

Study for the Month of December 2015
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The 'Man of Sin' of Bible Prophecy and his activities and career - Part IX

Pope says 'fundamentalism is a disease of all religions,' and 'is idolatrous'

See HYPERLINK "http://news.yahoo.com/pope-says-fundamentalism-disease-religions-041229580.html" <http://news.yahoo.com/pope-says-fundamentalism-disease-religions-041229580.html>.

"Aboard the papal plane, Pope Francis said *fundamentalism is 'a disease of all religions,' including the Roman Catholic Church*, as he returned from a three-nation tour of Africa in which he preached reconciliation and hope. '*Fundamentalism is always a tragedy. It is not religious, it lacks God, it is idolatrous,*' the Argentine pontiff told journalists on the plane back from the Central African Republic. . . . 'We Catholics, we have a few, even many fundamentalists. They believe they know absolute truth and corrupt others,' he said, adding, 'I can say this because this is my Church.' . . .

"In extraordinary scenes before he held a *papal* mass at the capital's Barthelemy Boganda stadium, a group of Moslem rebels from the PK5 area leapt out of two pickup trucks, all wearing T-shirts bearing the pope's image. As they pushed through the crowd in an area where Muslims usually do not dare to venture, people cheered and shouted, '*It's over.*' '*We thought the whole world had abandoned us, but not him [pope Francis]. He loves us Muslims too,*' said *Idi Bohari, an elderly man*. The landlocked Central African Republic descended into bloodshed after longtime *Christian* leader Francoise Bozize was ousted by rebels from the mainly *Moslem* Seleka force in March 2013. The coup plunged the former French colony into its worst crisis since independence in 1960...." (NOTE: there were 1004 comments posted).

All Paths Lead back to Rome; Return of all Prodigal Daughters Back to the Mother

“It’s over.” What is almost over? The separation and divisions among Christianity particularly as a result of the Protestant Reformation in the Old World against the corruption and apostasy of the Church of Rome. The world’s monotheistic religions are **Judaism, Christianity, and Islam**. All three claim to believe in “only one God.” Now as to who God really is to each one, differs widely, which is, or now, was, really the substance of each respective religion. But the Ecumenical agenda formulated and propagated during the last Vatican II Council has all-too-successfully brought about the desired goal, progressively reuniting the once separated and sharply-divided major religions together in these last days of earth’s history, as clearly prophesied in Revelation 13, 14, 17, and 18. This progressive reunification is being achieved by *sacrificing through compromise*, their own unique *fundamental beliefs* which their forefathers and founders championed and gave their lives for, in exchange for allegedly “the greater good of unity and humanity.”

This inevitably finally singles out a faithful remnant—a sore thumb sticking out that needs to be eliminated if they persist in refusing to join the final global confederacy of all religions and secular powers in keeping a global worship day—which of course will be Sunday, the first working day of creation week but the first and foremost form of apostate and atheistic forms of worship—whether the different forms of the literal sun-gods, or in the last days, the day of the sun.

All three monotheistic religions have within each, different major sects that interpret their once unifying fundamental beliefs differently with one class leaning towards modernism, thus relaxing and even discarding centuries-held, traditional fundamental beliefs or at the other end the generally older, orthodox , historic sects that tend to breed “extremism” or “radicalized” elements.

Judaism

By Christ’s time three major sects prevailed in Judaism—the *Pharisees*, *Sadducees*, and the *Herodians*. Each vied against each other for control of the nation and the priesthood in particular, and at times were bitter enemies though all were represented in the Sanhedrin or the Talmudic Hebrew *Sanhedrim*, from the Greek *sunedrion*, a council. It is the name given by writers on Jewish antiquities and history to the highest Jewish assembly for government in the time of Christ. The English version uses the more familiar word *council*. *These warring factions eventually united—against Christ*. It was the Sanhedrin, in behalf of the Jewish nation that declared Christ guilty of all the capital crimes

they conspired to accuse Him of, which the Roman governor Pilate declared He personally found to the contrary and publicly so declared. Yet against all evidence and testimony, including that of Rome to the contrary, with even greater demand and satanic fury they demanded the crucifixion of the Lord of glory, *the Savior of the world*. Mysterious to the majority but not to those who are studying Bible prophecy, the Church of Rome formally acquitted them of this guilt and crying shame *of the ages*, which are specially recorded in the book in heaven sealed with seven seals, in the Nostra Aetate (meaning, “In our time”) historic document drawn up in the last Vatican II Council—a topic we covered recently.

Islam, and its sectarian divisions

Islam is also referred to as Mohammedanism and their devotees as Muslims. Their prophet Mohammed is also called Muhammad or Mahomet. In fact they were referred to by the early pioneers and writers of the Advent movement as Mahometan, a variation of Mohamedan. Moors, natives of Morocco, are North African Moslems.

According to Webster’s Unified Dictionary and Encyclopedia, published by H.S. Stuttman Co., Inc. NY, 1960: Islam is “the Mohammedan’s name for their religion. As the name implies (in the Arabic, ‘submission’), it *exacts submission* of the faithful to the will of God, or Allah, as revealed in his Word, the Koran [or more recently called the Q’ran], and in the traditional teachings of the last of his great prophets, Mohammed. The Caliph until the abolition of the caliphate in 1924, was regarded as the head of the Muslim Community [even as the pope is to the Roman Catholic Church] and successor to Mohammed. The sectarian divisions into *Sunnites*, *Shiites*, and *Kharawites* was due to their viewpoints regarding *the caliphate*, i.e., respectively, as [1] elective, [2] God-given, or [3] open to any qualified believer.” Islamism is the creed, doctrines and systems of the Mohammedan theology and world.”

NOTE: I tried checking other dictionaries and websites, including Wikipedia and have not, thus far, found further identification and definition of Kharawites.

What is available is **Khawarij**, “a sect in early Islam that broke into revolt against the authority of Caliph Ali Ibn Abu Talib after he agreed to arbitration with his rival Mu’awiyah *to decide the succession to the Caliphate* following the Battle of Siffin (657).- Wikipedia. Khararidji “held that judgment belongs to God alone’, and that God would decide succession by determining the victor in *battle [war]*, whereas arbitration would be decided by men. They believe that all

Muslims, rich or poor, had the same rights, and that any Muslim (not just a Quraysh or even Arab) could be the leader of a community (imam) if they are morally irreproachable, but that if the leader sinned, it was the duty of the Muslims to oppose and depose him. The Kharijites develop extreme doctrines that farther set them apart from both mainstream Sunni and Shia Muslims.”

Since the death of their prophet Mohammad, has been rocked with violence for centuries among themselves over the preeminence and exclusive right of the caliphate, each, of course, claiming to be the legitimate one by various claims of direct and indirect succession to Mohammed or his relatives. This is not much different from the Roman Catholic Church’s claims of “unbroken apostolic succession” of all the popes beginning with the disciple Peter,” whom they claim was “the first pope,” an assertion which is biblically unfounded and had to be established by the church’s own definitions through later decretals issued by certain popes. This so-called unbroken apostolic succession is belied by the historical fact that for almost forty years, six hundred years ago, referred to in modern church history and literature as “the great Western Schism,” there were *three* popes simultaneously claiming the right to sit on Peter’s throne and be called “pope.”

But notice that while the rest are compromising or even abandoning their fundamental beliefs one by one (until all will eventually disappear as prophesied), which, in the first, established their distinctiveness as a religion or denomination in contrast or comparison to the others, all are falling in line to march to the beat of the drum of the revived Roman Catholic Church. Although they had some serious differences of interpretations of certain theological questions, the godly Reformers were unanimous in pointing to the Church of Rome as “the beast of prophecy,” “the whore or great harlot who sits on many waters [symbol of “multitudes of people] with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, making “the inhabitants of the earth drunk with the wine of her fornication” (Rev. 17: 1, 2); the “Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of harlots and of the Abominations of the earth, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs for Jesus” (verses 5, 6).

The Antichrist of prophecy, they said, is the papal system of church government, combining church craft and state craft. However, by careful design, first by subtle stratagem, then later openly and boldly, papal apologists through the highly popular Futuristic interpretation of end-time prophecy, have successfully deceived the Christian world (Protestant world, mainstream Christianity) into

believing and propagating the error that the Antichrist is *an individual, a man yet to appear in the Middle East in the near future*. Furthermore, they have sadly also been also deceived into believing the lie that the interpretation that “Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth” is the Church of Rome is merely an interpretation of “Seventh-day Adventists.”

These gross misinterpretations and misunderstandings are an unmistakable manifestations of the **far greater disease** of fatal ignorance of God’s word caused by rejecting God’s law and *turning to men and churches* instead of to God. The latter are described by the prophet as “broken cisterns that hold no water” that is, the water of spiritual truth and life.

Confusion breeds confusion. And the ordinary man on Main street---the majority in every nation, society, and church in the world, need to know the truth as quickly as possible. Here’s why, according to the Spirit of Prophecy:

Step faster. See 1 Thess. 5: 2-8; 2 Tim. 4: 3, 4; Rom. 13: 12-14; Heb. 5:12-14; 6:1-6. Those who persist in lulling themselves to sleep in these most solemn hours of earth’s history by indulging in peace-and-safety, “milky messages” given “by the gallons” in the mega churches need to wake up now. It’s getting late now!

“It is too late in the day to feed with milk. If souls *a month or two old in the truth*, who are about to enter the time of trouble such as never was [Dan. 12:1], cannot hear all the straight truth, or endure the strong meat of the straightness of the way, how will they stand in the day of battle? Truths that we have been *years* learning must be learned in a *few months* by those who now embrace the *third angel’s message*. . . . There is no need of milk after souls are convinced of the truth. As soon as the conviction of the truth is yielded to and the heart willing, the truth should have its effect, the truth will work like leaven, and purify and purge away the passions of the natural heart. It is a *disgrace* for those who have been in the *truth for years* to talk of feeding souls who have been *months* in the truth, upon *milk*. It shows they *know little* of the leadings of the Spirit of the Lord, and *realize not* the time we are living in. Those who embrace the truth now will have to step fast. There will have to be a breaking up of the heart before the Lord, a rending of the heart, and not the garment.”- Ms. 1, Feb. 12, 1854; Vol. 1, Man. Releases, pp. 33, 34.

“The Lord would teach man the lesson that, *though united in church capacity*, he is not saved until the seal of God is placed upon him.” – *Letter 80*, 1898; *E. G. White Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 969.4.

“We shall *individually* be held responsible for doing *one jot less* than we have the ability to do. . . . We shall be judged according to what we ought to have done, but did not accomplish because we did not use our powers to glorify God.”- *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. p. 363.

“The work of preparation is an individual work. *We are not saved in groups*. The purity and devotion of one will not offset the want of these qualities in another. Though all *nations* are to pass in judgment before God, yet He will examine the case of *each individual* with as close and searching scrutiny as if there were not another being upon earth. Everyone must be tested and found without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. . . . Solemn are the scenes connected with *the closing work of the atonement*. Momentous are the interests involved therein. *The judgment is now passing in the sanctuary above*. For many years this work has been in progress. Soon—none know how soon---it will pass to the cases of the living. In the awful presence of God our lives are to come up in review. At this time it behooves every soul to heed the Savior’s admonition, ‘Watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is [the individual judgment].’ Mark. 13: 33.”- *Great Controversy*, pp, 489-90.

“Transgression of God’s law has almost reached its limit. Confusion fills the world, and a *great terror* is soon to come upon human beings. The end is very near. We who know the truth should be preparing for what is soon to break upon the world as an *overwhelming surprise*.”- *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 28.

Fundamentalism

Here are three different English Dictionaries’ definition of fundamentalism (emphasis mine):

Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary: “**a.** a recent movement in American Protestantism re-emphasizing as fundamental to Christianity belief in the *inerrancy of the Scriptures*, Biblical miracles, especially the virgin birth and physical resurrection of Christ, etc. **b** The beliefs so emphasized. **c** The state or fact of being an adherent of fundamentalism.”- *Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, Fifth Edition, The Largest Abridgement of Webster’s International Dictionary*,

*Second Edition, G & C. Merriam Co., Publishers, Springfield, Mass. U.S.A. 1942, art. Fundamentalism. **Fundamental**, according to the same edition is defined as: “1. Of or pertaining to the foundation or basis; essential; basal. . . . – n. 1. A principle, law, or article, which serves as the groundwork of a system; essential part.”*

Webster’s Unified Dictionary & Encyclopedia, 1960: “A religious movement emphasizing certain historical beliefs as fundamental and *opposing modernism*.” The same dictionary says: “**Fundamentalism**, general name for *the religious movement in many American Protestant sects in favor of an insistence on the literal inspiration of the Bible*. It has developed especially after World War I, and is particularly strong in the middle western states. Much attention was drawn to it in 1965 as the result of the *prosecution of a Tennessee teacher for upholding the doctrine of evolution in a State school*.” – Published 1960 by H.S. Stuttman Co., Inc., NY 16, NY.

Prosecution does not automatically mean *persecution*. But in the context and nature of the great controversy between Christ and Satan, with emphasis on Satan’s personal *war* against Christ, His law, and the faithful commandment-keeping people (beginning with righteous Abel, murdered by his brother Cain) the final form of persecution will inevitably include prosecution. The book of Daniel describes the wars of the four successive worldwide empires against God, His law, and His people. “The great men of the earth” and “the kings of the earth” spoken of in Revelation refer to *political* powers.

As far as Fundamentalism includes “opposing modernism” (above Webster’s edition), this particular definition needs additional citation or clarification for the following reasons: (1) the gradual falling away of the Reformation and Protestantism began, in fact, with the younger generation progressively “**new-modeling** the cause.” Noted theologians and celebrated Protestant ministers such as Challoner, Hopkins, Robinson, Wesley, Spurgeon, etc. lamented and exposed this apostate trend, and in fact, called for reformation, *a return to the fundamental* teachings of the Bible and the gospel.

“The Church of England [Anglican],’ says Spurgeon, ‘seems to be eaten through and through with sacramentarianism; but nonconformity appears to be almost as badly riddled with philosophical infidelity. Those of whom we thought better things are turning aside one by one *from the fundamentals of the faith*. Through and through, I believe, the very heart of England is honeycombed with a

damnable infidelity which dares till go into the pulpit and call itself Christian.”

Spurgeon here is saying that *the departure from the fundamentals of the faith* is, “damnable infidelity.” Why this is so is explained by other scholars as either not *fully* breaking away from Romanism, or returning to the false doctrines and Christianized heathen practices of the Church of Rome after their godly, courageous forebears left her, recognizing her as the “Babylon” of the Scriptures. Note the following:

“A Roman Catholic work argues that ‘if the Church of Rome were ever guilty of idolatry in relation to the saints, her daughter, the Church of England, stands guilty of the same, which has ten churches dedicated to Mary for one dedicated to Christ.” –Richard Challoner, *The Catholic Christian Instructed*, Preface, pages 21, 22, quoted in *Great Controversy* by Ellen G. White (1911) p. 384.

“And Dr. Hopkins, in ‘A Treatise on the Millenium,’ declares: ‘There is no reason to consider the antichristian spirit and practices to be confined to that which is now called Church of Rome. *The Protestant churches have much of antichrist* in them [emphasis mine], and are far from being wholly reformed from. . . corruptions and wickedness.’ – Samuel Hopkins, *Works*, vol. 2, p. 328/ Ibid.

“Concerning the separation of the *Presbyterian Church* from Rome, Dr. Guthrie writes: ‘Three hundred years ago, our church, with an open Bible on her banner, and this motto, ‘Search the Scriptures,’ on her scroll, marched out from the gates of Rome.’ Then he asks the significant question” Did they come *clean out of Babylon*?” – Thomas Guthrie, *The Gospel of Ezekiel*, page 237/ Ibid 384. The Presbyterian theologian and pastor Thomas Guthrie clearly referred to the Church of Rome, the Roman Catholic Church, as *Babylon*.

E. G. White continues with these questions that all serious students of God’s Word should also be asking, regardless of their current religious affiliations: “What was the origin of the great apostasy? How did the church first depart from the simplicity of the gospel? Ans. By conforming to the practices of paganism, to facilitate the acceptance of Christianity by the heathen.” – Ibid.

All Christians, Seventh-day Adventists included, ask yourself these questions, too: What is our church doing in order to “*facilitate acceptance* of our beliefs with non-believers or those of another faith?” Are your religious leaders also resorting to compromise with worldly practices or toning down the vital yet

unpopular features of the end-time messages or worse, incorporating obviously erroneous interpretations of Bible doctrines in order to accomplish this short-sighted goal—instead of rescuing souls from Satan’s fearful deceptions of these last days?

“The apostle Paul declared, even in his day, ‘The mystery of iniquity doth already work.’ 2 Thessalonians 2:7. During the lives of the apostles the church remained relatively pure. But ‘toward the end of the second century most of the churches assumed a new form; the first simplicity disappeared, and insensibly, as the old disciples retired to their graves, *their children, along with new converts . . . came forward and new-modeled the cause.*’ – Robert Robinson, *Ecclesiastical Researches*, ch. 6, par. 17, p. 51. To secure converts, the exalted standard of the Christian faith was lowered, and as a result ‘a pagan flood, flowing into the church, carried with it its customs, practices, and idols.’ – Gavazzi, *Lectures*, page 278.

So “new-modeling the cause means “lowering the exalted standard of the Christian faith—“the faith of the fathers,”—the godly patriarchs, not of the Church of Rome but “the faith of *Jesus*” (Rev. 14: 12), “the faith once delivered to the saints,” one that we are exhorted “to contend earnestly for” as did the apostles and the faithful men and women who succeeded them and lost their lives yet preserved the truth for the later generations till the final generation. Jude 3.

“As the Christian religion *secured the favor and support of secular rulers*, it was nominally *accepted by multitudes*; but while in appearance Christians, many ‘remained in substance pagans, especially *worshipping in secret their idols.*” – *ibid*, page 278. /*Ibid* 385.

It is not difficult to see, without being judgmental one bit, how and why there is this modern phenomena sweeping Christendom called “mega churches” suddenly burgeoning overnight like mushrooms! What is their draw? Pretty much the same—lowering of the lofty standards of Bible religion of self-sacrifice and self-denial by following the law of God and the life of Christ. The same customs, practices, and modern idols of the world are flowing into the churches with their “new converts.” It is not the world being converted into the church but the church being converted to the world. Christians only in name but worldlings in substance as these godly men so accurately and courageously exposed.

Again, “*Has not the same process been repeated in nearly every church calling itself Protestant?* As the founders, those who possessed the true spirit of reform,

pass away, their descendants come forward and ‘*new-model the cause.*’ While blindly clinging to the creed of their fathers and refusing to accept *the truth in advance of what they saw, the children of the reformers depart widely from their example of humility, self-denial, and renunciation of the world.* Thus ‘the first simplicity disappears.’ A worldly flood, flowing into the church, carries ‘with it its customs, practices, and idols.”-Ibid, p. 385.

Give special heed to these three “things of this world” that destroyed the early Christian church and the so-called Protestant churches later, namely, the world’s *customs, practices, and idols.* The only way to counteract this overwhelming flood is to plead to God for the Holy Spirit to re-instill in our hearts the true *spirit humility, self-denial, and renunciation of the world.*

NOTE: In fact this is the clarion call for true revival and thorough reformation by returning to, not departing from or denying the Fundamental truths and doctrines of the faith and religion of the Bible—the exact opposite of what Pope Francis just declared about fundamentalism, calling it “a disease of all religions. It is always a tragedy. It is not religious. It lacks God, it is idolatrous!” Imagine!

If there is any church claiming to be *Christian* that is literally, openly, and boldly *idolatrous* it is the Church of Rome, the Roman Catholic Church. We visited the Vatican during our European tour several years ago. I still haven’t gotten over it; for while I have long been made aware through study of the Bible, church and denominational history, Bible prophecies, and all the pictures proudly displayed of the world headquarters of the Church of Rome, I was, and still am amazed, dumbfounded, that is, by at least two things:

(a) the sheer amount of literal idols, images, sculptures, religious relics, paintings, works of arts by the masters, etc., on open display for the world to see with their own eyes and photograph for themselves. In disbelief, I asked myself: how could highly intelligent, honest and faithful votaries and pilgrims, and I would add, Bible-reading Protestant Christians among the unnumbered non-religious tourists, go out of their way, pay a handsome fee for the privilege and actually marvel with unreserved oohs and ahhs at all these accumulated and hoarded invaluable yet perishable treasures of this world” in the church that Pope Francis recently publicly hoped “*to be the church of the poor?*” That’s an oxymoron. And this, together with selling Indulgences---paying in advance with money and property the *forgiveness of sins* even before or after they are knowingly committed, which is how the priests corrupted the temple in

Jerusalem “turning the house of God into a house of merchandise and thieves” that Jesus condemned twice with rare public display of indignation at the start and towards the end of His three and-a-half year-ministry. (b) How can all these visual and physical reality not open the eyes and mind, if not yet fully blinded?

First, it presumptuously and brazenly expunged the whole second commandment of the Decalogue, written by God’s own finger, expressly forbidding the fashioning and adoration of images. “Thou shalt not make unto thee *any graven image* of any likeness of anything that is in the heavens above, or that is in the earth beneath or that is in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt *not bow down to them nor serve them* for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me but showing mercy unto thousands [of generations] of them that love Me and keep My commandments.” Exo. 20: 4-6; Deut. 5:8-10, K.J.V.

Other More Deceiving Forms of Idolatry in these last days

“The Apostle Paul’s words of warning to the Corinthian church are applicable to all time, *and are especially adapted to our day*. By idolatry He meant not only the worship of idols, but self-serving, love of ease, the gratification of appetite and passion. A mere profession of faith in Christ, a boastful knowledge of the truth, does not make a man a Christian. A religion that seeks only to gratify the eye, the ear, and the taste, or that sanctions self-indulgence, is *not the religion of Christ*.”- E. G. White, *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 317. It is an Antichristian religion.

Covetousness is the tenth sin condemned in the Decalogue (Exo. 20: 17), thus the foundation for the other nine before it. Like stubbornness (see 1 Sam. 15: 23), it is spiritual idolatry yet is *the most pervasive and universal of sins*. It caused Lucifer’s fall in and from *heaven*; it the leading sin on *earth* in these last days.

“There are today close beside us many who are hungry, naked, and homeless. A neglect to impart of our means to these needy, suffering ones places upon us a burden of guilt which we shall one day fear to meet. All covetousness is condemned as idolatry. All selfish indulgence is an offense to God’s sight.”- Ibid, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 261. (To be continued next month)

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