

13. Babylon

Proverb: All roads lead to Rome.

Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it. (Matthew 7:13-14; Revelation 17:1 – 18:24)

When ancient empires conquered, the victor frequently took authority over the conquered nation's religion. For example, in 170 BC, King Antiochus Epiphanes ruled Israel. He aggressively imposed the Greek culture and religion on Israel by erecting a statue of the Greek god Zeus at the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

The Roman Empire integrated the religious practices of conquered nations into its religion. The Roman Empire took control over Christian religion in 312 AD. A Roman emperor, Constantine, made Catholic teaching preeminent. Declaring himself the supreme pontiff (Pontifex Maximus), Constantine held authority over all other pontiffs. Because of this entanglement between the church and governing state, the Catholic Church accepted traditions and bad doctrine that originated in ancient Babylon. Even today, Roman Catholic tradition holds a status equal to scripture; scripture is interpreted a manner that validates tradition.¹

Revelation depicts a Roman Church that shares in the corruption of the Roman Empire. It describes this empire (beast) and church (prostitute woman)

as entwined. *The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth.* (Revelation 17:18) The capital city and church are the same city, Rome.

Scriptures depict the Roman Church as a woman, named Babylon. *Then the angel said to me: "Why are you astonished? I will explain to you the mystery of the woman and of the beast she rides, which has the seven heads and ten horns.* (Revelation 17:7) Rome is a mystery with two components—the first is a woman who is a prostitute (Roman Church) and the other half is a beast (Roman Empire). While the first is preeminent in religion, the other seeks world conquest.

The relationship the Roman Church shares with world leaders is based on *adultery*—a shared disloyalty to God. *With Babylon, the kings of the earth committed adultery.* (Revelation 18:3) Babylon commits adultery against God by being faithful to the kings (leaders) of this world, but not to the king of heaven. Pope John Paul II was a typical Roman Catholic leader. Eighty prime ministers, presidents, kings, and queens attended his funeral; it was the largest gathering of statesmen in history.²

Countless people, even many believers, continue to think highly of the Roman Church; the *inhabitants of the earth* are intoxicated with her religion and traditions. *With her the kings of the earth committed adultery and the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries."* (Revelation 17:2)

Bread and Idolatry

Babylon is dressed like a prostitute *in purple and scarlet with gold, precious stones and pearls*. However, what really offends God is contained inside a golden cup, which is her chalice. *The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, and was glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls. She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries.* (Revelation 17:4) Babylon worships the contents of the golden cup instead of God.

Sacraments in the Catholic Church promote the alleged ability of priests to perform miracles. For example, priests are supposedly able to transform bread into the body of Jesus. Catholics call this transformation “transubstantiation.” Concerning Babylon, there is a *golden cup in her hand that is filled with the filth of her adulteries*. Catholic doctrine says through transubstantiation, its chalice contains the literal Body of Christ—and therefore this bread is worshiped as being God.

The Wrong Rock

Roman religion established the office of Pontiff (pope). This position, thought to have started with Peter, actually began hundreds of years before Jesus. For example, Julius Caesar became Pontifex Maximus in 63 BC. Caesar Augustus became Pontifex in 12 BC, and held that position at the time of Christ.



Julius Caesar as Pontiff
Coin is a Denarius – cited in
Mark 12:16 and Luke 20:24-25

The idea that there should be a Christian pontiff resulted from the misinterpretation of a single scripture. Jesus said, *“And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”* (Matthew 16:18) However, the “rock” upon which the true church was built was Jesus, not Pope Peter (Isaiah 26:4; Psalm 42:9; Ephesians 2:20-21). Even Peter disagreed with Roman Catholic interpretation; he identified Jesus as the primary rock, the cornerstone of the church.

For in Scripture it says:

*“See, I lay a stone in Zion,
a chosen and precious cornerstone,
and the one who trusts in him
will never be put to shame.”* (1 Peter 2:6)

God sends a clear message to people in a pagan church. Many are authentic believers who have been deceived.

Then I heard another voice from heaven say:

*“Come out of her, my people,
so that you will not share in her sins,
so that you will not receive any of her plagues;
for her sins are piled up to heaven,
and God has remembered her crimes.* (Revelation 18:4-5)

This is the call that so many people trusting in a religious tradition have already heard, to leave tradition and follow Christ. This message has filled countless scripture-based churches with former Roman Catholics.

Notes:

1. Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Citta del Vaticano. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Part One, Section One, Chapter Two, Article 2-II, The Relationship between Tradition and Sacred Scripture. 2003.

2. Wikipedia. *List of dignitaries at the funeral of Pope John Paul II*.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_dignitaries_at_the_funeral_of_Pope_John_Paul_II