

God Is Government

Isaiah 33:22

*“For the LORD is our judge, the
LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD
is our king; he will save us.”*



TRUTH ABOUT RELIGION & THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

PART SEVEN

Beginning with Part Six we provided detail history about the Roman Catholic Church so that you can fully understand the historical corruption of the church and just how they not only lied to the world but positioned themselves as the sole authority of faith. However, in doing this, the Roman Catholic Church throughout history has failed to adhere to that which they told the world. In Part Seven we are going to look at the history of the Papacy and the Popes themselves and shed light on this corrupt organization.

Some of this material that's bound to offend many of you if you come from certain backgrounds. So let me emphasize, I do believe it's important for us to have a perspective of history. And there's some histories that you generally will not be exposed to unless you have special sources or do some digging.

The book of Revelation was published approximately 96 A.D. And apparently even by then the church was in big trouble. Now one of the lessons you get from this is if you're going to study what a church ought to be you probably have to limit yourself to the book of Acts and of course those seven letters in Revelation Chapters 2 & 3. So, as we study the so-called early church in this Part Seven we shouldn't be surprised that maybe much of what they did or what we think they did may not be too much of an example. However, after you complete the reading of this Part I think you may have some surprises – eye openers at least.

The view of the church from the world's perspective is generally pretty much one of bigotry and one of bloodshed. The view of the church from the Jewish perspective is understandably one of merciless persecution. It is a shock to anyone that does a little bit of homework to realize what kinds of crimes are and the extent of those crimes that have been created throughout history in the name of the church.

Now you may wonder why is this dismal and violent history important? I don't think that you and I can really get a handle on the present and especially the prophetic implications of passages in Scripture without



a valid perspective of history. I don't believe any of us since most of us here would probably identify with the Protestant Reformation and its benefits passed on to us. But I believe that you and I have probably just a superficial glimpse of what that Reformation really involved, and I think we need to have an appreciation for the history that led up to it.

So, what I'd like to do is just take the liberty of summarizing the history from the early church to the present day in rather candid terms. Now obviously the early church, I guess you'd probably date it starting roughly in the year 30-something A.D. and we'll take it to about 300 A.D. I'll use that phrase of the early church. Certainly, that was all impacted by the rise of Rome.

Now Rome was actually founded in 753 B.C. and it subdued Italy and Carthage and Greece, Asia Minor and so forth in the subsequent centuries. Spain, Gaul, Britain, the Teutons in 133 and they finally conquered Judea in 63 B.C. Setting up, if you will, almost a worldwide administrative environment that of course the Gospel was in effect going to take advantage of subsequently. The Greeks had conquered earlier and established a universal language.

So, it's interesting how a universal language and a very global administration set the stage for the Gospel period. But in any case, the Roman Empire that arises out of that subsequently, that is in the days of Julius Caesar, call it 46 to 44 B.C. that really starts the Empire as such. It was eventually to extend from the Atlantic to the Euphrates and from the North Sea to the African Desert.

The population was well over 100-120 million, which in those days was a big number. Now after Julius Caesar, of course, we have Augustus Caesar, during whose days of course Jesus was born, and Tiberius followed him during which Jesus was crucified. Then Caligula made an unsuccessful attempt to desecrate the Temple.

Then finally we got to Nero who really started the persecution. One thing you should understand if you study the Gospels is to realize that most of those early persecutions you read about in the Book of Acts were sponsored by the local Jewish community.

As one of envy or call it what you will, it wasn't really until Nero that the Roman Emperors got into the act. And that's what shook up the Thessalonian Church, of course, because that was when things got really pretty rough. And of course, as you know, he blamed the burning of Rome on the Christians or attempted to and so forth. He was the one, of course, that executed Paul. Then comes Galba, then Vespasian. Moving on through Titus and Domitian. And he was probably one of the worst, very violent. He's the one that exiled John to the island of Patmos. We finally get through after Trajan, Hadrian, Antinous Pius. That was where the Bar Kokhba revolt was. He's the one that leveled the city of Jerusalem. Then Marcus Aurelius. And he was the severest, the most severe guy since Nero. He also probably marks the peak of Roman power, approximately 180 A.D. From that point on, it's a decline. And I won't go through all these emperors. As you go through them, some of them were, of course, severe on persecuting Christians.

Some of them were quite favorable to Christianity, surprisingly enough. But anyway, go right through those. Diocletian in 305, who persecuted the Christians furiously. He was probably the most severe of that bunch. And he attempted to systematically eliminate Christians by torturing them to death. And of course, the catacombs of Rome and all kinds of background, you can get into these.

But that brings us to the 4th century. In other words, the early 300s to a guy by the name of Constantine, who's widely misunderstood. He became identified with Christians, but many people misunderstand his background. He was facing a battle, the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, on that evening, just outside Rome. He apparently had a vision, or at least the subsequent press would have it so. But after he succeeded in that battle, he published his Edict of Toleration, which established freedom of religion. In other words, he allowed Christianity to come out of hiding and be part of the culture. But not the only one. And he favored Christians at court. He exempted Christian ministers from taxes. He issued a general exhortation in 325 A.D. for all his subjects to become Christians.

Now, you need to understand that what he was obsessed by was unity in the empire. And in his view, Mithras worship, Sun worship, Christianity, all could be somehow rationalized. And it appeared to him to be thus unifiable. And so his reforms were substantial. He's the one that established Sunday worship. He's the one that forbids work on Sunday, which is a big deal for the slaves. And he reduced slavery. He eliminated the gladiatorial fights. And he made it illegal to kill unwelcome children. Interesting guy compared to today. Crucifixion as a form of execution was abolished. And it's interesting that he took on some interesting titles.

He, of course, as the head of the pagan priesthood, was the Pontifex Maximus. But he took on an additional title. Vicarious Christi, or another Christ, or in place of Christ.

The word vicarious in Latin is equivalent to the word anti in the Greek. We think of anti-something as against. The word in the Greek actually means in the place of. And so the term antichrist means in the place of Christ. In Latin, it's the vicar of Christ. So, he was the one, not the Roman bishops by the way, that originally took on that title.

And he was the one that, he was the first ecumenical leader. He presided over the council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. and considered himself the head of all these different religions in the empire at that time. And so, in some respects, he might be viewed by some as a prototype of a coming world leader who will attempt to do the same thing.

Now he got so fed up with the local Roman aristocracy who persisted on adhering to their pagan religions that he moved the capital of the world from Rome to Byzantium. We name it Constantinople, and in effect the new Rome. And it became the capital of the world in 330 A.D. Now after the power shifted to Byzantium, the Roman bishops tried to establish their self-assumed role that we'll talk about as we go, which eventually becomes the Vatican and the Papacy.

Now it's interesting that Constantine was followed by Julian who is known as the apostate because he attempted to undo all this and restore paganism. But he was succeeded by Jovian who reestablished the Christian religion, and it was his successor that is the third successor after Constantine, Theodosius, who made Christianity the state religion of the world. He ruled from 378 to 395 A.D. Many people think Constantine did, not really.

It was really the third guy after him. But what happened as a result of that, many people were forced to convert. They filled the churches with unregenerate members. He had an ambition to rule, to heathenism, pomp, and so forth emerged in the worldly church. Thus, the empire really begins to divide. And we have a series of leaders in the west and a series of leaders in the east. And I won't go through all of those. But from the 300s we finally get to the 400s. In 476 the western part of that empire fell to the barbarians. That ushers

up a period that most people allude to as the Dark Ages. In the east, the eastern segment of the empire endures all the way until 1453, call it a thousand years longer. But it finally falls, of course, to the Muslims.

With the government and political background, I want to back up now and talk about the bishops of Rome because it's out of their intrigues that we have a tremendous impact on our lives today. And, of course, it's interesting that up until 500 A.D., well, first of all, the word Pope, which simply means father, papa or father, was initially applied to all western bishops. But from about 500 A.D. on it began to be restricted to the Bishop of Rome, was the title that they used.

But for 500 years the bishops of Rome were not popes, by the way. That comes as a shock to many people who feel that they've studied this background, but it's well documented. Now, the Catholic tradition that Peter was the first Pope is fiction without any historical or biblical basis whatsoever.

There's no evidence that Peter was ever a Bishop of Rome. In fact, in 1 Peter 5:3, we even get the hint of his own foreboding of such things over his successors because he says, "...neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock." If you recognize what Peter's saying there, it's in some contrast to some things that are attributed to him. Now, the early Roman bishops tried to influence and control other bishops, but with no significant effect.

It was a self-assertion that didn't fly. Sylvester I, from about 314 to 335, was Bishop of Rome, and Constantine virtually made Christianity favored by his moves. But Constantine regarded himself as the head of the church, and he called and presided, as I say, over the Council of Nicaea.

The bishops of Alexandria and Antioch were accorded full jurisdiction over their provinces, as the Roman bishop was over his. And there was no hint that there was any overlap here. In fact, by the end of the 4th century, all the churches and bishops had come to be largely dominated by five primary centers.

Rome, Constantinople, of course, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria. And these bishops had come to be called the Patriarchs. They were of equal authority, each in control of their own province.

After the division of the empire in 395, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria came to acknowledge the leadership of Constantinople. And that starts the struggle between Constantinople and Rome for power. Sylvester, the Bishop of Rome, 395-398, he tried to claim a universal jurisdiction over the whole church.

But just as he did, of course, the empire divided, so he really got nowhere. This struggle that started back then, continues to this day, and it is strangely enough, the roots of the problem in Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia, and the region of Yugoslavia. There are three ethnic traditions, there are three religions, and there are three different sources of support for the conflict there.

The Roman Catholics, the Eastern Orthodox, and the Muslims. There's no high ground. All sides have accumulated atrocities over the last 1500 years.

Now, some historians consider Leo I the first pope. The East was beset with controversies. The West was under weak emperors.

It was beginning to break up under the barbarians. That is the political Rome. And so he obtained from Emperor Valentinian III imperial recognition for his claim as primate over all bishops. He was able to get him to sign something. In 452, he did something interesting. He persuaded Attila the Hun to spare the city of Rome just by jawboning. That was in 452. In 455, he induced Genseric the Vandal to have mercy on the city.

Having done that twice, his reputation was made. And he declared himself lord of the whole church. Advocated exclusive universal papacy.

Resistance to his authority was a sure path to hell. And he advocated the death penalty for heresy. However, the ecumenical council of Chalcedon in 451 composed of bishops from all over the world, had already given the patriarch of Constantinople equal prerogatives to the bishop of Rome.

Now, the fall of Rome, interestingly enough, sets the stage, if you will, for more power because with the breakup of the empire, all these pieces were negotiable. And an aggressive guy, see, they're free of civil

authority. The fragmented kingdoms of the barbarians gave opportunity for individual advantageous alliances.

And ironically, the pope becomes the most commanding figure in the west because the political thing was a shambles. Now, Gregory I, from about 590 to 600, is regarded by many as the first real pope. He appeared at a time of political anarchy throughout Europe.

His conspicuous leadership over various kings stabilized the times. He labored unceasingly over the purification of the church, deposed neglectful or unworthy bishops, opposed the sale of offices. Most of these offices were bought and sold. You'll see more of that as we go here. In his personal life, he was a good man, one of the purest and best of the popes. And if more had been, as he was, the world would have a very different view of the papacy.

But that leads us to one of the most remarkable leaders in the history of the world, a guy by the name of Charlemagne. Zacharias, who ruled from 741 to 752, was instrumental in making Pepin the father of Charlemagne, king of the Franks. They were a Germanic people occupying western Germany and northern France.

Stephen II, his successor, had requested Pepin to lead his army to Italy to conquer the Lombards, which had pillaged Italy. He succeeded and gave a large part of central Italy to the pope, which was the beginning of the Papal States. These endured until 1870 for about 1100 years, an actual piece of ground that was the Papal States.

And the king, Victor Emmanuel, returned these lands to the kingdom of Italy in 1870. Well, Pepin sends Charlemagne, who was also the grandson of Charles Martel. If you know European history, Charles Martel was the guy that stopped the Muslims from overrunning Europe at his famous victory at the Battle of Tours in 732.

Anyway, Charlemagne then accedes to the throne. He became one of the greatest rulers of all time. He reigned for 46 years and many wars and many conquests, huge ones. His realm included what is now

Germany, France, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, Belgium, and parts of Spain and Italy. So that's a major, major event in, obviously, world history. But see, he helped the Pope, and the Pope helped him.

So he was, turns out, to be one of the greatest influences in bringing the Papacy to a position of world power. After his death at the Treaty of Verdun, and that's about 843, that divided the empire into what became the foundations of Germany, France, and Italy. Now, that started a ceaseless struggle between the Popes and the political rulers of those areas, especially the German and French kings.

The so-called Holy Roman Empire lasted a thousand years, until finally Napoleon brought it to an end in 1806. Now, Nicholas I was the first Pope to wear a crown. It was about this time that a book appeared, and you'll hear about this, the Isidorean Decretals, which purported to be letters and decrees of bishops and councils of the second and third centuries.

Centuries later, it'll be discovered that these were deliberate forgeries. They were designed to exalt the power of the Pope, stamping the Papacy with authority of antiquity, antedating the Pope's temporal power by five centuries. They are regarded by historians as the most colossal literary fraud in history.

But let's move on. Now we get to what I'll call the Great Cleavage. About, now get this, up till 869, all the ecumenical councils were held in or near Constantinople, not Rome, and they were in Greek, not Latin, for the large measure.

Nicholas undertook to interfere in the affairs of the Eastern Church. He excommunicated the Patriarch of Constantinople, who in turn excommunicated him. The claims of the Roman Church became unbearable, and the East finally separated itself.

And this breach became wider through the centuries. The brutal treatment of Constantinople by the armies of Pope Innocent III, I'll come to him, during the Crusades, and the creation of the dogma of papal infallibility in 1870, deepened that chasm even more. So, by the time you get to the 9th century, you've got an Eastern-Western Church.

The Eastern Church involves primitive Christianity mixed up with Greek and Oriental paganism. The Western Church is primitive Christianity, all mixed up with Greek and Roman paganism. But we're moving on.

This leads to a period of about 200 years that is regarded by historians as the darkest period of the papacy. From Nicholas I to Gregory VII, that's from 870 to 1050, they're sometimes called the midnight of the Dark Ages. Bribery, corruption, immorality, and bloodshed mark this blackest chapter of the organized Church.

Now we get to Sergius III, about 904 to 911. He had a mistress by the name of Marozia. She, her mother Theodora, and her sisters filled the papal chair with paramours and bastard sons and turned the papal den into a den of robbers.

This is called by the historians the Rule of the Harlots. It occurred from about 904 to about 963. John X was brought from Ravenna to Rome and made Pope by Theodora for her more convenient gratification.

He was smothered to death by Marozia, who then, in succession, raised to the papacy Leo VI, Stephen VII, John IX, and then finally her own illegitimate son. Another of her sons appointed four of the following popes. Leo VII, Stephen VIII, Martin III, Acciapetus II, and John XII.

And a grandson of Marozia, who was guilty of almost every crime, violated virgins and widows, lived with his father's mistress, made the papal palace a brothel, was killed while in an act of adultery by the woman's enraged husband. Well, many people say that was the times. At the same time, it's a matter of history.

Let's move on. Benedict VIII and John XIX bought the office of the Pope with open bribery.

Benedict IX was made Pope when he was a boy, twelve years old, through a money bargain with the powerful families that ruled Rome. He committed murders and adultery in broad daylight, robbed pilgrims on the graves of the martyrs. He was a hideous criminal.

The people finally drove him out of Rome. Some call him the worst of the popes. Although there's a number of these guys, it'll make the finals.

There were three rival popes in 1045 to 1046. Benedict IX, Gregory VI, Sylvester III. Rome in those days swarmed with hired assassins, and the virtue of many, most, I should say, pilgrims, were violated.

Clement II was appointed pope by Emperor Henry III of Germany because no Roman clergyman could be found who was free of the pollution of simony or fornication. Now simony is the term buying office. It comes as a shock to many of us to realize that with all the other problems, these offices were bought and sold as property.

They were just that. But this, after this dark period, we lead to what some people would call the golden age of papal power. There was a cry for reform that was answered by Hildebrand, who led the papacy into its golden age from about 1049 to about 1294.

He controlled five successive administrations prior to his own. Leo IX, Victor II, Stephen IX, Nicholas II. I won't go through all this. He became Gregory VII in 1073 to 1085 and undertook a major reform, especially simony. Practically all bishops and priests in those days had purchased their offices from kings, all for money of course. This elimination of that source of revenue brought about conflict with King Henry IV, the emperor of Germany.

Devastating wars followed, and Italy was devastated also by opposing armies. Gregory was eventually driven from Rome and died in exile, but he had succeeded in making the papacy independent of temporal power. Now we get to the interesting guy called Innocent III.

If you don't remember any of these other guys, you want to remember this one, because he turns out to be one of the most powerful of all popes. Now he claimed to be a vicar of Christ, and so vicar of God, supreme sovereign over the church and the world, and so forth. All things on earth, and in heaven and in hell are subject to the vicar of Christ.

Now, the reason I want you to remember him is because Innocent III one day murdered more Christians than all the Roman Caesars put together. Let's move on. The kings of Germany, France, England, and practically all the monarchs of Europe obeyed his will, including the Byzantine Empire.

Never in history has any one man exerted more power. He ordered two crusades. He decreed transubstantiation, confirmed oracular confession, declared papal infallibility, condemned the Magna Carta, forbid the reading of the Bible in the vernacular, instituted the Inquisition, ordered the extermination of heretics, etc.

More blood was shed under his direction than any, than all his immediate successors, or, and that of his successors, than in any other period of church history except in the papacy's effort to crush the Reformation, which I'll come to. Now let's talk a little bit about the Inquisition because that's a term you hear about. Many people haven't done their homework with that really.

It was called the Holy Office, formal name, when it was instituted by Pope Innocent III, and it was perfected under Pope Gregory IX. Under it, everyone was required to inform against heretics. Anyone suspect was subject to torture without knowing the name of their 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, what have you. The victim's property was confiscated and divided between the civil and religious authorities. That's called an incentive. Of course, the Inquisition claimed multitudes of victims in Spain, Italy, Germany, and the Netherlands, but it did its most deadly work against the Albigensians.

In southern France and northern Spain and northern Italy, there was a group that preached against the immoralities of the priesthood, the worship of saints and images, completely rejected the clergy and their claims, opposed the claims of the Church of Rome, made great use of the Scriptures, lived self-denying lives with great zeal for moral purity. By 1167, they embraced a majority of the population of southern France, and there were very numerous in northern Italy. By 1208, Pope Innocent III ordered a crusade in which the bloody war of extermination utterly wiped-out town after town after town.

The inhabitants were murdered without discrimination until all of the Albigensians were wiped out. Another group, very similar but different, were called the Waldensians. They're not identical, but very similar and somewhat in the same region.

They emphasized Bible reading and rejecting clerical usurpation and profligacy, and they were similarly wiped out. All but a few survivors in the Alpine valleys southwest of Turin, who are now the leading Protestant body in Italy. It is recorded that in the 30 years between 1540 and 1570, no fewer than 900,000 Protestants were put to death by the Pope's war for the extermination of the Waldensians.

For 500 years, the Inquisition was the most diabolical thing in human history. For its record, none of the, quote, holy, quote, quote, infallible, close quote, Popes have ever apologized. Rather, the leadership and the instigators have been elevated to sainthood.

Now, Boniface VIII, in his famous book called *Unum Sanctum*, said, quote, we declare, affirm, define, and pronounce that it is altogether necessary for salvation, that every creature be subject to the Roman Pontiff, close quote. However, he was so corrupt that Dante, who visited Rome during his reign, called the Vatican a sewer of corruption, and assigned him, along with Nicholas III and Clement V, to the lowest parts of hell. Now, one of the things that you start to get the picture here, and you're going to see more of it, is the history of Europe is really a history of bloodshed resulting from struggle for power, temporal earthly power between the Popes and the various kings.

Roman Catholicism has become the most persecuting faith that the world has ever seen. Innocent III, as I say, murdered more Christians one afternoon than any Roman emperor did during his entire reign. In Spain alone, over three million are recorded in Canon Laurenti's *History of the Inquisition*.

These horrors remain as memorials to the dogmas which remain in force today. It may come as a shock that the mechanisms are in place today, legal mechanisms. You don't hear much about them, and they're not operative in places where the Catholic Church is not adequately dominant.

But talk to Christian missionaries, certain parts of South America and elsewhere. You'll discover this procedure is still in force where it can be enforced. So we have millions over the centuries that have simply refused to align themselves with Roman Catholic heresies, dogmas, and practices that thus were willingly martyred for their commitment to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Papacy had been victorious in its 200-year struggle with the German Empire, but they met their match with the French King, Philip the Fair, King of France. And with him, the history of modern France really begins. After the death of Pope Benedict XI, the Papal Palace was removed from Rome to Avignon on the south border of France, and for 70 years, the Papacy was a mere tool of the French court from about 1305 to 1377.

I mention all this because most of us have a very broad tailored revisionist view of Church history. But all of this is well documented, and there will be a list of all the documents with the references, but primarily leaning on such available documents as Haley's Bible Handbook which is available in any bookstore.

And also, as I'm going to get to, a book that I regard as a must-read for any responsible Christian today. A book by Dave Hunt, called, *A Woman Rides the Beast*. Chuck Smith has said, "if there is a prophet alive today, his name is Dave Hunt, unpopular guy, highly controversial, does his homework, doesn't mean I necessarily agree with all his particular views, but boy, he does a thorough job, and his book, to me, is a milestone."

I'm reasonably well-read in this area when I read his book. It startled me, because he also, in addition to going through important history, and going into important doctrinal background, puts it in prophetic perspective, like no writer I've ever seen. We'll come to that.

But anyway, getting back to the French control of the papacy, for the next 40 years, there were two sets of popes, one at Rome, and one at Avignon, each claiming to be vicar of Christ, hurling anathemas at each other, till we get to John XXIII, 1410-1415, who was called by some as the most depraved criminal who ever sat on the papal throne, was guilty of almost every crime, as cardinal, 200 maidens, nuns, and married women fell victim to him. As pope, he violated virgins and nuns, lived in adultery with his brother's wife, was guilty of sodomy and other nameless vices. He bought the papal office, sold cardinalates to children of wealthy families, and openly denied the future life.

That brings us to, really, the Renaissance pope, from Pius II. He's said to be the father of many illegitimate children, spoke openly of methods used to seduce women, encourage young men to, and even offered to

instruct them in methods of self-indulgence. And we get to Paul II, who filled his house with concubines, Sixtus IV.

He sanctioned the Spanish Inquisition, decreed that money would deliver souls from purgatory, was implicated in the plot to murder Lorenzo de' Medici and others who opposed his policies. He used the papacy to enrich himself and his relatives, made eight of his nephew's cardinals, while some of them were yet boys, mere boys. In wealth and pomp, he and his relatives surpassed the old Roman families.

Then we get to Innocent VIII, had 16 children by various married women, multiplied church officers, sold them for vast sums of money, decreed the extermination of the Waldenses, appointed the brutal Thomas of Torquemada the Inquisitor General of Spain, and ordered all rulers to deliver up heretics to him. When you realize the power of the Catholic Church in most of Europe, you can imagine what that meant. Alexander VI, he's called the most corrupt of the Renaissance popes.

He's licentious, avaricious, depraved, bought the papacy, made many new cardinals for money, had a number of illegitimate children whom he openly acknowledged, and appointed to high church office while they were yet children who, with their father, murdered cardinals and others who stood in their way. He had for a mistress a sister of cardinal who became the next pope, Pius III, and so on. Julius II shows up, called the warrior pope, richest of the cardinals, vast income from numerous bishoprics and churches.

He bought the papacy, maintained and personally led vast armies, issued indulgences for money, on it goes. This brings you then to the year 1483, where in Isolaven, Saxony, a baby boy is born to a very poor coal miner. As he grew up and he observed the poverty of his father, he, this boy named Martin, chose a different vocation.

He decided to become a lawyer. In 1501, he entered the University of Erfurt, where he excelled in his studies. When he came to the end of his schooling in 1504, an event occurred that changed his life.

He was walking across the campus, and there was a lightning storm of unusual severity. It broke out so forcefully that he fell on his face in fear. The thunder was deafening, lightning was striking about him, including a tree right next to him.

So instinctively, he cried out to the patron saint of the coal miners, whose name he heard invoked during his childhood, Saint Anne, to save me from lightning. If you save me, I'll become a monk. Shortly thereafter, the storm seemed to immediately stop.

And being a man of his word, he withdrew from law school and entered an Augustinian monastery, where he applied himself so diligently, that he quickly obtained, a relatively quick time, a Doctor of Theology, just a few years. The more he studied, the more troubled, though, he became. Because although he was becoming expert in theology, he lacked peace personally.

The question he continually wrote in his diary was, how can a man find favor with God? In search of peace, he devoted himself to an exceedingly pious lifestyle. He would fast for 10-15 days at a time. When temperatures dropped below freezing, he slept outside without a blanket.

Between his studies, he would beat his body black and blue and bleeding, hoping that by punishing his flesh, he could rid himself of the thoughts and motives that he knew were not right. This was not uncommon in the medieval church. He went to confession so often, that it's recorded that Abbott said, Martin, either go out and commit a sin worth confessing, or stop bothering me.

He was very introspective, continually plagued by what he knew of his own depravity and sinfulness. And I won't go through some, all of this here, but finally in 1509, he decided to make a pilgrimage to Rome, in the hope of finding this elusive peace for which he longed. He set out on foot and crossed the Alps, but on coming over, he almost died from a fever.

And on making his way to a monastery at the foot of the mountains, they nursed him back to health. But there a wise monk suggested that he needs to read the book of Habakkuk, the Old Testament. He did just that.

It was a good suggestion because Habakkuk was a struggler, just like he was. And just like we do today, if God is good, why does He allow suffering? If there really is a devil, why doesn't God just obliterate him? The book of Habakkuk deals with that. You know, it's interesting.

You and I, we throw out questions, and then we quickly go back to our personal pursuits and wonder why we don't find the answers. Well, anyway, one verse captured Martin's attention. Habakkuk 2, 4. The just shall live by faith.

Now, by the way, it's kind of interesting that that verse becomes the key verse in Paul's trilogy. Paul wrote three epistles. Galatians, Romans, and Hebrews.

And each one of those quotes that verse, and that verse thus becomes the glue for that trilogy. The just shall live by faith. Who are the just? The Book of Romans answers that question.

The just shall live by faith. How do we live? The book of Galatians amplifies that. The just shall live by faith.

Book of Hebrews deals with that, and that's one of the reasons I'm convinced that either Paul wrote all three, or Paul didn't write Hebrews, and the fingerprint of the Holy Spirit is even more impressive. But anyway, let's move on. He recovered sufficiently to continue his journey to Rome.

He went to the church of St. John's Lateran, typical cathedral of that day. There's a staircase there that's said to have come from Pilate's judgment hall. I won't go through the whole procedure, but pilgrims there mount them painfully on their knees a step at a time, saying prayers as they go.

The Pope had promised an indulgence to all who would undergo this particular kind of rite. And as Martin was undergoing this procedure, climbing on his knees up this, the Lateran staircase, Habakkuk 2.4 suddenly came into his mind. The just shall live by faith.

What's he doing here? So, he ceased his prayers, and he returned to the University of Wittenberg where he explored this revolutionary idea of justification by faith. On October 31st, 1517, he nailed his famous 95 Theses to the door of Wittenberg Castle Church. Started a movement that's known today as the Reformation, probably the most important, single most important event in history.

His name of course is Martin Luther. Now the church didn't like the implications of his views, and ultimately, the Diet of Worms, the Diet is a council, Worms is a location, town. They excommunicated him as a heretic.

In 1520, a bull excommunicating Luther required him to retract what he had been teaching for 60 days, or face death. Luther burned it publicly on December 10th of 1520. The Diet of Worms was convened the following year, in 1521.

Charles V, the emperor of the so-called Holy Roman Empire, that's the Germany, Spain, Netherlands, and Austria, powerful guy, summoned him to appear. And his remarks were very simple. Here I stand, I can do not else, so help me God.

Fortunately, he was popular enough with certain German princes that he didn't get killed. He obviously survived. He went on to write commentaries that are classics today, hymns like, A Mighty Fortress is Our God, translated the Bible in German, and a classic which remains a literary masterpiece in the Germanic tongue.

It wasn't perfect. Some of his writings are a gigantic embarrassment to the church. He was, strangely enough, very, very anti-Semitic.

And some of his writings are an embarrassment to the Lutheran faith. But let's move on. In the 16th century, of course, we thus have the Reformation.

An attempt to return to original Christianity, free of paganism, with open Bibles, religious freedom, separation of church and state. That starts what's called the Counter-Reformation Wars. Centuries of wars began.

The war on the German Protestants from 1566 to 1609. The war on Protestants of the Netherlands, 1566 to 1609. The Huguenot Wars in France, from 1572 to 1598.

Philip's attempt against England in 1588. The Thirty Years' War from 1618 to 1648. These were all started by Catholic kings, urged on by the Pope and Jesuit, for the purpose of crushing Protestantism.

The thousands of the martyrs of the Caesars of Rome were dwarfed by the millions of the Vatican. Leo X was the Pope when Luther started the Protestant Reformation. And by the way, he didn't really start it.

They measured from it. Actually, the Albengues, the Waldenses, there's a lot of events, many heroes along before Luther. But that's generally where the thing starts to take major political leverage.

Anyway, Leo X was the Pope when Luther started the Protestant Reformation. He was an Archbishop at 8 years old, a Cardinal at 13, appointed to 27 church offices, which meant vast income, before he was 13. He was appointed to the Cardinals as young as 7. He maintained the most luxurious licentious court in Europe.

He issued indulgences for stipulated fees and declared the burning of heretics a divine appointment. And we get to others, and I won't go through all of these, but let's get to the Jesuits. Rome's answer to Luther was the Inquisition under the leadership of the Jesuits an order founded by Ignatius Loyola, a Spaniard, on the principle of absolute and unconditional obedience to the Pope, having its object, the recovery of territory lost to Protestants and Muslims, and the conquest of the entire heathen world for the Roman Catholic Church.

Their supreme aim, the destruction of heresy, that is, thinking anything different from what the Pope said to think. For this accomplishment, anything was justifiable, deception, immorality, vice, even murder. In France, they were responsible for St. Bartholomew's Massacre, the persecution of the Huguenots, the revocation of the toleration of the French Revolution in Spain, the Netherlands, South Germany, Bohemia, Austria, Poland, and other countries they led in the massacre of untold multitudes, and thus saved the Papacy from ruin.

But let's get back. St. Bartholomew's Massacre. Catherine de' Medici, mother of the king, an ardent Romanist, and the willing tool of the Pope, gave the order, and on the night of August 24, 1572, 70,000 Huguenots 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 in order to be sung in Thanksgiving. Then they struck a medal in commemoration of the massacre and sent a cardinal to Paris to bear the king and queen mother the congratulations of the Pope and the Cardinals.

Well, I won't go through the rest of it. I think much of it is what follows you up where in Switzerland Zwingli, Calvin made their mark in Netherlands, Scandinavia. In Bohemia, they had 4 million population, 80% Protestant in the year 1600.

When the Habsburgs and the Jesuits had done their work only 800,000 were left, all Catholics. Austria and Hungary, half the population were Protestant, all were slaughtered. It's hard for us to really appreciate what being a Christian meant through those centuries.

If you adhere to the Gospel of Christ as proclaimed by Jesus Christ as described in the Scripture, you were not only subject to death, but you were also to be tortured to death. This brings us up to about Leo XIII, 1878 to 1903. He claimed that he was appointed to be head of all rulers and that he holds on this earth the place of Almighty God.

He emphasized papal infallibility, pronounced Protestants as, quote, enemy of the Christian name. He proclaimed the only method of cooperation is complete submission to the Roman Pontiff. He denounced Americanism.

By the way, Pope Leo XII reproved Louis XVIII for granting the liberal French Constitution. Pope Gregory XVI denounced the Belgian Constitution of 1832. The suppression of freedom of conscience, the oppression, imprisonment, and torturous death of non-Catholics has characterized their primary agenda for centuries.

The unholy alliances with the totalitarian governments of Hitler and Mussolini were but continuation of these policies. Hitler viewed his anti-Jewish policies as manifestly consistent with the Church's over the previous centuries, only more efficient. The 1929 concordat with Mussolini and the 1933 concordat with Hitler is a matter of record.

With the Vatican sanctions all this. You know that Hitler was a practicing Catholic. He was a boy at a Benedictine monastery at Lombok that Hitler first encountered the Hindu swastika, which he later adopted.

Now the silence of the Church of all shapes and sizes during the Holocaust strains our credibility as we look back. And yet, here's the kicker. To this day Hitler and Mussolini have never been excommunicated.

In fact, if you read or do some homework, a lot of books have been written about this. If you ever wondered how the Nazis got out of Germany after the war, you'll discover one of the primary channels for them to do that was a thing that was dubbed the Ratlines, organized and funded and hidden by the Vatican. But that's a matter of current history.

You can do your own reading on that. Let's just talk a little bit about doctrines before we jump into a little more other history here.

Innocent III, Gregory IX, Clement XI, Leo XII, Pius VIII, Gregory XVI and Pius IX all condemned reading the Bible and condemned Bible societies. Let's talk about tolerance. Clement VIII, Innocent X, Leo XII, Pius VIII, Pius IX, Leo XIII all condemned, rejected, annulled and protested religious freedom.

They cried tolerance only in countries where they're in a minority. They have fought religious freedom at every step. Indulgences which go with the doctrine of Purgatory. Purgatory is a pagan idea. It's non-biblical. I think most of you know that.

And the idea of buying your way out of it is what indulgences are. Purgatory is a key source of revenue to the Vatican. Pope Sixtus IV, that's in 1476 was the first to apply them to souls already in Purgatory.

He even retailed them. In 1517, John Tetzel came to Germany selling certificates signed by the Pope offering pardon of all sins to buyers and their friends without confession, repentance or even absolution by a priest. The Vatican is opposed consistently.

Every democratic advance from absolute monarchies which they always aspired to control toward government by the people. This began with the Magna Carta in England on June 15th of 1215. The mother of European constitutions if you will.

Which was denounced immediately by Pope Innocent III there he is again, 1198 to 1216 and encouraged King John with foreign mercenaries to fight the barons bringing great destruction to the country. Subsequent popes did all their power to help John's successor, Henry III, overturn the Magna Carta. The salaries to the numerous imported Italian priests were three times the crown's annual revenue.

Well, enough of all of this. Let's come to the modern days. On March 29, 1994, one of the most interesting events in 500 years of church history occurred by a joint declaration called Evangelicals and Catholics Together colon the Christian Mission in the Third Millennium signed by a long list of most, I won't say most a great number of the major evangelical leaders in this country and of course the Catholic leadership.

Now what startled some namely Dave Hunt, John Ankerberg and some of our other concerned leadership is what's going on here because this implies a compromise of the gospel. Because that is what lies in hard agreement. The gospel of Jesus Christ has not changed but does this document imply or suggest that millions of Christians willingly were burned at the stake over a misunderstanding? The persecution of Protestants is still official policy, yet the Evangelicals have signed a truce.

Having signed the truce Rome is stepping up its evangelization of Protestants into the Catholic Church with its program called Evangelization 2000. And I won't get into all of that here, it's in recent enough news you can do your reading on that, but I tell you there's an event that occurred on May 22, 1995, that I believe is a response to Dave Hunt's book. On May 22, 1995, at an abandoned Soviet air base in Monrovia to a relatively small audience by papal standards less than 100,000 people there the Pope asked forgiveness for all the crimes and sins committed, crimes of commission and omission by the Catholic Church against Christians over the centuries.

A remarkable statement because up till then it was stone wall time. Unless you do some careful digging as Dave Hunt does and documents, you won't find most of this history and general availability in the Catholic

community. In fact, this whole history is dismissed where they will admit to it those were the times and it's dismissed without comment.

The Pope here on May 22, 1995, begged forgiveness for the sins committed by the Roman Catholic Church of all ages. Now from a historical perspective that statement is astonishing and at first for many good reasons it's exciting. But you see what happens then that erases the blackboard doesn't it? That puts it all behind us.

That's the past, right? You would think that this serves to eliminate a major barrier between Catholics and Protestants. Centuries of conflict are thus relegated to the dusty tomes of ancient irrelevant history and a tragic era. But you see that may be precisely the stratagem.

What is the ambition of the Vatican? What is the goal, especially of the present Pope? To be the leader of a worldwide ecumenical movement. Carefully study the maneuvering and shenanigans call them what you will of the Vatican over recent years. They have prayer meetings with snake charmers, Buddhists, Paganists of all shapes and sizes.

This is the Catholic Church. I thought they were the conservatives. I thought they were very rigid. No. Only when it suits their purpose. The Pope is aggressively attempting to be the leader of the ecumenical movement.

Now when you start looking at that that's when you want to start doing your homework in Revelation chapter 17 and 18 and you discover that John is shocked by what he sees in this vision. Because he sees of course the church guilty of all these crimes. Drunk with the blood of the martyrs the book of Revelation says.

Not just guilt of the blood drunk with the blood of the martyrs. Then you go through history and discover the research that was continually carried out for centuries to devise more painful methods of torture. Killing them wasn't enough.

The Jesuits kept records to find out which methods were more effective at inflicting pain. And you begin to realize this history is staggering when you get into it. Now I personally have the suspicion that this announcement on May 22nd was a response to Dave Hunt's book and the growing awareness of Protestants or Evangelicals or Christians, call them what you will that do their homework.

So, one of the things I'm going to urge all of you to do is to get a hold of Dave Hunt's book and read it. And we plan to publish this tape along with a tape of Dave Hunt summarizing his book. And especially the prophetic part of it.

But more is going on. On December 30, 1993, a historic event occurred. The Vatican for the first time in history recognized Israel. Do you realize that it wasn't until December 30, 1993, that the Vatican even acknowledged the existence of Israel. But they did then. They're pushing for the idea of internationalizing Jerusalem.

Now this leads to our prophetic situation today. Zechariah 12 and Zechariah 14 detail a climactic period of human history in which Jerusalem is going to be a cup of trembling to the entire world. A goblet of staggering if you take verses 2 and 3 literally.

That Jerusalem will be a ... it speaks of a burdensome stone. The imagery there and the language really is like a wrestler who gets a hernia trying to lift this. That's really ... because it says he's torn to pieces lifting.

But it's a mixed idiom until you understand the background. But the point is when you look at these prophecies in Zechariah 12 and Zechariah 14, they're ridiculous. Why should a city today have no river, no harbor, no natural resources, no reason to be significant, bring the whole world to the brink of war? And that's exactly what's happening today.

The only reason for Jerusalem to be relevant is for religious reasons. It's important to a small group of Jews. Not many by world standards.

The Muslims had it for a thousand years and regarded it as ... let it go to ruin until they discovered it was ... realized it was important to the Jews. Then suddenly Jerusalem is very important to Islam. Not even mentioned in the Koran, but you can't tell that from their speeches.

And of course, the city is relevant to Christians, but really for historical reasons. But set those all ... put those all-in-one buckets. That's a small drop for a world that is a-religious in the first place.

For Zechariah to argue in chapter 12 and 14 of his prophecy that the entire world is going to go to war. Apparently a nuclear war over Jerusalem. Now as you and I have spent the last few weeks celebrating various holidays, the late lights were burning in every major capital in the world.

Where the various people involved with foreign policy struggle with what on earth to do about the problem of Jerusalem. And there are many experts that believe that a nuclear war over Jerusalem is a certainty, it's a question of timing. Will it be next month, next year? How far away is it? It's coming.

Now in this tension, there are preparations and plans and much talk about the Vatican setting up a second Vatican in Jerusalem. Setting up a residence for the Pope. Internationalizing the Temple Mount.

All this fuss over the Temple Mount. Why not let the Muslims use it on Friday, that's their holy day. Let the Jews use it on Shabbat, on Saturday.

Let the Christians use it on Sunday. And we, the Vatican, will administer all this in fairness to all peoples. As part of our program of world ecumenical leadership.

That's pretty interesting. That's pretty interesting. I wonder, don't know this, wonder if that will lead to an environment in which the Jews will be allowed to rebuild their temple, especially since the latest scientific evidence seems to indicate, despite the recent articles in the newspaper by Alain Rittmeyer, who has a view, not saying he's wrong, but he has a view that he tries to defend the traditional site of the temple as being at the Dome of the Rock.

Asher Kaufman is famous for his research, which seems to suggest reasons why it might have occurred to the North, the North of the Temple Mount. More and more attention is being given to Tuvia Segiv's researches, and recent infrared photography seems to support Tuvia Segiv, both in terms of a hidden gate that lines up with the Al-Qas fountain, and with the idea that the temple stood, in effect, to the south by roughly 100 meters. And from altitude considerations, from a number of considerations generated, derived from three-dimensional computer models, it's turning out that there's a number of us that are, not, we don't know, but we tend to be very fascinated with Tuvia Segiv's research.

And we're going to Israel here shortly, and when we do one of our primary events, we'll be to spend an evening with Tuvia, and be brought up to date on what the latest of all that is. But the point is, watch for moves to permit a Jewish temple. Because Jesus, Paul, and John all refer to its standing prior to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

And it's fascinating, we see them preparing, we see them training the priests, we see the Temple Institute has made not all, but almost all, of the implements for the coming temple. That it's a major milestone coming in our time. Well, let's try to put this in perspective.

Roman Catholic Church has over a billion followers. They have 483,488 priests, 3,000 bishops, over 200,000 parishes. They are the wealthiest institutions on the planet Earth today.

And they have an agenda. It's fascinating to me to notice that it is not fashionable to speak of Catholic doctrine among evangelical circles. You can talk about Jehovah's Witnesses, you can talk about Mormons, you can talk about all kinds of groups with whom you might have a disagreement.

But how interesting it is that it's not very fashionable. You see all kinds of major leaders, I won't use names to stay out of that minefield, but all kinds of major leaders who tiptoe around the issue, is a Catholic saved? If a Catholic is saved, it's because they're not following the doctrine they're taught. Because the Catholics are taught that their salvation is in the hands of the Pope.

The Bible teaches the contrary. That does not mean a Catholic is not saved. But the Catholics that are saved are the ones that are trusting Jesus Christ, not Mary.

And I won't get into all that discussion. Most of you in this audience are sophisticated enough to understand the differences. The question is, are those differences material? I think they're very material.

But it's interesting that where we have doctrinal differences with other groups, pagan groups, pseudo-Christian groups, there's a lot of discussion. But you start talking about doctrine, biblical doctrine, in the context of the Catholic Church, and boy, you're on a minefield.

Now you need to understand what makes this all perspective isn't just the bloody history. Because there's blood on the hands of many of the past. Maybe not with the efficiency and the extent that we've talked about here, but let me tell you, nobody's hands are clean.

Been a lot of bloodshed in the past, a lot of emotion. But that bloodshed and that emotion isn't accompanied by protestations of infallibility. Protestations of being God's authority on the earth, in contrast to the Scripture, et cetera, if you follow what I'm trying to say.

And I think we need to understand the power and the mechanics and the agenda of this growing institution. Because, if Dave Hunt is right, and I believe he is, I believe that the world religion that climaxes human history, is not the New Age. The New Age is pantheism.

God is everywhere. Pantheism has no leader. Pantheism will degrade into occultism, and it has a leader.

But I believe that the Scripture clearly teaches, in Revelation 17 and elsewhere, that the final one world religion on the planet earth will be a form of pseudo-Christianity. It'll be a form of religion in Christian trappings. And so, when I watch this powerful organization whose history matches the record of Revelation 17 so amazingly precisely, emerge with an agenda of ecumenical leadership, that fascinates me.

I think we're seeing the beginning of another major tangible fulfillment of prophecy. A couple of other remarks I might make. In Daniel chapter 2, verse 44, you may recall the image of Daniel 2 and the middleman and so forth, and it speaks of the ten kings at the end, the ten toes.

It says in verse 44, "...the days of these kings shall God in heaven set up a kingdom." Which, by the way, if you understand that prophecy, it reveals that in the days of Christ's ministry the kingdom was not to be set up. It's kind of interesting that you can find that fulfillment of prophecy in that clear prophecy in the Old Testament. Also, you also need to understand, I think this audience is sophisticated enough to also understand that it is not, the true church will not gradually take over the world.

There are many people who mean well, that have that view, but it's clearly not a biblically defensible view. God's kingdom will be established suddenly. The word in the Greek is entaxi, quickly, it's sometimes translated.

By a cataclysmic intervention from heaven. And that's in Daniel 2, 30 verses 34 and 35, and Revelation 6 through 19 makes that pretty clear. Okay, we've prattled on here a little bit, probably bored many of you with a rather tedious rundown.

The only excuse I can give you is that you should see the stuff I skipped. But, the question is, what's our action plan? Chuck, you've bored us with all this history, obviously quite controversial, obviously there are many views. Okay.

I want you to recognize that the gospel is your personal possession. I believe that the dark ages could happen again. Here in River City.

So, I think, number one, I think you need to make sure of your position in Jesus Christ, and make sure the gospel of Jesus Christ is your personal possession. Make a commitment to Jesus Christ, we've talked about all that. I'm saying, personalize your possession of it.

Learn the Bible, memorize Scripture, what you've memorized they can't take away from you. And I think you need to prioritize your commitment to Scripture. Don't take it for granted that it will always be there.

Study a little history and learn some lessons from it. I also think it's a good time to start preparing, when you start laying plans in the coming year, not only make a specific commitment to really learn your Bible but do it as a family. Have the same study Bible for all members and have a program where you get together.

I think you men need to wake up and realize what priesthood duties, you are the priests of your family, and God is going to hold you accountable for that. But I want you to realize that the New Age is not our primary threat. More people are concerned about the New Age this, New Age that, and certainly it's a form of agnosticism that's damaging to our community.

But I don't think the New Age is our primary threat. I think a hostile, power-drunk harlot is. The queen of tarts. The mother of all harlots. Scripture says. There's a big movement in our culture to abolish religious differences. That means to eliminate beliefs. So, let me just leave you with that commitment. To get your hands on a copy of Dave Hunt's book.

Borrow it, buy it, whatever. But familiarize yourself with it. If you don't want to do that, if you have a Haley's Bible handbook, if you look in the back of it, you'll find much of the material that I've presented herein has been taken from that and similar sources.

And we will, of course, have all that accompanying our tapes here. But watch for a strange rapport between the Vatican and Islam. This is all a power play.

Islam speaks for a billion, two hundred thousand followers. You can't think of two more unlikely bedfellows, if I can use that metaphor, between the Vatican and Islam. And yet in the cynicism of power brokering, watch what's going on.

And if they are both members under the same final leader, the God of this world, then nothing should surprise us. You and I are being plunged into what I call the age of deceit. Getting ready for the big one.

The big lie. Let's stand for a closing word of prayer. Again, let me emphasize, it's not my intent to speak unlovingly of Catholics.

I think we should pray for them. I think we should do, be as effective as it's possible to be, to try to win them for Jesus Christ. And I'm not trying to be offensive.

I do hope that candor is effective, at least in giving us a perspective of what we're dealing with. Because there is a tendency, on all of our parts, to sort of sweep under the carpet these differences as being the domain of pastors and theologians. There are people who believe they're saved, who have been taught that they're saved through generations, that are destined to spend an eternity in eternal punishment.

Very unpleasant idea, but very, very real. Jesus spoke a great deal about it. We should spend some time on our knees for those who are in that system, that their blindness would be removed, that the Holy Spirit, God is in the miracle business, that He will reveal to them that it is Jesus Christ that saves, not His mother.

And certainly not a fallible person as part of a gigantic power struggle centered in Rome. With all due respect to some of the honorable people who have populated that office, I'm sure, it doesn't justify the doctrines that they insist upon.

Are you getting an understanding that the Roman Catholic Church is an evil demonic institution? If not, can you put forth an argument that supports that the bible is so opposite than the church doctrine and practices throughout history? At some point, the truth has to begin to translate to satan worship and practices.