sprinkling, idolatry, and many other Babylonian customs appeared repeatedly. He could only conclude that Rome is not the only form of Babylonian mysticism, but merely the one that has infiltrated Christianity. And after the Rapture, their leaders that remain will bring all the Babylonian based religions together with one global idolatrous religion. She may be the one leading all forms of religions at the end time.

**Rome's Persecution of Christians:** Today it is not just liberals who are trying to beat a path back to Rome, thus nullifying the Protestant Reformation. There are leading evangelicals who have had meetings to bring the faiths back together. Using the drastic social chaos created by liberal humanism (or socialistic ideology), in education, media, and the entertainment industry as a pretext to "get together" on the moral issues we agree upon. Some are willing to negotiate away the right to evangelize Jews, Catholics, or those of other religions.

Three of these leading evangelicals are personal friends of long standing with Tim LaHaye. But he has refused to participate in the dangerous and what he considers "heretical" effort to do Antichrist's work for him even before he comes. Not only are their efforts a violation of the Great Commission, but it also ignores the long history of Rome's intolerance and persecution of Christians. (In Rev. 17:6), we are told that this prostitute, or idolatrous woman, "was drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus." (**Was Drunken with the Blood of the Saints;** (see Rev. 17:6).

Whenever in control of a country, Rome has not hesitated to put to death all who opposed her. Rome's frantic opposition to the Reformation (caused by her pagan indulgences and corruption of the true faith), is a good example. Some passages from Halley's Bible Handbook will illustrate her historic brutality.

**The Inquisition:** The inquisition, called the "Holy Office", was instituted by Innocent III, and perfected under the second following Pope, Gregory IX. It was the Church Court for the detection and punishment of heretics. Under it, everyone was required to inform against heretics. Anyone suspected was liable to torture, without knowing the name of his accuser. The proceedings were secret. The Inquisitor pronounced sentence, and the victim was turned over to the civil authorities to be imprisoned for life or to be burned. The victim's property was confiscated and divided between the Church and the State.

In the period immediately following Innocent III the Inquisition did its most deadly work in Southern France (see under Albigenses), but claimed vast multitudes of victims in Spain, Italy, Germany, and the Netherlands. Later, the Inquisition was the main agency in the Papacy's effort to crush the Reformation. It is stated that in the 30 years (between 1540 and 1570), no fewer than 900,000 Protestants were put to death, in the Pope's war for the extermination of the Waldenses.

Think of monks and priests directing, with heartless cruelty and inhuman brutality, the work of torturing and burning alive innocent men and women; and doing it in the name of Christ, by the direct order of the "Vicar of Christ." The Inquisition is the MOST INFAMOUS THING in history. It was devised by the Popes and used by them for 500 years to maintain their power. For its record, none of the subsequent line of "Holy" and "Infallible" Popes have ever apologized.

**Rome's Opposition to the Reformation:** In the Netherlands the Reformation was received early; Lutheranism, and Calvinism; and Anabaptists were already numerous. Between (1513 and 1531), there were issued 25 different translations of the Bible in Dutch, Flemish and French. The Netherlands were a part of the dominion of Charles V. (In 1522), he established the Inquisition, and ordered all Lutheran writings to be burned. (In 1525), prohibited religious meetings in which the Bible would be read. (1546), prohibited the printing or possession of the Bible, either Vulgate or translation. (1535), declared "death by fire" for Anabaptists. Phillip II (1566-98), successor to Charles V, reissued the edicts of his father, and with Jesuit help carried on the persecution with still greater fury.

By one sentence of the Inquisition the whole population was condemned to death, and under Charles V and Phillip II, more than 100,000 were massacred with unbelievable brutality. Some were chained to a stake near the fire and slowly roasted to death; some were thrown into dungeons, scourged, tortured on the rack, before being burned.

Women were buried alive, pressed into coffins too small, trampled down with the feet of the executioner. Those that tried to flee to other countries were intercepted by soldiers and massacred. After years of nonresistance, under unheard of cruelty, the Protestants of Netherlands united under the leadership of William of Orange, and (in 1572), began the great revolt. And after incredible suffering (in 1609), won their independence; Holland on the North, became Protestant; Belgium on the South, Roman Catholic. Holland was the first country to adopt public

schools supported by taxation, and to legalize principle of religious toleration and freedom of the press.

**In France:** By (1520), Luther's teaching has penetrated France. Calvin's soon followed. By (1559), there were about 400,000 Protestants. They were called "Huguenots." Their earnest piety and pure lives were in striking contrast to the scandalous lives of the Roman clergy. In (1557), Pope Pius urged their extermination. The king issued a decree for their massacre and ordered all loyal subjects to help in hunting them out. The Jesuits went through France persuading the faithful to bear arms for their destruction. Thus, hunted by Papal agents, as in the days of Diocletian, they met secretly, often in cellars at midnight.

**St. Bartholomew's Massacre:** Catherine de Medici, mother of the King, an ardent Romanist and willing tool of the Pope, gave the order (and on the night of Aug. 24, 1572), 70,000 Huguenots, including most of their leaders, were massacred. There was great rejoicing in Rome. The Pope and his College of Cardinals went, in solemn procession, to the Church of San Marco, and ordered the Te Deum to be sung in thanksgiving.

The Pope struck a medal in commemoration of the Massacre; and send a Cardinal to Paris to bear the King and Queen Mother the Congratulations of Pope and Cardinals. "France was within a hair breadth of actually becoming Protestant; but France massacred Protestantism on the night of St. Bartholomew (1572).

Then in (1792), there came to France a "Protest" of another kind."

The Huguenot Wars, Following St. Bartholomew's Massacre the Huguenots united and armed for resistance; till finally (in 1598), by the Edict of Nantes, they were granted the right of freedom of conscience and worship. But in the meantime, some 200,000 had perished as martyrs. Pope Clement VIII called the Toleration Edict of Nantes a "cursed thing"; and, after years of underground work by the Jesuits, the Edict was revoked (in 1685); and 500,000 Huguenots fled to Protestant Countries.

In Bohemia: By 1600 in a population of 4,000,000, eighty percent was Protestant. When the Hapsburgs and Jesuits had done their work, 800,000 were left, all Catholics.

In Spain: The Reformation never made much headway, because the Inquisition was already there. Every effort for freedom or independent thinking was crushed with a ruthless hand. Torquemada (1420-98), a Dominican monk, arch inquisitor, in 18 years burned (10,200), and condemned to perpetual imprisonment 97,000. Victims were usually burned alive in the public square; made the occasion of religious festivities.

From (1481 to 1808), there were at least 100,000 martyrs and 1,500,000 banished. "In the 16th and 17th centuries the Inquisition extinguished the literary life of Spain and put the nation almost outside the circle of European civilization." When the Reformation began, Spain was the most powerful country in the world. "Its present negligible standing among the nations shows what the Papacy can do for a country."

The above quotations indicate that Rome has never been noted for her toleration. To Tim LaHaye's knowledge, she has never publicly acknowledged her sin of putting these Protestants to death. Calling us "separated brethren" is just an accommodation used today to gain acceptance by Protestants. When she is established in power, you can expect additional outbreaks of the Inquisition.

Look at Catholic dominated countries today, such as Columbia and Spain, where Protestants are treated as heretics, their churches burned, and their religious freedom denied. In India we find that Hinduism is so parallel to the practices of Romanism that many of the Hindus can become Roman Catholics and need not give up Hinduism. Since the religions of the world all have idolatry in common, it would be a simple thing for them to amalgamate on a common basis. What do they care whether they are worshiping Semiramis and Tammuz or Mary and Jesus, just so they have an idol before which to bow down?

The color scheme of this one world religion **Purple and Scarlet** (see Rev. 17:4), is most revealing: "The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet." If you are familiar with pictures of the Vatican Council as published in national magazines, you will have observed that the bishops and cardinals wore purple and scarlet robes. You will also see that the pope and other church leaders are "glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls." They hold "a golden cup in their hand, filled with abominable things and the filthiness of their adulteries." These abominable things and adulteries are the idolatry and worship of gods other than Jesus Christ. In Rome we saw all manner of idols in the very headquarters of the Roman Church. More costly surroundings can scarcely be found than in the Vatican.

**The Conflict of the Ages:** Church history reveals that after three centuries of incessant attempts to destroy the Church through persecution and burning all copies of the Word of God, the Church was so powerful that she supplanted paganism as the state religion of Rome (in 312 A.D.). At this point Satan stumbled on his most effective tool, indulgence, or endorsement. During the next 13 centuries the Church gradually lost her light and spiritual power by adopting some of the satanically inspired practices of paganism contrary to the Word of God. As these practices increased, Bible light decreased, bringing on what is called the Dark Ages. No jailer ever kept his prisoner more confined than did the Church of Rome keep the Bible for hundreds of years.

Not until the Reformation were people again exposed to God's word, but again Satan made an attack. The superstitious concepts of the Roman Catholic Church, which by this time were little more than modernized pagan thought, turned many intellectuals during the Age of Enlightenment against Christianity. History affirms that many skeptics and rationalists were educated in Jesuit colleges. Being thus exposed to a characterization of Christianity through Catholic dogma and never exposed to the living Christ, these men turned to atheism and a resultant humanism that has deified the human race as proud and arrogant.

The difference between John Wycliffe, John Calvin, Martin Luther, William Tyndale, and other Christian intellectuals and such men as Voltaire, Rousseau, Weishaupt, Mirabeau, and other atheistic thinkers is the Word of God. Had the latter group been exposed to the living Christ

through the pages of the Bible, history may well have been different and the world today a far better place in which to live.

The city of Rome (around 320 A.D.) was filled with temples, idols, and shrines to almost every god in the pantheon of pagan religions. Turning these temples over to the Christians proved to be the worst thing Constantine did and the worst thing to happen to the early church. It is said the church retained much of the statuary in the pagan temples. It simply rededicated them to Christianity, then chiseled off the names of the pagan deities and replaced them with the names of the apostles, Jesus, and Mary.

Gradually the pagan practices and teachings of Babylon began to worm their way into Christianity. These included prayers for the dead, making the sign of the cross, worship of saints and angels, instituting the mass, and worship of Mary. Which in the Church of Rome was followed by prayers directly to Mary, leading to the 1950 doctrine of her assumption into heaven (and in 1965), to the proclamation that Mary was “Mother of the Church”.

As pagan teachings increased, biblical authority decreased. Just over one hundred years after Constantine, the brilliant Augustine came along with his brand of Greek humanism and introduced “man’s wisdom” along with “God’s wisdom,” further paving the way for more pagan thought and practice. Although he did not intend it, his spiritualizing of Scripture eventually removed the Bible as the sole source of authority for correct doctrine.

At the same time, the Scriptures were kept locked up in monasteries and museums, leaving Christians defenseless against the invasion of pagan and humanistic thought and practice. Consequently, the Dark Ages prevailed, and the Church of Rome became more pagan than Christian.

In the Middle Ages and in pre-modern times, true believers were subjected to martyrdom on an incredible scale. It is estimated that as many as 40 million persons were killed during that period when Babylonian mysticism controlled the church.

France the most advanced country of the 17th century, is an example of the effects of Babylon on the seven hilled city of Rome. Consider how the pope and Catholic authorities worked with the Catholic kings of France to produce the St. Bartholomew Square massacre, in which forty thousand born again Christians were killed in a single day. That was followed by other massacres that eliminated up to 4 million Huguenots, who would be called evangelical Christians if they were living today.

Their destruction so angered skeptics like Voltaire and Rousseau that they became anti-Christian thinkers and began to propagate an atheistic socialism born out of French skepticism, which ultimately merges with German rationalism. Today their intellectual descendants champion a philosophy called “secular humanism.”

To this day the Catholic Church has never truly repented of those massacres perpetrated “in the name of Christ and His church.” These tragic events make it difficult for many Christians to trust current efforts at reestablishing unity between Protestants and Catholics.

The Rapture is unknown in today's Roman Catholicism. In fact, it is specifically contradicted by the twin Catholic dogmas of purgatory and indulgences. Although down through the centuries there have been many relatively small groups of evangelical believers independent of and persecuted by Rome. They too, for the most part, lost the hope of the Rapture.

**Peter's Fallibility:** Roman Catholics insist that Peter is the rock upon which the Church was founded. Yes, Jesus did say to Peter, "On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 16:18-19). Out of that simple statement (basically the same He made to all the disciples in Matt. 18:18-19 and John 20:23). Rome has manufactured a papal office, papal infallibility, apostolic succession, a magisterium which alone can interpret Scripture. A celibate priesthood to whom confession must be made and which alone can administer grace through seven sacraments, and much more. One can examine Christ's statement with a microscope and never find justification for such embellishments.

**Demonic Apparitions of "Mary":** Indeed, in one of numerous demonic impersonations embraced by Roman Catholics, "Mary" appeared to Catherine Laboure (in Nov. 1830), in Paris as the "woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars" (Rev. 12:1).

Douay Rheims Version Translated from the Latin Vulgate. The New Testament First Published by the English College at Rheims (A.D. 1582). The vision of the woman clothed with the sun and of the great dragon her persecutor: Rev. 12:1 "And a great sign appeared in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars". A woman . . . The church of God. It may also, by allusion, be applied to our blessed Lady.

The church is clothed with the sun, that is, with Christ: she hath the moon, that is, the changeable things of the world, under her feet. And the twelve stars with which she is crowned, are the twelve apostles: she is in labor and pain, whilst she brings forth her children, and Christ in them, in the midst of afflictions and persecutions. (Actual reading from the Douay Rheims Bible).

This apparition substituted Mary for Israel. Moreover, this counterfeit "Mary" appeared standing with her foot upon a serpent's head, which she was crushing beneath her heel. The vision gave seemingly miraculous support to Rome's dishonest rendering (of Genesis 3:15). While some modern Catholic translations have in recent times corrected this verse, the teaching Mary is the one who crushes the serpent's head remains solidly entrenched in Roman Catholicism (take in the New American Bible for Catholics and read the same verse).

Catherine Laboure's vision has been preserved in a medal minted (in 1832), to be worn by the Roman Catholic faithful around the neck for protection. The medal depicts "Mary" as Catherine saw her, crushing the serpent's head. Obviously, the apparition, now known as "Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal," was not the true Mary of the Bible. For it perverted the Scripture and gave to Mary a power and a work that belong to Christ alone. Whether Catherine hallucinated, made up the whole story, or was deceived by a demon impersonating Mary is irrelevant.

The fact is that the Roman Catholic Church honors this heretical picture of Mary as the truth to this day. This favorite medal, to which many miracles have been credited, has been worn by scores of millions of Catholics around the world. It continues to rank in popularity and official church recognition next to the rosary and the scapular of "Our Lady of Mount Carmel". Of course, the Bible gives no such honor to Mary, nor did the real Mary claim it. There are no prophecies in the Old Testament about the coming of the woman, but there are scores of prophecies concerning the coming of the "seed of the woman," the virgin born Messiah.