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The 'Man of Sin' of Bible Prophecy and his activities and career - Part VIII

## **The Fast-Tracking Papacy and the Nostra Aetate**

The title of this month's focus are but facts provided by the papacy itself and the media reports, which sources will be cited correspondingly. But before proceeding, lest we be misunderstood and wrongly portrayed by those rendered uncomfortable with these unpopular and even intentionally distorted Biblical truths, we once more pause, as we periodically do in our continuing monthly studies, as well as in our weekly Friday Morning Manna postings, to remind our readers of the end-time purpose and mission of this ministry, that is:

To help proclaim with Seventh-day Adventists—which clearly satisfies all the Biblical specifications as the remnant church of prophecy, including currently being in the Laodicean “lukewarm” condition, the last of the seven stages of the Christian Church since its founding after Pentecost yet verily the only denomination that corporately “keeps (as in, “preserves”) the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” Rev. 19: 10; 12: 17; 14: 12. They are currently spiritually militant, i.e., “engaged in spiritual warfare,” not “against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in high places.” Eph. 6: 12. It is not yet the church triumphant. The coming final sifting of the fiery yet necessary ordeal will eternally sift out the “chaff” from what even now “appears to be golden wheat.” Such is the gospel's closing work of character purification. Only then does the church triumphant finally emerge, and are eternally reunited with the redeemed of the ages, beginning with Adam and Eve.

Our messages and work are based on what “the law and testimony” (Isa. 8: 20) has revealed and requires to be proclaimed. Thus, in spirit and truth we are in full accord and harmony with all who bear the same heart burden and proclaim the same antitypical combined and cumulative messages and work of Noah, Elijah, and John the Baptist who earnestly yet meekly pleaded with the wicked as well as the stubborn, backsliding people

of God to repentance, revival, and corresponding thorough reformation. They warned the world and the people of their generations by precept and example and “by pen and voice.” During these closing hours of earth’s probation, our message is to warn those within our God-given sphere of influence, and prepare a people for the glorious Second Advent of Jesus, which is the sacred keynote and hope of all the ages since the fall at Eden six thousand years ago. This requires proclaiming in trumpet tones the unvarnished truths of the three-part comprehensive third angel’s message--earth’s final warning messages given in Revelation. Hence, “*whole* gospel ministries.”

What is this Gospel? - Paul declared to the *Romans* that “the gospel of Christ” is “the *power* of God unto salvation to everyone that believes (Rom. 1: 16), and that the reception of “grace and apostleship” is “*for obedience to the faith* among all nations.” Rom. 1: 5. This faith, John the beloved says, is not the faith *of the church* but “the faith of Jesus.” Christ calls all those who “patiently keep the commandments of God as “*His saints*.” Rev. 14: 12. Jesus means “He shall save His people *from* their sins.” Matt. 1: 21. Thus salvation is *from* not in sin.

Ellen G. White summarizes the preponderance of Scriptural teachings regarding the true gospel as detailed in the sanctuary doctrine, as follows:

“The gospel is a system of practical truths destined to work great changes in human character. If it does not work the transformation in life, in habits, and practice, it is no truth to those who claim to believe it. Man must be sanctified through the truth. And said Jesus, ‘Thy word is truth.’ (John 17: 17). Unless the truth of God shall lift up man out of his depravity, his intemperate and profligate [abandoned; dissolute; dissipation; prodigal] habits, and make him reflect the image of God, he is lost.” – Letter 14, Mar. 13, 1885/This Day with God, p. 81

And so the messages we simply share are “constrained” (2 Cor. 5: 14) by “the love of “the truth *as it is in Jesus*” (Eph. 4: 21). This includes, as Ellen G. White says, searching out “the mystery of iniquity” in order to *expose the wickedness of the man of sin* so that precious souls purchased by the blood of Christ may be saved from his delusive doctrines. But first, we must know for a certainty what or who is “the mystery of iniquity,” and “the man of sin.” The Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy reveals them as follows:

**The Mystery of Iniquity.** See Early Writings, pp. 213-7; Great Controversy, p. 49; Story of Redemption, p. 236; Evangelism, p. 705)

“The apostle Paul, in his second letter to the Thessalonians *foretold the great*

*apostasy which would result in the establishment of the papal power.* He declared that the day of Christ [the Second Advent] should not come, ‘except there come a falling away first, and *that man of sin* be revealed, the *son of perdition*; who *opposeth* [this includes making their own laws then opposing it. For e.g., in fast-tracking their sainthood process, they waived heir own standard procedures!] and exalteth itself above all that is called God, showing himself that he is God [outright blasphemy!]' And furthermore, the apostle warns his brethren that ‘*the mystery of iniquity* doth already work.’ 2 Thess. 2: 3, 4, 7. Even at that early date [about late A.D. 50] he saw, creeping into the church, errors that would prepare the way for the development of the papacy.

“Little by little, at first in stealth and silence, and then more openly as it increased in strength and gained control of the minds of men, *the mystery of iniquity* carried forward its deceptive and blasphemous work. Almost imperceptibly the *customs of heathenism* found their way into the Christian church. The *spirit of compromise and conformity* [the one constant temptation of mixing religion and politics] was restrained for a time by the fierce persecutions which the church endured under paganism [the state religion of the Roman emperors]. But as persecution ceased, and Christianity entered the courts and palaces of the kings, she laid aside the humble simplicity of Christ and His apostles for the pomp and pride of pagan priests and rulers; and in the place of the requirements of God, she substituted human theories and traditions. The conversion of Constantine, in the early part of the fourth century, caused great rejoicing; and the world, cloaked with the form of righteousness, walked into the church. Now the work of corruption rapidly progressed. Paganism, while appearing to be vanquished, became the conqueror. Her spirit controlled the church. Her *doctrines, ceremonies, and superstitions*, were incorporated into the faith and worship of the professed followers of Christ.” –E. G. White, Great Controversy, pp. 49, 50 (1911 ed.)

**“The Man of Sin” and “the Son of Perdition.”** – “This compromise between paganism and Christianity resulted in the development of the ‘man of sin’ foretold in prophecy as opposing and exalting himself above God. *That gigantic system of false religion is a masterpiece of Satan’s power*,---a monument of his efforts to seat himself upon the throne to rule the earth according to his will. . . . To secure worldly gains and honors, the church was led to seek the favor and support of the great men of the earth [emperors, kings, state and civil powers, etc]; and having thus rejected Christ, she was induced to yield allegiance *to the representative of Satan,--the Bishop of Rome*. . . It is one of the leading doctrines of Romanism that the pope is the *visible* head of the universal church of Christ [instead of the invisible Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Godhead, Christ’s personally appointed vicegerent who reigns in the throne of heart of

the converted man] invested with supreme authority over bishops and pastors in all parts of the world. More than this, the pope has been given the very titles of Deity. He has been styled 'Lord God the Pope (see Appendix) and has been declared *infallible*. He demands the homage of all men. The same claim urged by Satan in the wilderness of temptation, is still urged by him *through the Church of Rome*, and vast numbers are ready to yield him homage [as in "the whole world wondered after the beast," Rev. 13: 3]." – Ibid, p. 50.

### **Apostasy in the Christian churches origin of Mystery of Iniquity**

"A Roman Catholic work argues that 'if the Church of Rome were ever guilty of idolatry in relation to the saints dedicated to Mary, her daughter, the Church of England, stands guilty of the same, which has ten churches for one dedicated to Christ.' (Dr. Challoner, 'The Catholic Christian Instructed,' Preface, pp. 21, 22 (ed. 1897).

"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 the Church of Rome. The *Protestant Churches* have much of antichrist in them, and are far from being wholly reformed from . . . corruptions and wickedness.'" - Hopkins, Samuel, 'Works,' Vol. II, p. 328 (ed. 1854).

"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?' – Guthrie, John, 'The Gospel in Ezekiel,' p. 237 (Edinburgh ed. 1857).

"The church of England,' says (Charles) 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 still go into the pulpit and call itself *Christian*.'

"What was the origin of the great apostasy? How did the church first depart from the simplicity of the gospel? By conforming to the practices of paganism, to facilitate the acceptance of Christianity by the heathen. . . . During the lives of the apostles the church remained comparatively pure. But 'towards *the latter end of the second century* most 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.’ (Robinson, Robert, ‘Ecclesiastical Researches,’ ch. 6, par. 17 (ed. 1792, p. 51). To secure converts, the exalted standard of the Christian faith was lowered, and as the result ‘a pagan flood, flowing into the church, carried with it its customs, practices, and idols.’ As the Christian religion secured the favor and support of the secular rulers [“the great men” or “kings of the earth”], it was nominally accepted by multitudes; but while in appearance Christians, man ‘remained in substance pagans, especially worshipping in secret their idols.’ (Gavazzi’s Lectures, p. 278 (ed. 1854).

“Has not the *same process* been repeated in nearly every church calling itself *Protestant*? As its 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 any 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.’ (Ibid). A worldly flood, flowing into the church, ‘carries with it its customs, practices, and idols.’ – Ibid, Great Controversy, pp. 384, 385 (ed. 1911).

**Paul foretold baleful work of the mystery of iniquity.** “Early in the history of the church the *mystery of iniquity* foretold by the apostle Paul began its baleful work; and as the false teachers concerning whom Peter had warned the believers [2 Pet 2: 1], urged their heresies, many were ensnared by false doctrines. Some faltered under trial, and were tempted to give up the faith. At the time when John was given the Revelation, many had lost their first love of the gospel truth. But in His mercy God did not leave the church to continue in its backslidden state. In a message of infinite tenderness He revealed His love for them, and His desire that they should make sure work for eternity. ‘Remember,’ He pleaded. ‘from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works.’ Rev. 2: 5.” – Ibid, Acts of the Apostles, p. 587.

### **Satan is the mystery of iniquity and Spiritualism as well**

“There are but two parties. Satan works with his crooked, deceiving power, and through strong delusions he catches all who do not abide in the truth, who have turned away their ears from the truth and have turned unto fables [2 Tim. 4: 3, 4]. Satan himself abode not in the truth [John 8: 44]; he is the mystery of iniquity. Through his subtlety he gives to his soul-destroying errors the appearance of truth. Herein is their power to deceive. It is because they are a counterfeit of the truth that Spiritualism, theosophy, and the like deceptions gain such power over the minds of men. Herein is the masterly working of Satan. He pretends to be the savior of man, the benefactor of the human

race, and thus he more readily lures his victims to destruction. We are warned in the word of God that sleepless vigilance is the price of safety. Only in the straight path of truth and righteousness can we escape the tempter's power. But the world is ensnared. . . . *Organizations, institutions, unless kept by the power of God, will work under Satan's dictation to bring men under the control of men; and fraud and guile will bear the semblance of zeal for truth and for the advancement of the kingdom of God. Whatever in our practice that is not open as day belongs to the methods of the prince of evil.* His methods are practiced *even among Seventh-day Adventists, who claim to have advanced truth.* – Ibid, *Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 365. 366.

**“All need wisdom carefully to search out the mystery of iniquity that figures so largely in the winding up of this earth's history . . . .** In the very time in which we live, the Lord has called His people and has given them a message to bear. *He has called them to expose the wickedness of the man of sin who has made the Sunday law a distinctive power, who has thought to change times and laws, and oppress the people of God who stand firmly to honor Him by keeping the only true Sabbath, the Sabbath of creation, as holy unto the Lord.*

“The perils of the last days are upon us, and in our *work*, we are to *warn* the people of the danger they are in. Let not the solemn scenes which prophecy has revealed *be left untouched*. If our people were half awake, if they realized the nearness of the events portrayed in the Revelation, a *reformation* would be wrought in our churches, and many more would believe the message. We have no time to lose.; God calls upon us to watch for souls as they that must give an account. Advance new principles, and *crowd in* the clear-cut truth. It will be as a sword cutting both ways [Heb. 4:12]. *But be not too ready to take a controversial attitude.* There will be times when we must stand still and see the salvation of God. Let Daniel speak, let the Revelation speak, and tell what is truth. *But whatever the phase of the subject, uplift Jesus as the center of all hope*, ‘the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright and morning Star.’ Rev. 22: 16.”- *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 118. (See also *Evangelism*, p. 195; Vol. 7 E.G. White Bible Commentary, p. 911).

**We are Not Anti Catholic.** In exposing the wickedness of “the man of sin,” meaning, the false, soul-destroying doctrines, career, and activities of the papacy, past, present, and future as revealed in history and prophecy, we reiterate that we are not *anti Catholic*. Many of us were born Roman Catholics either by infant baptism or by mere profession “as everyone else in the family was Catholic,” i.e., before we saw the vastly superior, soul-satisfying, advancing light of truth of Adventism, in God's appointed time. To this moment, we have relatives, friends, co-workers, and neighbors who are kind, helpful, and loving Catholics. It is the unscriptural, antichristian, and clearly heathen origins of their faith and practices that we separated from. Together with apostle Paul

who, standing atop the famous Mars' Hill, declared to the idol-worshipping men of Athens "that God giveth to all life, and breadth, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation." Acts. 17: 11-26, K.J.V.

"But Christians of past generations obeyed the Sunday, supposing that in so doing they were keeping the Bible Sabbath; and there are now true Christians in every church, not excepting the Roman Catholic communion, who honestly believe that Sunday is the Sabbath of divine appointment. God accepts their sincerity of purpose and their integrity before Him. But when Sunday observance shall be enforced by law, and the world shall be enlightened concerning the obligation of the true Sabbath, then whosoever shall transgress the command of God, to obey a precept which has *no higher authority than that of Rome*, will thereby honor popery above God. He is paying homage to Rome and to the power which enforces the institution ordained by Rome. He is worshipping the beast and his image." – Ibid, Great Controversy, p. 449 (ed. 1911).

**"The pacific tone of Rome in the United States does not imply a change of heart. She is tolerant where she is helpless.** Says Bishop O' Connor: 'Religious liberty is merely endured until the opposite can be carried into effect without peril to the Catholic world'. . . . The archbishop of St. Louis once said: 'Heresy and unbelief are crimes; and in Christian countries, as in Italy and Spain, for instance, where all the people are Catholics, and where the Catholic religion is an essential part of the law of the land, they are punished as other crimes'. . . . Every cardinal, archbishop, and bishop in the Catholic Church takes an oath of allegiance to the pope [not to Jesus Christ!], in which occur the following words: '*Heretics, schismatics, and rebels to our said Lord (the pope), or his aforesaid successors, I will to my utmost persecute and oppose.*'" – Josiah Strong, Our Country, ch. 5, pars. 2-4/Ibid, p. 565.

*"It is true that there are real Christians in the Roman Catholic communion. Thousands in that church are serving God according to the best light they have. They are not allowed access to His word, and therefore they do not discern the truth \* [Published in 1888 and 1911. See Appendix]. They have never seen the contrast between a living heart service and a round of mere forms and ceremonies. God looks with pitying tenderness upon these souls, educated as they are in a faith that is delusive and unsatisfying. He will cause rays of light to penetrate the dense darkness that surrounds them. He will reveal to them the truth as it is in Jesus, and many will yet take their position with His people. But Romanism as a system is no more in harmony with the gospel of Christ now than at any former period in her history." –Ibid, p. 565.*

## **We Seriously Consider the following Words of Caution:**

“Let The Truth Cut.---Christ said to His disciples: ‘Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.’ Matt. 10: 16. Satan’s attacks against the advocates of truth will wax more bitter and determined to the very close of time. As in Christ’s day the chief priests and rulers stirred up the people against Him, so today the religious leaders will excite bitterness and prejudice against the truth for this time. The people will be led to acts of violence and opposition which they would never have thought of had they not been imbued with the animosity of professed Christians against the truth.

“What course shall the advocates of truth pursue? They have the unchangeable, eternal word of God, and they should reveal the fact that they have the truth as it is in Jesus. Their words must not be rugged and sharp. In their presentation of truth they must manifest the *love* and *meekness* and *gentleness* of Christ. Let the truth do the cutting. The word of God is as a sharp, two-edged sword, and will cut its way to the heart. Those who know that they have the truth should not, by the use of harsh and severe expressions, give Satan once chance to misinterpret their spirit.”

NO RAILING ACCUSATION. –As a people, we must stand as did the world’s Redeemer. When in controversy with Satan in regard to the body of Moses, Christ durst [dared] not bring against him a railing accusation. He had every provocation to do this, and Satan was disappointed because he could not arouse in Christ a spirit of retaliation. Satan was ready to misinterpret everything that was done by Jesus; and the Savior would give him no occasion, not the semblance of an excuse. He would not turn from His straight forward course of truth in order to follow the wanderings, and twisting, and turnings, and prevarications of Satan.

“We read in the prophecy of Zechariah that when Satan and all his synagogue stood up to resist the prayers of Joshua the high priest, and to resist Christ, who was about to show decided favor to Joshua, ‘The Lord said unto Satan, the Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?’ Zech. 3: 2. The course of Christ in dealing even with the adversary of souls, should be an example to us in all our intercourse with others, never to bring a railing accusation against any; much less should we employ harshness or severity toward those who may be as anxious to know the right way as we are ourselves.

“Those who have been educated in the truth by precept and example, should make great allowance for others who have had no knowledge of the Scriptures except through the interpretations given by ministers and church members, who have received



traditions and fables as Bible truth [see 1 Tim. 1: 4; 4: 7; 2 Tim. 4: 4; Titus 1: 14; 2 Pet. 1: 16]. They are surprised by the presentation of truth; it is a new revelation to them, and they cannot bear to have all the truth, in its most striking character, presented to them at the outset. All is new and strange, and wholly unlike that which they have heard from their ministers; and they are inclined to believe that the ministers have told them,---that Seventh-day Adventists are infidels, and do not believe the Bible. Let the truth be presented as it is in Jesus, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, and there a little [see Isa. 28: 9-13].” –Ibid, *Counsels to Writers & Editors*, p. 60.

With these clarifications as a background, we reiterate the definition of the Papacy. It is (1) The position or authority of the pope 2. The period during which the pope rules 3. The line or succession of the popes 4. The government of the Roman Catholic church, headed by the Pope.” –*Webster’s Dictionary, Student’s Edition, 1976*.

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Among the strangely daily breaking news regarding the papacy, too numerous to mention, we focus on two which highlight its characteristics, career, and end-time activities, historic and prophetic, namely (1) fast-tracking their own sainthood process by *waiving* even the basic two-miracle requirement for someone who is supposed to be prayed to as an intercessor for miracles to happen! (2) the Nostra Aetate declaration *acquitting* the Jewish people of guilt for Christ’s death, contradicting the very Bible testimony itself.

### **“WAITING PERIOD AND TWO-MIRACLE REQUIREMENT WAIVED IN FIRST DOUBLE CANONIZATION SINCE MIDDLE AGES”**

This was the headline of the news story by Andrew Frey, Bloomberg Business:

“Pope Francis *fast-tracked canonization* of John Paul II and John XIII. On April 27, 2015, Pope Francis, 77, declared the sainthood of John Paul, who died 9 years ago, and John XIII, who passed away in 1963, *in the first double canonization since the Middle Ages.....*The drive for John Paul, the Polish-born Karol Wojtyla, was kick-started immediately after his death by then newly-elected Pope Benedict XVI, *in breach of the standard 5-year waiting period*. For John XIII, whose campaign developed more slowly, it was Francis who cut through the red tape by *waiving the Vatican’s two-miracle requirement*.” See HYPERLINK "<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2014-04-24/John-Paul-fast=track-saint-in-two-pope-canonization>" [www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2014-04-24/John-Paul-fast=track-saint-in-two-pope-canonization](http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2014-04-24/John-Paul-fast=track-saint-in-two-pope-canonization).

## **“What is Nostra Aetate And What Does It Have To Do With Catholic-Jewish Relations?”**

This was the headline of an important religious news in HuffPost Religion, Religious News Service/By Lauren Markoe 10-27-15, posted 10-24-15. HYPERLINK "Http://huffingtonpost.com/entry/nostra" [Http://huffingtonpost.com/entry/nostra](http://huffingtonpost.com/entry/nostra) -aetate-catholic-jewish-relations\_562ac346e4b0aac0b8fd0ec0?cps=gravity\_2677\_6550410986397179150:

“(RNS) Fifty years ago Wednesday (October 28), the Vatican issued a declaration that established a new rapport between Jews and Catholics. On the eve of this anniversary, the Anti-Defamation League —founded to protect Jewish lives and rights---called the church’s approval of Nostra Aetate ‘arguably the most important moment in modern Jewish-Christian relations.’ How so? Let us explain . . .

### **“Q. ‘Nostra Aetate.’ Does that mean ‘Jewish people’ in Latin?**

“A. It means ‘In Our Time.’ They are the first words of the declaration, which was written in the Second Vatican Council, the most-far-reaching reform effort of the Roman Catholic Church in centuries. The document’s English title: ‘Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions.’ In the fourth of five sections, Nostra Aetate focuses in on the relationship between Jew and Catholics. By the way, the entire declaration is a quick read---little more than a page long.

### **“Q. Yeah, but could I have the Cliff Notes Version?**

“A: Nostra Aetate draws a poetic analogy between Christians and Jews, describing them as the well-cultivated olive tree unto which have been grafted the wild shoots, the Gentiles.”\* ‘Crucially, it rejects the charge that the Jewish people are responsible for Jesus’ death, an accusation used for centuries to justify the persecution of the Jews. The document reads: ‘ . . . what happened in His passion cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today.’ The church, it continues, ‘*decries hatred, persecutions\*\**, displays of anti-Semitism, directed against Jews at any time and by anyone.’ [\*Rom. 11: 23, 34.\*\*The Church’s Inquisition used the worst forms of torture ever invented against those it considered “heretics,” particularly the Protestants of the Old World].

“In 1949, Isaac met with Pope Pius XII, whose response to Nazism is viewed by critics as too slow and too quiet, and remains a point of contention. Little came of the meeting. Ten years later, Isaac met with Pope John XXIII, admired for his efforts to save Jews during World War II. John, who had already thought deeply about Christian

responsibility for Jewish suffering, entrusted Cardinal Augustin Bea, a champion of Jewish-Catholic relations, to lead the efforts to draft a declaration on the church and the Jews.

**“Q: Does Nostra Aetate mention the Holocaust?”**

“A: No, but it was born of it. French Jewish historian Jules Isaac survived the Holocaust and then immersed himself in Christian texts, trying to understand how Christians\* could participate in Hitler’s plan to murder the Jews, or stand by as millions perished. He concluded that *a misinterpretation of the Gospels*, a ‘teaching of contempt,’ had provided an excuse to persecute Jews for centuries, and that it must be supplanted by a teaching true to Jesus’ message. [NOTES: (a) Hitler was a baptized *Catholic* (b) It the *Romans*, not Christ’s humble followers, that “desolated” Jerusalem and the Jews. See 70-week prophecy of Daniel 9; Matt. 24; Luke 21; Josephus’ “Antiquities,” etc.]

**“Q. Does Nostra Aetate talk about religion other than Judaism?”**

“A: As originally conceived, the declaration was to be about the church and the Jews only. Traditionalists, and Middle Eastern bishops unsympathetic to the new state of Israel, objected. Bea decided on a less contentious goal: *a document that stressed ecumenism and discussed other faiths.*

“*Hinduism and Buddhism* each get a complimentary line or two. And a third of Nostra Aetate’s five sections is devoted to *Islam*. ‘The church regards with esteem also the *Moslems*.’ It states, ‘They adore the one God, living and subsisting in Himself; merciful and all-powerful, the Creator of heaven and earth, who has spoken to man.’

**“Q. So after Nostra Aetate, everything is hunky-dory between Catholics and Jews?”**

“A: Issues have arisen, including the Vatican’s reluctance to establish *diplomatic* relations [truly the church-state described in prophecy] with Israel, which occurred in 1993, and the pursuit of *sainthood for Pope Pius XII*. But since Nostra Aetate was signed, all popes have taken seriously its charge to improve Jewish-Catholic relations. And in 1998 the *Vatican apologized for its inaction during the Holocaust*. As for the current pontiff, even before he was Pope Francis, Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Buenos Aires enjoyed a close friendship with Argentine Rabbi Abraham Skorka. The pair co-hosted a television show and wrote a book together about *interfaith dialogue*. These days, when Skorka visits Francis at the Vatican, the pope himself is known to supervise their meals, so that the rabbi eats only kosher foods.” (End of quote)

**“Why Nostra Aetate Was a ‘Miracle’ For Catholic-Jewish Relations’**

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[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/nostra-aetate-catholic-jewish-realtions\\_56312a25e4b063179910a982?cps+gravity\\_5017\\_308476441095964599](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/nostra-aetate-catholic-jewish-realtions_56312a25e4b063179910a982?cps+gravity_5017_308476441095964599).

“The president of the World Jewish Congress on Wednesday (Oct. 28) hailed as a ‘miracle’ a Vatican declaration signed 50 years ago that helped improve Catholic-Jewish relations. ‘Relations between Catholics and Jews on *many levels* are today *better than ever before in history*,’ said Ronald Lauder, World Jewish Congress president. He attributed the breakthrough to the 1965 document known as Nostra Aetate, which he described as a miracle.” Nostra Aetate, or ‘In Our Time’ in English, rejected the *notion* that the Jewish people should be held responsible for Jesus’ death.” (end of quote).

**Church of Rome Similar to the Jewish Church.** – “There is a striking similarity between the church of Rome and the Jewish church at the time of Christ’s *first advent*. While the Jews secretly trampled upon *every principle* of the law of God, they were *outwardly rigorous* in the observance of its precepts, loading it down with exactions that made obedience painful and burdensome. As the Jews professed to revere the *law*, so do Romanists claim to reverence the *cross*. They *exalt the symbol* of Christ’s sufferings, while in their lives they deny Him whom it represents.” - Ellen G. White, Vol 4 Spirit of Prophecy, p. 384 (ed. 1884), Pacific Press, Oakland, CA. (Continued next month)

**NOTE:** Who were actually persecuting the Jews for this reason? Not Christ’s followers, beginning with the Twelve. Judaism, not Islam, was the first and most bitter persecutors of Christ and His disciples and followers, the first and early Christians up to the time of Paul, the former Pharisee zealot prior to his conversion to become the “Apostle to the Gentiles”—both Jewish and non-Jewish in Europe. Even the converted Jews made life extremely difficult for Paul and the rest of the apostles. They insisted that the new converts to Christianity from the Gentiles had to follow the customs and traditions of Judaism, particularly circumcision as the evidence of their conversion---instead of the baptism by immersion which Christ taught and He himself submitted to in the hand of John the Baptist at Jordan as the Example for all. Jerusalem was the site of the most bitter persecution of their fellow Jews. John wrote the familiar verse, “He came to His own but His own [people] received Him not.” See \_\_\_\_\_. As prophesied, it was during Christ’s mock public trial in which Pilate declared Jesus guiltless three times of all the charges brought upon Him by the Jewish Sanhedrin and the people assembled. They persisted in the demand to crucify Him. At Pilate’s last effort to release Jesus by

presenting to them Barrabbas, a real criminal and leader of the insurrection against Roman rule, hoping by the character contrast between Jesus and Judas, they, instead, screamed even louder in unison, “Crucify Him, crucify Him, crucify Him.” Then they added their fearful self-condemnation recorded in the book with seven seals and the whole universe as witness, “*Let His blood be upon us and our children.*” \_\_\_\_\_.

So who persecuted Christ’s persecutors? First, the emperors of pagan Rome—the real Gentiles—the bitter enemies of the Jewish nation for forsaking God and going into idolatry.

See ***The Wars of the Jews or The History of the Destruction of Jerusalem*** by Josephus, Complete Works, Book I, From Antiochus Epiphanes Taking Jerusalem to the Death of Herod the Great, Book II, From the Death of Herod Till Vespasian Was Sent To Subdue the Jews By Nero.”

The Footnote on p. 428 of the Preface says: “That these calamities of the Jews, who were our Savior’s murderers, were to be the greatest that had ever been since the beginning of the world, our Savior had directly foretold, (Matt. XXIV. 21; Xiii. 19; xxi. 23, 24;) and that they proved to be such accordingly, Josephus is here a most authoritative witness.”

There were several insurrections most famous of which is the Maccabean Revolt led by John Hyrcanus [?] recorded by Josephus.

(Continued from last month’s study)

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