

Revelation

Notes #10C

Seal #7 - Trumpet #6: Summary

Chapter 10

A short summary is in order before moving on to chapter 11.

Some commentators remind us that, up to this point in history, we have seen **the death or decline of Paganism, the birth of Romanism (Catholicism), the rise of Islamism, the tyranny of the papism, and the genesis of Protestantism (Reformation).**

Romanism under the headship of a pope (Bishop of Rome), the self-anointed "vicar of Christ," declared itself to be **"the only instrument for the salvation of all humanity,"** and established itself as the **universal church** of all Christians and **the pope as the Lord over all the church.**

Although rooted in Christian belief, the **Roman Catholic** church during this period is best called an **apparent** or **visible church**, but not the true, spiritual Church of God that Christ is building.

Contrary to some teaching, the theme of Revelation up to this point has been Christian throughout. Specifically, it has been about the rise and fall of all opposition to the building of the **true Church of God.**

First, **paganism** came against it from without, then power and corruption came against it from within in the form of the **Roman papacy**, which became **antichrist through its vicars** who took the place of (i.e., *anti*) Christ on earth, and then a **false prophet** and his new religion called **Islam** came against it from without. Throughout these times, many saints were sacrificed on the altar of martyrdom for the testimony of Jesus. It has been said that **"the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church"** (Tertullian).

By far the greatest danger to the true Church of God came from within from the Roman papacy. The reformers were convinced that **the papacy was antichrist** as the popes took the place of Christ in authority over the Lord's people and usurped His throne on earth. This is the heart of a true antichrist. It is *not standing against* but *taking the place of* that reckons one as antichrist. The papacy did not stand against Christ; they took His place.

The reformers were critical of the papacy that made the **Lord's Supper** (called **Eucharist** by Catholics) into a real sacrifice. *Transubstantiation* is the conversion of the bread and wine into the actual body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist. This was first endorsed by the Archbishop of Tours in 1133, and then referenced in 1215 at the **Fourth Council of Lateran**. However, it was not until the convening of the **Council of Trent** on **October 11, 1511** that transubstantiation was officially approved.

The papacy did then and continues now to claim that the Catholic church is the true Church; however, the reformers took exception to this and believed the Catholics had more characteristics of **heathenism** than of **Christianism**. However, even their Christianity was a distortion of true Christianity (*the faith, not the religion*).

Further, contrary to many modern-day Christian-Zionist commentators, **the Jew and Judaism** are not a major theme throughout John's vision. Where the *Jew* is mentioned, he is referred to as of **the synagogue of Satan** and as **one who lies** (i.e., liar) (Revelation 2:9; 3:9).

Thus, up to this point in the Revelation, the theme has been Christian throughout.

However, this does not mean that the *apparent* Jew is absent from the historical record. Quite the contrary, they suffered much persecution at the hand of Romanism, just like true Christians did, even after the Reformation. In the years 1096, 1098, 1099, 1236, 1243, 1298, 1348, 1349,

and 1389, thousands of Jews were killed through slaughter and torture by the Roman Catholics. Whole towns of Jews were known to be burned alive.

In 1940, Baron DePonnat, a French statesman, stated:

“Roman Catholicism was born in blood, has wallowed in blood, and has quenched its thirst in blood, and it is in letters of blood that its true history is written.”

In reference to the Reformation, J. A. Wylie, an historian, stated:

*It is idle in Rome to say, "I gave you the Bible, and therefore you must believe in **me** before you can believe in **it**." The facts...conclusively dispose of this claim. Rome did not give us the Bible—she did all in her power to keep it from us; she retained it under the seal of a dead language; and when others broke that seal, and threw open its pages to all, she stood over the book, and unsheathing her fiery sword, would permit none to read the message of life, save at the peril of eternal anathema."*

Finally, Will Durant in his book *The Reformation* (Simon and Schuster, 1957; page 332-333), probably best sums up the days leading up to the Protestant Reformation.

"A thousand factors and influences—ecclesiastical, intellectual, emotional, economic, political, moral—were coming together, after centuries of obstruction and suppression, in **a whirlwind that would throw Europe into the greatest upheaval since the barbarian conquest of Rome.**

The weakening of the **papacy** by the **Avignon exile [1309-1377 AD]** and the **Papal Schism [1378-1417 AD]**; the breakdown of monastic discipline and clerical celibacy; the luxury of prelates, the **corruption of the Curia**, the worldly activities of the popes; the morals of Alexander VI, the wars of Julius II, the careless gaiety of Leo X; the relic mongering and peddling of **indulgences**; the **triumph of Islam** over Christendom in the **Crusades [1096-1272 AD]** and the Turkish wars; the spreading acquaintance with non-Christian faiths; the influx of Arabic science and philosophy; the collapse of Scholasticism in irrationalism of Scotus and the skepticism of Ockham; the failure of the conciliar movement to effect reform; the discovery of pagan antiquity and of America; the invention of printing; the extension of literacy and education; the translation and reading of the Bible; the newly realized contrast between the poverty and simplicity of the Apostles and the ceremonious opulence of the Church; the rising wealth and economic independence of Germany and England; the growth of a middle class resentful of ecclesiastical restrictions and claims; the protests against the flow of money to Rome; the secularization of law and government; the intensification of nationalism and the strengthening of monarchies; the nationalistic influence of vernacular languages and literatures; the fermenting legacies of the Waldenses, Wyclif, and Huss; the mystic demand for a less ritualistic, more personal and inward and direct religion.

All these were now uniting in a torrent of forces that would crack the crust of medieval custom, loosen all standards and bonds, shatter Europe into nations and sects, sweep away more and more of the supports and comforts of traditional beliefs, and perhaps mark the beginning of the end for the dominance of Christianity in the mental life of the European man."

To the above, I would add the **Inquisitions** against heresy within Romanism itself, starting in **1231 AD**, and being re-enforced with a papal bull in **1252** by Pope Innocent IV authorizing the use of torture in investigating heresy within its ranks. Those outside the faith, such as Islamists and apparent Jews, were not included unless they had been converted and baptized into the church. These groups were treated to outright war and persecution.

In **1542 AD**, in reaction to the Reformation, Pope Paul III established the **Congregation of the Holy Office of the Inquisition**, tasked with "maintaining and defending the integrity of the faith and of examining and proscribing errors and false doctrines." Life imprisonment was the most severe penalty rendered. In 1965, it changed names to **Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith**, which continues to this day.

As is shown in the study notes for chapter 11, the period of papal supremacy, conflict, and corruption extended for about 1,260 years, starting around 529 AD, especially when Justinian subjugated the entire church to the Roman pope (531 AD) and then bestowed on the Bishop of Rome the title of "Lord of the Church."

These acts set the course of the papacy for the next 1,260 years leading to the Reformation and concluding with the French Revolution (1789-1801). This period could be described as the rise and fall of the papacy, followed by its ecclesiastical revival but without the political clout over and within nations it once held.