

# Revelation

Notes #11B

Seal #7 - Trumpet #6: 42 Months, 1,260 Days

Chapter 11:2b, 3

## Trumpet

**#6**  
**[Part 6]**

## Description

(2b) "And **they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two [42] months.** (3) "And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for **twelve hundred and sixty days [1,260]**, clothed in sackcloth." (Revelation 11:2b, 3 NASB)

## Symbology

42 Months  
1,260 Days

## Meaning(s)

Prophetic 1,260 years  
Prophetic 1,260 years

Before looking at the two witnesses, it is best to cover the months and days.

## A Reed

In the measurement of Ezekiel's temple, the reed was 42 handbreadths. Since this temple has never been built and most likely is a spiritual type of New Jerusalem, the reed is a divine measurement related to the Temple of God that God is building.

Prophetically speaking, **1 reed = 42 months** or **1,260 days**, and, by extension, **1 cubit = 7 months** or **210 days**, and **1 handbreadth = 1 month** or **30 days**.

As a reminder, generally, the **preterists** see the months and days as having already been completed around John's time; the **futurists** see them fulfilled near the end of our present age as literal months and days; and the **historicists** see them as having begun soon after John's day and continuing on for years not days. Of course, at some point in time the futuristic and the historic views must catch up to each other.

Applying the **day-year principle**, generally, the historicists see the 42 months ( $42 \times 30 = 1,260$ ) and the 1,260 days as a literal historical period of 1,260 years. If we accept this thinking, then the question remains as to when the period began and ended. Of course, if we know either the beginning or the end, we can determine the period by either counting forward or backward.

Now, there are several possibilities for the 1,260-year period that run approximately through the same centuries. They overlap each other but with different start and stop dates within years of each other. This is not unusual when it comes to God's prophetic timing. The question is which period(s) best applies to the two witnesses based on the nations treading under foot the holy city and the two witnesses in sackcloth. However, it is also quite possible that there is more than one valid period, including one that runs to our present day or in our generation that brings the Pentecostal era to a close and initiates the Tabernacles era. If true, then there must be some significant event(s) that occurred from 751-761 AD or, perhaps, a little later.

See **Notes #11C – 1,260 Prophetic Years**.

Before moving on, there is one other possibility that needs to be addressed and that is whether there could be two distinct periods of 1,260 years that occur back-to-back. In other words, they do not run concurrently as the same period of time. As such, there would have to be two 1,260-year periods totaling 2,520 years.

In my opinion, this is not possible given that Revelation was written no later than 98 AD. If John's historical vision began in his day, then adding 2,520 days to 98 AD brings it to 2618 AD, or, if you prefer, dating the vision from 33 AD (Calvary) brings it to 2553 AD.

Technically speaking, this is not possible based on God's principle of six days or **6,000 years** for **Man's Day** and one day or **1,000 years** for the **Lord's Day** that He set for our present heaven and earth. We have already reached the 6,000 year mark and appear to be in a transition period between two ages (Pentecost and Tabernacles). A transition of over 500 years seems untenable.

See **Appendix #45 – Six Days and then the Seventh.**

Further, assuming that, historically speaking, the measurement of the Temple of God occurred around the time of the Reformation (1517 AD), adding 1,260 years to 1517 AD, or doubling it to 2,520 years ends up in 2777 or 4037 AD, respectively. Both of these dates are well beyond the six days. Likewise, if we go backward from 1517 AD for 2,520 years, we end up well before the birth of Christ.

Consequently, the only possibility that makes sense or fits into our present age is that the 42 months (years) and the 1,260 days (years) run concurrently, and they start sometime before the Reformation, and either end at the Reformation or run beyond it for some years. If this is so, we should be able to trace history to some discernible date or period of time that corresponds with the Temple of God being tread under foot by the nations and the two witnesses being in mourning as they prophesied to the nations (past tense intended).

Of course, this all depends on one accepting the principle of "after 6 days, on the 7<sup>th</sup> day," as well as the principle of the prophetic day-year. If this is not accepted, then we are left with literal months and days manifested in some future event.

So, to discern the times, we need to look at some of the major events that occurred well after John's day.

Before we press into the history, a few points need to be stressed.

First, bear in mind that there is a built-in bias to the events I have chosen to highlight. Obviously, not all was bad during these times, for surely there was good, even within Christianity. The Lord has always had His 7,000 faithful conquerors in every generation and within every church, institutional or otherwise, that claim Christ, regardless of the label attached to them.

Second, the Reformation was a reaction to the Roman papacy and all its evils against fellow Christians, and the two witnesses prophesied and spoke judgments while the nations were treading under foot God's holy city. Because of this, of necessity, we must be biased toward the evils of these days and the things that stood against the true Church. However, none of what follows is meant to indict all Catholics or even all popes, for surely the Lord had (has) His called and chosen among Catholics, just as He did (does) among the denominational churches that grew out of the Reformation, and the many types of assemblies that have followed.

Third, it is a fact that the Roman papacy elevated itself as the supreme authority on all spiritual issues throughout Europe for the many centuries we will ever so briefly touch upon. During this period, the papacy and its clerical hierarchy exerted tremendous influence and power over the monarchs and secular issues of the day that brought a great amount of wealth its way through tithes and other sources that it either controlled or owned, including whole towns and cities.

In summing up the finances of the Roman Catholic church by the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, Will Durant states in his book, *The Age of Faith* (Simon and Schuster, 1950; pages 765-766):

**"A Church that was actually a European superstate, dealing with the worship, morals, education, marriages, wars, crusades, deaths, and wills of the population of half a**

continent, **sharing actively in the administration of secular affairs**, and raising the most expensive structures in medieval history, could sustain its functions only through **exploiting** a hundred sources of revenue. ... As the **property** of the Church was inalienable, and, before 1200, was normally free from secular taxation, it **grew from century to century.**"

At times, the papacy was the ruling authority over all. It is also a historical fact that the Roman papacy committed blasphemies and abominations during its reign. After all, it is the papacy alone that declared itself **infallible**; something that it has insisted even to our day. Neither Christendom nor Christ Himself bestowed this right upon the popes; the popes took it upon themselves.

Finally, in reviewing historical dates, I have discovered differences among the historians in dating the same event. No attempt is made to reconcile the differences. I have simply picked dates that seem to be more commonly accepted. Frankly, in the big scheme, a year or two in one direction or another has little significance, except perhaps when we come to the meaning of the 3½ days for the death of the two witnesses.

### **Primacy of the Bishop of Rome (254-257 AD)**

The first suggestion for a start date is **254-257 AD**. During this time, **Stephen I, the Bishop of Rome**, was the first bishop to assert the **primacy of the Bishop of Rome**.

Primacy deals with claiming to be the only successor to the apostles and thus the only one who has the authority over the whole of the universal Church of God. Simply, it was and is a controversy over who should be number one in the Church. Of course, the real question is whether any one individual has that right to be first at all. After all, there is only one Head of the *true* Church and **one Mediator also between God and men** (1 Timothy 2:5). Consequently, we do not need a man as head over all the Church on earth.

The controversy over being first is not a new phenomenon, for the Lord's disciples squabbled over the very same thing.

(37) They said to Him, "**Grant that we may sit, one on Your right and one on Your left, in Your glory.**" ... (41) Hearing this, **the ten began to feel indignant with James and John.** (Mark 10:37, 41 NASB)

Initially, primacy was not claimed based on Peter. Instead, ordained bishops were considered successors to any one of the original apostles. However, it was the Roman papacy that first claimed the Bishop of Rome, the pope, to be the apostolic successor above all other bishops on earth—the *numero uno*. This is called the **Petrine Doctrine**, for it claims the legitimacy and supremacy of popes over all other bishops of the church as a succession from Peter.

**Damascus I, the Bishop of Rome (366-384 AD)** is credited with claiming that **primacy begins with Peter**. He was also the first to refer to the Roman church as the **Apostolic See**.

The papists' claim to supremacy is based on Matthew 16:16-18. As they see it, Jesus established Peter as the rock of the Church and its first pope. However, Peter was merely a little stone that fell on the Rock. The true Church is not built upon Peter or any successor to Peter, but upon all the apostles (Revelation 21:14). It is built upon the substance of the answer that Peter gave to the Lord when He asked him: "**But who do you say that I am?**" The rock upon which the Church is built is the Rock who is **the Christ, the Son of the living God** (Matthew 16:16).

There is no doubt that Peter was quite influential in the early Church, but the record seems to indicate that James was the chief spokesman for a season (Acts 15).

In addition to primacy of the pope, there are two other doctrines or dogmas of significance: papal supremacy and papal infallibility.

**Papal supremacy** states that the pope, as the **Vicar of Christ** and pastor of the entire Christian Church, has full, supreme, and universal power over the whole Church, which he exercises unhindered. Thus, **"the Pope enjoys, by divine institution, supreme, full, immediate, and universal power in the care of souls"** (source: Wikipedia).

**Papal infallibility**, which was defined by the **First Vatican Council of 1870**, means that, by action of the Holy Spirit, a pope is preserved from error when he solemnly declares or promulgates to the universal Church a dogmatic teaching on faith as being contained in divine revelation, or at least being intimately connected to divine revelation. It is also held that the Holy Spirit will take these infallible dogmatic teachings and ensure they are received by all Catholics. However, *infallibility* does not mean that a pope is free of sin or error (source: Wikipedia).

However, there is no biblical support for any particular bishop or any other titled leader having sole rights to leadership, supremacy, or infallibility over the whole Church. It is simply a bogus, arrogant claim.

### **Code of Justinian and the "Lord of the Church" (529-533 AD)**

The most prevalent view for a starting point is **529-534 AD** when **Justinian**, the ruler of the Eastern half of the old Roman world, in his fervor to bring a unifying order to his empire, discarded Roman law with orthodox Christian law, which was more on the line of the tradition of the church and not God's divine law. With this, Justinian managed to merge ecclesiastical power with civil power when it came to the law.

See **Notes #8C – Interlude Announcing Woes.**

Collectively the many changes that were made became known as the **Code of Justinian**, which the Catholic Encyclopedia states its importance should not be underrated, for it is the **"basis of all canon law and the basis of civil law in every civilized country."**

Through this Code, Justinian established the See of Rome as the supreme authority regarding spiritual matters. As the quote implies, this was very significant.

As Will Durant (*The Age of Civilization*) notes: **"It acknowledged the ecclesiastical leadership of the Roman Church, and ordered all Christian groups to submit to her authority. But ensuing chapters proclaimed the dominion of the emperor over the Church: all ecclesiastical, like all civil, law, was to emanate from the throne."**

Further, Barton Warren Johnson (1833-1894), in his *People's New Testament*, notes: "In **A. D. 531**, Justinian, the ruler of the Eastern half of the old Roman world, the ruler of the countries where the churches still protested against the arrogant claims of Rome, decreed and enforced by arms the subjugation of the whole Church to the **Roman Pope**, and in **A. D. 533**, he bestowed upon him the title of *Rector Ecclesiae* or **Lord of the Church.**"

Thus, much like bishop Stephen's claim to primacy, the actions of Justinian set the stage for Romanism or, more specifically, papism to rise up to conquer and control the people (i.e. tread under foot the true Church). It was also the time in which the popes vied for political power with the monarchs and were often the most corrupt and immoral of the lot. Plus, we cannot forget

that during this time the Lord raised up **Islam** to judge the Eastern Roman Empire and the apparent church as well.

One other interesting item is Justinian's **marriage to Theodora on April 4, 527 AD**. Prior to their marriage and her conversion, Theodora was known for her depraved and immoral life style. Some have made a connection between her and Jezebel; however, some state that she did seem to change once converted to Christ. At any rate, she was not merely a consort queen to Justinian; she was an **Empress** who shared the throne with her husband. In other words, she was a **co-regent**, much like **Jezebel** was to **King Ahab**.

In **533 AD**, Justinian also began a campaign to free Italy from the Vandals and Ostrogoths.

The end date for this period would have to be 1,260 years later or in the period of **1789-1798 AD**, which takes it beyond the Reformation and into the **French Revolution**, the **dechristianisation of France**, and the further deterioration of the papacy's political power.

### **Power Shift from the Monarchs to the Popes (536 AD)**

There is another possible 1,260-year period starting in 536 AD and running to around 1796 AD as Napoleon Bonaparte rose to power in the aftermath of the French Revolution. As shown later, the dechristianisation of France essentially shut down the Roman church for a period of about three years, after which it recovered a bit. However, under Napoleon, the power of the pope suffered as he was taken captive and sent into exile. It is generally thought that this was an endpoint for the papacy's power over future monarchs.

But the starting point for the rise of papal power over monarchs is generally seen commencing with a **conflict between Emperor Justinian and Pope Agapetus in 536 AD. This date is also one of the dates biblical historians assign to the beginning of the Thyatira church; the other date is 529 AD.**

Pope Agapetus was not a bad pope; he didn't seriously abuse his authority and did not participate in bribery. He is also known for establishing public schools in Rome. However, Agapetus was in office during the period when Rome still answered to the emperor in Constantinople, meaning, in some measure, he answered to Justinian.

In referencing Pope Agapetus, Stephen Jones (God's Kingdom Ministries) states:

"When he was summoned before Justinian in 536 in a doctrinal dispute with the patriarch of Constantinople, Justinian demanded that he recognize his patriarch or face exile. Agapetus replied (Cormenin, *History of the Popes*, Vol. I, p. 109),"

*'I hoped to find a Christian emperor, and I have met with a new Diocletian. Well! Let Diocletian learn that the bishop of Rome does not fear his threats, and refuses to submit to his orders.'*

"The emperor backed down. Agapetus asked Justinian to call for Anthimus, the patriarch, so that he could question him in regard to the doctrine of the two natures of Christ. Cormenin records on page 109,"

*'Anthimus replied to the arguments of the pontiff, and concluded by declaring that Jesus Christ did not possess two natures. Agapetus, in a fury, hurled anathemas against Anthimus, Severus, Peter of Apama, Zora, and several other prelates, whose names would have rested in oblivion but for the excommunication. Then he*

*obtained from the monarch an order for the deposition of Anthimus, and consecrated the new patriarch of Constantinople.'*

"In the power struggles between popes and monarchs that characterized Church history for centuries, this was the beginning of the shift in power from monarch to pope. This event has been cited by Church authorities in later years as proof of the Church's authority over monarchs. It set an important precedent, although it would be many years before such papal ambitions would become a reality."

### **Plague of Justinian (541-542 AD)**

There were three major outbreaks of the plague that fell upon Europe and Asia with great devastation to their populations and the very fabric of their societies. The third outbreak occurred in China and India in the 1890s; this is outside the scope of this study, so it is only mentioned in passing.

The first plague was called the **Plague of Justinian** from **541-542 AD** with further outbreaks in the 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> centuries; the last occurring in 750 AD. It is estimated that **40% of the population of Constantinople died from the bubonic plague**; up to **5,000 deaths occurred daily**. Other estimates claim half of Europe's population was wiped out by the 700s AD, and **25 million worldwide** died from the Plagues of Justinian. Interestingly, one of the things that the two witnesses bring upon those who trample under foot the holy city is plagues.

### **Pope Gregory I – "The Great" (540-604 AD)**

By this time, the fallen empire of the west was in shambles. In **590 AD**, the **bubonic plague decimated Rome's population** and took the life of Pope Pelagius II. **Gregory I** became his successor, who eventually assumed both **imperial powers and ecclesiastical authority**, thus fully integrating the church and state with the pope over all, including kings and emperors. As we will see, he was not the last to make such a claim. After his death, he was canonized and given the name **Gregory the Great**.

### **Pope Pelagius – Schisms (557-560 AD or 577-590 AD)**

The following quotes are presented to further highlight the tenor of the rise of the popes to power. There were two popes named Pelagius, one served from 557-560 AD, and the other from 577-590 AD; however, what follows does not identify which one said this as noted in H. Grattan Guinness' book, *Romanism and the Reformation* (1887; page 31, 32).

"Schism is an evil. Whoever is separated from the apostolic see is doubtless in schism. Do then what we often exhort. Take pains that they who presume to commit this sin be brought into custody.... **Do not hesitate to compress men of this kind**, and if he despise this, **let him be crushed by the public powers**."

"Pope Damasus, whose election to the pontificate was secured by a hundred and thirty-seven murders, **authorizes persecution of those who speak against any of the holy canons**, and adds, 'It is permitted neither to think nor to speak differently from the Roman Church'... **Whatever is short of absolute, unconditional surrender of all freedom of act or word, or even of thought and conscience, is heresy. Every evangelical Christian in the world is therefore, according to Roman canons, a heretic, and as such liable to 'punishment'**."

Keep in mind that heresy to the Roman church was taking any position contrary to the popes or, as stated above, the Apostolic See and all creeds or church doctrines that came forth from their

church councils. They saw heretics as causing schisms, meaning divisions. These are mighty arrogant words from ones who should have been wielding the sword of the Spirit and exemplifying the love of Christ, even to ones they might have considered enemies of their church.

*The History of Popes* (JB Smith; 1859; Volume 1, page 118) by Louis DeCormenin provides a quote from Pope Pelagius I (557-560 AD).

"Do not listen,' said he, 'to the idle talk of timid men, who blame the church when it commands **a persecution for the purpose of repressing error**, in order to save souls. **Schisms are violent evils, which must be cured by strong and terrible remedies**; and Scripture and the canon authorize us to call in the aid of magistrates to compel schismatics to re-enter into the bosom of the church. Do, then, that which we have frequently asked from you; send to the emperor, well guarded, those who have separated themselves from the apostolic see. Have no fears for your eternal safety; **the examples of the great saints will teach you that princes ought to punish heretics, not only by exile, but also by the confiscation of property, by severe imprisonment, and even by torture**'."

If Peter, Paul, and the others were alive, they undoubtedly would be outraged over such comments. Nevertheless, such attitudes set the stage for persecutions of Christians by the Roman church and the Inquisitions to follow that led to the death of thousands, if not millions by the time it was over.

### **Pope Boniface III – "Universal Bishop" (606 AD)**

There is another significant moment that stands out in relation to the papacy. In **606 AD, Pope Boniface III** assumed the title of "**universal bishop**." Some prior popes had made similar claims, but the title did not stick until Boniface. After him, all popes claimed the title that has continued to our day. In other words, universal bishop became a tenet of the Roman papacy.

Again, see **Notes #8C – Interlude Announcing Woes**.

So, 359 years after Stephen I, the Roman papacy claimed not only primacy but universality over all the Church of God on earth. Is there any wonder why the Protestant Reformation came about 911 years later? Someone called "911" and God answered!

### **Pope Zacharias – the "Kingmaker" (751 AD)**

There was an additional role to be established for the Roman popes that cemented their power in the civil realm; it was the role of kingmaker.

From 486-751 AD, the **Frankish kingdom** was ruled by the **Merovingian dynasty**, whose leaders were known as do-nothing kings who were more interested in debauchery (i.e., extreme indulgences of one's appetite, especially for sensual pleasure, orgies) than ruling. King Dagonbert (628-639 AD) had three queens and a host of concubines.

However, the story begins with his father Clotaire II who rewarded Pepin I the Elder with the position of "**Mayor of the Palace**" or *major domus*—"head of the house." As the Merovingian kings were concentrating on debauchery, Pepin grew in power as did his sons who assumed the role after him. His son Pepin II the Younger grew in power as he defeated rivals and expanded his title and rule under Clotaire IV (717-719 AD). He is best known for saving Europe for Christianity by turning back the Muslims at Tours.

In **751 AD**, his son **Pepin III** was the *major domus* to Childeric III when he decided it was time to depose the king. The fact of the matter is that by this time he ruled the land and acted as king without the title. So, **he sent an embassy to Pope Zacharias asking if it were sinful to depose the Merovingian king and make himself king in title.** Zacharias responded that it was not sinful. Actually, he needed the support of the Franks to fend off the ambitious Lombards. Nevertheless, **Zacharias became a kingmaker and helped to bring about the downfall of the do-nothing Merovingian kings.** In 751 AD, Pepin was chosen and Childeric was sent to a monastery. In 754 AD, **Pope Stephen II** anointed **Pepin "king by the grace of God."** Thus, so ended the Merovingian dynasty (486-751 AD) and so began the **Carolingian dynasty (751-987 AD)** with the popes declaring men kings.

### **Papal States (754–1870 AD)**

The Papal States referred to the territory that came under the direct rule or sovereignty of the papacy, starting sometime during the 6<sup>th</sup> century. These states were considered under the pope's temporal power, in contrast to his claim to ecclesiastical primacy. Actually, the popes saw themselves operating in or controlling three spheres or realms: **temporal/political, spiritual in this world (life), and purgatory in the afterlife.** These spheres seemed to gain momentum as the papacy gained more states. According to the Holy See, kings did not rule without the blessing of the pope and thus were subordinate to the papacy. However, the emperors saw the popes ruling only with their approval and thus were subordinate to the king. It is easy to see how power struggles developed between various popes and kings or emperors.

At its peak, the Papal States included most of the historical states of Italy.

In **754-756 AD**, the Frankish ruler, **Pepin III the Short**, took control of northern Italy and made a gift to the papacy called the **Donation of Pepin**, which added the territory of the Exarchate of Ravenna. However, in **781 AD**, **Charlemagne** officially codified the regions under papal sovereignty and expanded the territory. In **800 AD**, **Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne the "Emperor of the Romans."**

The French Revolution was a major turning point for the Papal States as well as the papacy and the Roman church. In 1791, Avignon was annexed into France, and in 1796 the French invaded Italy. Two years later, in 1798, the French took the Papal States as a whole. Pope Pius VI was sent into exile in France and died there in 1799. However, the Papal States were restored in June 1800 and Pope Pius VII returned, only for the French to invade again in 1808, at which time they annexed the remainder of the states. As if engaged in a ping pong match, when the Napoleonic system fell in 1814, the Papal States were restored once again.

However, Italian nationalism probably had more to do with the demise of the states than anything else. After 1814, Italy was divided in its rule and skirmishes broke out. By 1860, much of the region was in rebellion against papal rule. In 1861, Rome was declared the capital of Italy and the Papal States were reduced to the immediate area of Rome. To make the story short, on **September 10, 1870**, Italy declared war on the Papal States and on **September 20, 1870**, the city of Rome was captured and in October the entire city was annexed to the Italian State.

The point of this discussion is that, about **1,260 years after Boniface's claim as universal bishop**, the Roman church began to lose its Papal States to Italy until in 1870 when they were confined to a small portion of Rome. At this point, the papacy no longer ruled over nations nor did it have the political clout over nations that it once had. The power and influence of the Roman papacy and its religion over the politics of the nations was greatly diminished as it reverted back to an ecclesiastical role in the lives of Catholics, which today number over 1 billion.

It was not until **February 11, 1929** that the Holy See officially renounced all rights to the Papal States through the **Lateran Treaty**, which led to the formation of the **State of the Vatican City**, the **sovereign territory of the Holy See**.

### **Holy Roman Empire (800-1806 AD)**

The Holy Roman Empire, like so much of this era, came to an official end around the time of Napoleon. In its original sense, the concept of a holy empire meant that the Roman church and the state worked together in what could be called a Christian empire. However, near its end, the enlightened thinker **Voltaire** (1694-1778) summed it up this way: ***"This agglomeration which was called and which still calls itself the Holy Roman Empire was neither holy, nor Roman, nor an empire."***

It is believed that the concept of the **Holy Roman Empire** began with **Charlemagne, King of the Franks (768-814 AD)**, who saw his empire as the successor to the Roman Empire. He saw himself as God's principal vicar in the temporal realm, just as the pope *claimed* to be the vicar in the spiritual realm. In 800 AD, he expanded the Frankish Kingdom into the Roman Empire that included western and central Europe.

Charlemagne waged eighteen campaigns (772-804 AD) against the Saxons, who were on the eastern front of his kingdom and described as pagans. Finally, he gave the Saxons a choice between baptism and death. In other words, convert to Christianity or die. In one day, he had **4,500 Saxon rebels beheaded** and then proceeded to celebrate the nativity of Christ. Such is the Christian testimony of this era.

After successfully beating back enemies and expanding his kingdom, Charlemagne settled for peace at the age of 63 in the 34<sup>th</sup> year of his reign. Apart from his wars, Charlemagne ran a government that was the most just and enlightened that Europe had seen since Theodoric the Goth. He divided his empire into counties with a **bishop** or **archbishop governing spiritual matters** and a **count** or **comes**, meaning companion of the king, **governing secular affairs**.

According to Will Durant (*The Age of Faith*, page 463), "he could lead an army, persuade an assembly, humor the nobility, dominate the clergy, rule a harem."

Regarding the Roman church, Durant (pages 467, 468) states:

"Charlemagne was profusely generous to the Church; at the same time he made himself her master, and used her doctrines and personnel as instruments of education and government. Much of his correspondence was about religion; he hurled scriptural quotations at corrupt officials or worldly clerics; and the intensity of his utterance forbid suspicion that his piety was a political pose. ... **Out of this intimate co-operation of Church and state came one of the most brilliant ideas in the history of statesmanship; the transformation of Charlemagne's realm into a Holy Roman Empire that should have behind it all the prestige, sanctity, and stability of both Imperial and papal Rome.**"

However, there was a challenge to Charlemagne being the head of the Holy Roman Empire. First, he was King of the Franks, not of the Romans. Second, the Greek monarch in Constantinople held the title of Roman emperor. All out war between the Christian west and the Christian east could have broken out if things weren't handled carefully. Nevertheless, on December 26, 795, Leo III was elected pope, but he was not liked and for good reason. On April 25, 799, he was attacked and imprisoned in his monastery, from which he escaped and fled to Charlemagne for protection. The king sent the pope back to Rome under armed escort. On November 24, 800, Charlemagne marched into Rome and settled the dispute the people had

with Leo. Then on **December 25, 800 AD**, as Charlemagne knelt before St. Peter's altar to pray, Pope Leo suddenly placed a jeweled crown on his head, crowning him **Emperor and Augustus**, thus establishing him as the **Roman Emperor**.

Quoting again from Durant (page 469):

"The coronation had results for a thousand years. It strengthened the papacy and bishops by making civil authority derive from ecclesiastical conferment; Gregory VII and Innocent III would build a mightier Church on the events of 800 in Rome. It strengthened Charlemagne ... by making him a very vicar of God; it vastly advanced the theory of the divine right of kings. It contributed to the schism of Greek from Latin Christianity. ... Above all, the coronation established the Holy Roman Empire in fact, though not in theory. ... only with **Otto I (962 AD)** was the distinctively new character of the regime recognized; and it became "holy" only when **Frederick Barbarossa** introduced the word *sacrum* into his title in **1155 AD**. All in all, despite its threat to the liberty of the mind and the citizen, the Holy Roman Empire was a noble conception, a dream of security and peace, order and civilization restored in a world heroically won from barbarism, violence, and ignorance."

The last to use the word *holy* was **Francis II** who abdicated and dissolved the empire in **1806 AD** during the **Napoleonic Wars**.

As a final note, this is the genesis of the Holy Roman Empire, but it changed over time as the power of the emperors waned until in its last centuries it became more like a union of territories. In fact, it became a loose political federation centered in Germany and included neighboring territories, which at its peak included Italy and Burgundy.

### **East-West Church Schism (1054 AD)**

A divide had been brewing between the eastern and western churches for some time. Although the precise point is unclear, it is generally believed that around 1054 AD the two Christian communities parted ways in what is often called the **Great Schism**. Thus, **the Greek Orthodox church** and the **Roman (Latin) Catholic church** became official.

Over time, the two factions of the visible church grew apart due to misunderstandings and differences over philosophy, liturgy, language, and custom, along with political rivalries and divisions. The record proves that conflict between and among the two groups over doctrinal issues, creeds, discipline, and daily religious practice occurred well before 1054 AD.

The root of the schism could probably be traced back as far as the 3<sup>rd</sup> century when Constantine moved the capital to Constantinople, thus, laying the ground for the Greek and the Latin sections of the empire to be administered and to grow differently. Over time, their cultural and economic differences intensified.

The east and the west had common bonds, but the first to be broken was in the political realm when, in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, the WRE fell to barbarians from the north. **A political, power vacuum ensued that began to be filled by the Roman popes, which greatly blurred the lines between secular and ecclesiastical authority.**

However, Constantinople, which flourished during this time, had no such vacuum; it maintained a strong imperial power with Christian emperors presiding over a somewhat integrated Christian society. The emperors dominated the administration of church and state. However, this does not mean that the east was devoid of political and ecclesiastical conflict.

With this schism, what is of most interest is what happened in the west with the Roman Catholic church, for it is here that claims were (and, still are) made by the popes to dominate, own, and control Christians worldwide, for they see their church as the salvation of mankind.

Claims by the popes to be the **Vicar of Christ** on earth came from the Roman Catholics (meaning, *universal*), not from the Greek Orthodox, and this is what drove the protesting reformers to declare that the **Roman papacy was (is) antichrist** and to open the little book so that the masses could learn for themselves that Christ alone saves, not the pope or the church.

### **Pope Gregory VII – Above all Kings (1073 AD)**

In **1073 AD, Pope Gregory VII** formally established a **theocracy** when he declared that **the pope is above all the kings in the world**. This is considered **the zenith** of temporal power for the Roman papacy that gradually waned until this power was gradually stripped away later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

One would think that the statements coming from the popes could not get any worse than the several already presented, but, as will be shown, during **this period, which is often recognized as the time of the Thyatira church (529-1517 AD)**, more were to come.

### **Crusades (1095-1291 AD)**

In general, a series of religiously sanctioned military campaigns called the **Crusades** were called for by the popes with their main goal of retaking the Holy Land and placing it under Christian control. There were too many campaigns to cite in this study. What is important to note is that, whereas the Inquisitions were aimed at heretical Christians, these campaigns were primarily aimed at the **Islamists who occupied the Holy Land**.

The crusaders came from all over western Europe with the main campaigns occurring between 1095-1291 AD. However, a variety of campaigns with various motives stretched into the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It should be noted that one campaign actually was leveled against the Greek Orthodox Christians, which, for obvious reasons, did not help relations between the east and the west. Later, crusades were waged against pagan Slavs, Balts, Mongols, and even Christian heretics.

Wikipedia states:

"The Crusades originally had the goal of recapturing Jerusalem and the Holy Land from Muslim rule and their campaigns were launched in response to a call from the leaders of the Byzantine Empire for help to fight the expansion of the Muslim Seljuk Turks into Anatolia. The term is also used to describe contemporaneous and subsequent campaigns conducted through to the 16th century in territories outside the Levant usually against pagans, heretics, and peoples under the ban of excommunication for a mixture of religious, economic, and political reasons. Rivalries among both Christian and Muslim powers led also to alliances between religious factions against their opponents."

Will Durant [*The Age of Faith* (Simon and Schuster, 1950; page 585)] puts another twist on the Crusades.

"The Crusades were the culminating act of the medieval drama, and perhaps the most picturesque event in the history of Europe and the Near East. Now at last, after centuries of argument, the two great faiths, **Christianity and Mohammedanism**, resorted to man's ultimate arbitrament—the **supreme court of war**. All medieval development, all the expansion of commerce and Christendom, all the fervor of religious belief, all the power of

feudalism and glamour of chivalry came to a climax in a **Two Hundred Years' War** for the soul of man and the profits of trade."

Quoting again from Durant regarding the Crusaders' capture of Jerusalem (page 591-592):

"At last, on **June 7, 1099**, after a campaign of three years, the Crusaders, reduced to 12,000 combatants, stood in exaltation and fatigue before the walls of Jerusalem. ... The caliph offered peace on terms of guaranteed safety for Christian pilgrims and worshippers in Jerusalem, but Bohemund and Godfrey demanded **unconditional surrender**. ... Then, reports the priestly eyewitness Raymond of Agiles, "**wonderful things** were to be seen. Numbers of the Saracens were **beheaded** ... others were shot with arrows, or forced to jump from the towers; others were **tortured** for several days and then **burned** in flames. In the streets were seen piles of heads and hands and feet. One rode about everywhere amid the corpses of men and horses." ... women were **stabbed** to death. Suckling babes were snatched by the leg from their mother's breast and **flung over the wall**. ... **70,000** Moslems remaining in the city were **slaughtered**."

This is what resulted from the Christians' demand for "unconditional surrender." It is yet another example of the church taking up or sanctioning the **physical sword** against others, whether enemies, rivals, heretics, or even Christian brethren. So much for the glamour of chivalry!

### **Medieval Inquisitions (1184-1252 AD)**

Generally, historians recognize four major Inquisitions, which were "inquiries on heretical perversity": 1) **Medieval Inquisition** (1184-16<sup>th</sup> century AD); 2) **Spanish Inquisition** (1478-1834 AD); 3) **Portuguese Inquisition** (1536-1821); 4) **Roman Inquisition** (1542-c.1860 AD).

Each had its own characteristics but the one of most immediate attention to this study is the **Medieval Inquisition**, for it started around **1184 AD** and included the **Episcopal Inquisition (1184-1230s AD)**, and later the **Papal Inquisition (1230s AD)**. At times, the church did the inquisitions and turned the heretics over to civil authorities for punishment under the law; at other times, the church meted out punishment directly and cruelly. Sometimes special crusaders were called from throughout Europe to go after groups identified as heretics. Thus, the church and state often worked together in routing out the heretics. On the state's part, they sought to maintain order, and they saw the church as playing a role in maintaining some level of peace and calm.

There were several popular movements throughout Europe that the church considered apostate or heretical to the faith, such as the Cathars in southern France and the Waldensians in both southern France and northern Italy. Punishment for unrepentant heretics included everything from excommunication to imprisonment to death by burning at the stake. Property was also confiscated. However, according to some accounts, imprisonment in dark dungeons was perhaps one of the cruelest punishments, next to torture.

Without doubt, some of the doctrines and teachings of some of the movements during this period were, in fact, error, even perversions of the gospel, but it seems the Roman Catholics lost sight of the way they were to battle such things. Instead of taking up **the sword of the Spirit**, which is the **Word of God**, they took up **the physical sword of man** that kills the body but does nothing for the soul and spirit of the man.

And take the helmet of salvation, and **the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:** (Ephesians 6:17 ASV)

In 1227 AD, **Gregory IX** mounted the papal throne and in **1231 AD** adopted into church law legislation that had been adopted by **Frederick II** (1220-1239 AD) in 1224 that stated impenitent heresy was treason. The punishment was death by burning. The effect was to officially place the Inquisition under the pope's control.

Torture was not *officially* used in the first twenty years of the Papal Inquisitions until **Pope Innocent IV** issued a **papal bull** in **1252 AD** authorizing the use of **torture** when the judges were convinced the party was guilty. Popes that followed condoned its use as well and advised that it be the last resort. However, inquisitors often had their own interpretations of what this meant, leading to severe results.

It is believed that the number sentenced to death by the official Inquisitions was smaller than first thought by historians. Will Durant states: "***The worst tragedies of the Inquisition were concealed in the dungeons rather than brought to light at the stake***" (page 783).

Caution: Before we go off criticizing the Catholics, we need to look in the backyard, so to speak, of our so-called Christian nations that have been more than willing to wield the physical sword, as well, all in the name of democracy and freedom. In particular, I think of the gun-toting God and country Christians that seem to worship the military, or our government, whose motto is "In God We Trust," that in the past has sanctioned torture and rendering, all in the name of peace and security. Do the Crusades come to mind? What sword are we Christian nations wielding? What darkness lurks in our history? What dark dungeons have we maintained?

Quoting again from Will Durant (*The Age of Faith*; page 784):

"The methods of the inquisitors, including **torture**, were adopted into law codes of many governments; and perhaps our contemporary secret torture of suspects finds its model in the Inquisition even more than in Roman law. ... Compared with **the persecutions of heresy in Europe from 1227-1492**, the persecution of Christians by Romans in the first three centuries after Christ was mild and humane procedure. Making every allowance required of an historian and permitted to a Christian, we must rank **the Inquisition**, along with the wars and persecutions of our time, as among the **darkest blots on the record of mankind**, revealing a ferocity unknown in any beast."

Finally, quoting again from Stephen Jones:

"Literally millions of Christians were put to death, either directly or indirectly by the Church in the war against thinking differently. Finally, at the fifth Lateran Church Council (1512-1517), A. Pucci, a Cardinal of the Church, told the pope,"

***'The whole body of Christendom is now subject to one head, even to thee; no one now opposes, no one now objects.'*** (*Guinness*, p. 37)

"Perhaps he meant that by this they had finally succeeded in killing all the heretics. Yet we can only imagine how God must have laughed at his statement. That Council ended in 1517, and later that same year Martin Luther sparked the Protestant Reformation by nailing his famous "95 Theses" on the Church door at Wittenberg, Bavaria on Oct. 31, 1517."

"Just when the Church thought it had stamped out all its opposition and put all things under the feet of the Roman Church, their power began to fall. They had to relearn the lesson of Imperial Rome, that the more one persecutes Christians, the more they multiply, as others see the true character of both sides and ask themselves, *which is more Christ-like?*"

### **Pope Celestine V – "Peter the Hermit" (1294 AD)**

A study of this history would be remiss without a mention of **Peter Morone**, known as Peter the Hermit who became **Pope Celestine V** on **August 29, 1294**. In 1292, Pope Nicholas IV died, and the papacy remained vacant for all of 1293.

According to testimony from the conclave that elected Peter, it was an act of the Holy Spirit that elected this man, known as a hermit who lived in a cave on top of a mountain. In his eighties, Peter was also known as a simple man of God who hated the luxury of the Vatican. The common people loved him. However, Celestine was out of his league, so to speak, living in such an environment, so on December 13, 1294, after 107 days of serving, he resigned.

Unfortunately, his replacement, **Pope Boniface VIII (1294-1303 AD)** saw Peter as a potential threat to him due to his great popularity, so he imprisoned him where he died after 10 months.

Now, here is an interesting fact. **This occurred 1,260 years from the beginning of the Pentecostal era, starting in 33 AD.**

Peter the Hermit exemplified the very character and love of Christ that all popes should have exemplified. However, rather than show love toward Peter, Boniface made sure that Peter was taken out of the public light and treated like a criminal; some believe he was murdered in prison.

So, at this point in history, 1,260 years after Calvary, a good and righteous man is imprisoned and possibly killed by the command of a corrupt pope who, as is shown next, spoke arrogant words and blasphemies.

### **Blasphemy of Pope Boniface VIII (1302 AD)**

Revelation 13:5 states: **And there was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies; and authority to act for forty-two [42] months was given to him.** This is explained in more detail in other notes; however, it is clear that blasphemies came from the popes who claimed the right and power to overrule the precepts of Jesus' apostles and even Jesus Himself.

If there is any doubt about this statement, then consider what **Boniface VIII** wrote in *Unum Sanctum*, in **1302 AD**:

"Wherefore, no marvel if **it be in my power to change times and times, to alter and abrogate laws, to dispense with all things, yea, with the precepts of Christ**; for where Christ biddeth Peter put up his sword, and admonishes His disciples not to use any outward force in revenging themselves, do not I, **Pope Nicolas**, writing to the bishops of France, exhort them to **draw out their material swords**? And whereas Christ was present Himself at the marriage in Cana of Galilee, do not I, **Pope Martin**, in my distinction, **inhibit the spiritual clergy to be present at marriage feasts**, and also to marry? Moreover, where Christ biddeth us lend without hope of gain, do not I, **Pope Martin**, **give dispensation to do the same**? What should I speak of murder, making it to be no murder or homicide to slay them that be excommunicated?"

"Likewise **against the law of nature, item against the apostles, also against the canons of the apostles, I can and do dispense...**"

"This authority is not human, but rather Divine. Therefore, we declare, assert, define, and pronounce that **to be subject to the Roman pontiff is to every human creature altogether necessary for salvation.**"

This last pronouncement sounds like something straight out of the devil's playbook.

Also, take note of how Boniface identified with previous popes as if he were one with them. They all had one opinion of their absolute right as pope to alter or abrogate the laws of Christ and His apostles. Ruling on the throne of Christ is no sin, that is, until one claims that he can overrule even the law of Christ or, as Boniface stated, to change times and alter and abrogate laws, to even dispense the precepts of Christ. This is the meaning behind the title "Vicar of Christ" as the papacy sees it.

Think about this, the papacy claims apostolic succession starting with Peter the apostle. If the popes can alter even the teaching of the apostles, then they are abrogating Peter as well, the very source of their so-called succession as Bishop of Rome, that is, the pope of the universal church.

### **Avignon Papacy (1305-1378 AD)**

In **1305 AD**, **Philip IV of France** was successful in securing the election of **Clement V** as pope. Clement was a Frenchman, which was unpopular with the Italians who were used to having one of their own as the Bishop of Rome, that is, the pope. Clement could not stand the heat, so to speak, so he moved the papal capital to Avignon, France, which was a papal vassal at the time. This led to the **Papal States** in Italy reporting to French authorities.

Clement's move led to a succession of seven French popes seated in Avignon that ended in **1378** with **Gregory XI**. All of this led to the perception that the papacy was controlled by the French and beholden to the French crown. There is some debate as to how much control or influence the French crown had on the papacy during this time. Some claim that the church in Avignon was a French puppet, driven into corruption by its need for money.

It is generally accepted that the church lost much moral authority during this period, but it only got worse.

### **Western Papal Schism (1378-1415 AD)**

After having been in Avignon for nearly 70 years, **Gregory XI** (1370-1378 AD) moved the See back to Rome on **January 17, 1377**, over the objections of the French cardinals. Upon the death of Gregory much confusion and hostility ensued. There was dissension within the conclave over the selection of a new pope and even rioting outside. It ended in a compromise when an Italian who had served in Avignon was elected and became **Pope Urban VI**. He chose to remain in Rome, but his hostile and abusive treatment of the cardinals caused them to question the validity of his election. Consequently, on **September 20, 1378**, the cardinals selected another pope, **Clement VII**, who took up residence in Avignon in the summer of 1379.

This latter election threw the Roman church into turmoil, for now it had **two popes** and two administrations to support them. Some say this created a pope and an antipope. This is the sort of problem that comes from declaring there is no one higher than the pope, creating a near-impossible situation to resolve. This also created conflict throughout Europe, for secular leaders had to decide which pope to officially recognize for diplomatic reasons.

To try to settle the situation, a church council was held at **Pisa in 1409 AD**; however, they made it worse when they elected another or **third pope, Alexander V**.

This would be comical if it weren't so sad; however, it reveals what the carnal mind is capable of doing in the name of religion.

The situation was not resolved until the **Council of Constance** managed to dismiss or get rid of all the popes and elect **Martin V**, who served from **1417-1431 AD**. He was the first pope in 40 years to bring together the whole Roman church.

### **Black Death (1347-1350; 1603-1772 AD)**

The second major epidemic in Europe occurred with the infamous Black Death of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, with lesser but significant plagues breaking out at various points, such as in 1603 in London, which killed 38,000. It finally dissipated with the Russian plague of 1770-1772.

The Black Death has been described as one of the most devastating pandemics in human history. It came to Europe in **October 1347** and peaked from **1348-1350 AD**. It is thought to have originated in China (kings of the east) and arrived by way of merchant ships with stowaway black rats that carried Oriental rat fleas.

The Black Death is estimated to have **killed 30-60% of Europe's population**. This caused the **world's population to be reduced from an estimated 450 million to 350-375 million by 1400 AD**. It took Europe 150 years to recover its population.

Historians also report that this plague was a serious blow to the Catholic church. Due to the widespread death, people lived for the moment while others sought out people to blame, such as the Jews who were persecuted because it was believed they were complicit in the cause of the plagues.

Again, these outbreaks should catch our attention because they occurred within the period of our study. It is quite interesting that the first plague outbreak is identified with Justinian, and that the Black Death occurred right in the midst of the conflict of Avignon and the papal schism.

### **Protestant Reformation (1517 AD)**

As stated earlier, **257 AD is a possible start date for a 1,260-year period**. When Stephen I asserted the unscriptural claim of primacy of the Bishop of Rome (pope) and Damascus I seconded it, the course was set for Roman Catholicism to become an institution that stood in stark contrast to the character of Christ. It was this very character that set the stage for the Reformation 1,260 years later.

The official start of the **Reformation** under **Martin Luther** officially began on **October 31, 1517** with the nailing of his **95 theses** to the door of **Castle Church of Wittenberg**.

Martin Luther, although not the first or only reformer, is most often credited with being the instigator or founder of the Reformation that led to a gradual decline of authority of the papacy and its religion over all Christians. This event is generally cited as **the beginning of the Sardis church (1517-1776)**.

The Reformation was a protestation against the papacy (Bishop of Rome) of the Catholics and their many murderous persecutions, indulgences, and other abominable doctrines, greed, corruption, luxury, and boastful claims of its leaders, including the claim of the primacy of the pope.

It is important to point out that many of the reformers saw the **Roman papacy as antichrist**, for the popes sat themselves on a throne in the place of Christ.

The Greek word *anti* means "**in the place of; substitute, or instead of.**" When John wrote of antichrist (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 1:7), he referred to **antichrist** as a person or a spirit that

denied that the Son of God came in the flesh. However, the word itself refers to taking the place of Christ, that is, substituting for Christ. Such a one or spirit is not openly against Christ; it is more subtle than that, for an antichrist assumes the place of Christ as if he (it) were Christ.

**Each pope claims to be the Vicar of Christ on earth or the representative or substitute for Christ on earth. Consequently, by their own doctrine they are antichrists.**

Further, the reformers saw the papacy as the institution that trampled under foot the holy city of the true Church. In other words, the papacy was in the outer court as far as the reformers were concerned.

### **Diet of Worms (1521 AD)**

On **June 15, 1520 AD**, **Pope Leo X** issued a **bull** against Luther that excommunicated him within 60 days if he did not recant. Since Luther did not recant, he was officially **excommunicated** around **September 15, 1520**. On **December 11, 1520**, Luther declared that no man could be saved unless he renounced the rule of the papacy. Will Durant aptly wrote in his book titled, *The Reformation* (Simon and Schuster, 1957; page 357): ***"The monk had excommunicated the pope."***

As a condition of his election to emperor, **Charles V** had promised that no German would be condemned without a fair trial in Germany; therefore, Luther was summoned to appear before the **Imperial Diet of Worms**, which he did on **April 17-18, 1521**.

Emperor Charles called upon Luther to repent, but he replied: ***"Should I recant at this point, I would open the door to more tyranny and impiety, and it will be all the worse should it appear that I had done so at the instance of the Holy Roman Empire."***

The Diet pressed the point further and asked Luther if he was going to repudiate his books and the errors which they contained.

To this last request, Luther gave his famous response: ***"Unless I am convinced by the testimony of Sacred Scripture or by evident reason (I do not accept the authority of popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other), my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything, for to go against my conscience is neither right nor safe. God help me. Amen."***

On **May 5, 1521**, Luther went into seclusion in Wartburg, and on **May 26, 1521**, the **Edict of Worms** was issued ordering the burning of all of Luther's books. Martin Luther did not emerge out of seclusion until **March 9, 1522**. This seclusion gave the Reformation time to strengthen, which it did.

### **Counter Reformation (1534-1648 AD)**

In response to the Protestants, the Catholics sought to reform themselves from within. **Pope Paul III** called the **Council of Trent (1545-1563 AD)** to discuss the Protestant grievances, some of which were addressed; however, on matters of substance, the council simply reinforced them as church tenets and rejected all compromise with the Protestants. All of the characteristic Catholic doctrines, such as justification through faith *and* works, transubstantiation, salvation through the church, the veneration of Mary, and matters related to the saints and relics were upheld. They did attempt to reform the training of the clergy. It seems that the morals of the clergy did improve with this movement as seminaries were established to provide proper training in celibacy and piety.

Some mark two other dates for the beginning of the Counter Reformation. In **1534**, **Ignatius Loyola** formed a new Catholic order called the **Jesuits**. In **1540**, he received a charter from Pope Paul III authorizing the Jesuits or, as it was called, "**The Society of Jesus**." The Jesuits under Loyola undertook educational and missionary work with the goal of conversion or reconversion. However, they actually served as a **military order** to defend the pope.

Of the Jesuits, in regard to the Counter Reformation, Durant states (*The Reformation*; page 933): "***The spirit of the Jesuits, confident, positive, energetic, and disciplined, became the spirit of the militant Church. All in all it was an astonishing recovery, one of the most brilliant products of the Protestant Reformation.***"

The militant church of the papacy was not going to sit by idly as the Protestant Reformation grew without some push back, and they did push back as they sought to destroy the Protestants by force and persecution. Pope Paul IV (**1555-1559 AD**), the iron pope, began a program of  **censorship and inquisitions** that many were glad ended with his death. Plus, emperors Charles V and Philip II both took military action against Protestant growth.

It is generally accepted that the Counter Reformation ended in **1648** with the close of the **Thirty Years' War**.

See **Notes #10D – Bloody History**.

This is very much in line with John eating the book and it becoming bitter in his stomach. When the little book was opened, the people of the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries began to taste the word that was sweet; when persecution came, it turned bitter.

### **French Revolution and Dechristianisation of France (1789-1799 AD)**

The 1,260 year period following Justinian coincides with the **French Revolution** that led France to totally reject, not only Romanism, but also Christianity and its God. For about a three year period, France entered into spiritual darkness through what is called **the dechristianisation of France**. The **Cult of Reason (September 22, 1793-March 24, 1794)** and the **Cult of the Supreme Being (late 1793-July 28, 1794)** sought to replace the God of Creation and of the Bible with the philosophical mind of man or with a deist god called *Virtue* and a belief in the immortality of the soul.

France was known as "**the firstborn son of the Church**." We could say that the French Revolution overthrew the Christian son.

It must be noted that this so-called dechristianisation of France was, in large part but not exclusively, a movement to destroy the Catholic religion. It is estimated that 95% of France was Catholic with the remainder being mostly Protestant Huguenots and a small number of Jews and even a smaller number of Muslims.

During this time, the Catholic church was stripped of its power to tax, church property was confiscated and sold at public auction, and clergy were stripped of their special status.

In **1792**, **divorce was legalized**, which was contrary to Catholic doctrine, and many other anti-church laws were passed. This is reminiscent of how God divorced Israel and here France was essentially divorcing God 1,260 years after the Code of Justinian.

By the spring of 1794, most of the 40,000 church buildings in France had been closed, sold, destroyed, or converted to other uses. Bishops and priests were massacred by angry mobs. It is

said that this dechristianisation had long-term effects on a once "religious" people who never returned to their traditional religious practices when it was all over.

Essentially, **France became an atheistic nation**. What started as a political and economic movement quickly moved to a rejection or hatred of Catholicism until it turned into an outright rejection of God Himself and Christianity, at least as far as some of the governing authorities and elitists that were in control were concerned. Men of reason and philosophy, not of faith, began to vie for a voice over society.

It was the first time in Church history that the government of a Christian nation, even if it were led by an apparent church, had attempted to turn completely against their God and thrust Him out of their society and government.

Again, keep in mind, according to some historicists, all of this can be traced back to Justinian and the things he put into motion 1,260 years earlier. Some report that the zenith of this dechristianisation was reached around the middle of 1794; however, it was short-lived, for by early 1795 there was a return to some form of religion-based faith. On **February 21, 1795**, a law was passed legalizing **public worship**, but with strict limitations. However, priests were still being persecuted through imprisonment and deportation to penal colonies as late as 1799.

### **Napoleon and the Popes (1796-1815 AD)**

As **Napoleon Bonaparte** rose in power, he had repeated conflicts with the popes.

In 1796, French troops, commanded by Napoleon, invaded Italy and defeated the papal troops. Pope Pius VI asked for peace, which was granted on February 19, 1797, but due to a riot on December 28<sup>th</sup>, the French General Louis Alexandre Berthier marched into Rome on **February 10, 1798**, captured it, and imprisoned **Pope Pius VI** in Valence, France, where he died in **August 1799**. The pope's body was embalmed but not buried until **January 30, 1800** because Napoleon saw some political value in the delay in his attempt to bring the Catholic church back into France. The burial took place during the conclave to elect a new pope.

It wasn't until Napoleon negotiated an agreement with the new pope, **Pius VII**, over the relationship between the state and church, that the period of dechristianisation of France was officially over. This was accomplished with the **Concordat of 1801**, which **reaffirmed the Catholic church as the majority church of France**; some of its civil status was also restored. However, the agreement largely favored the states and the church-state balance favored Napoleon.

Napoleon's relationship with Pius VII was one of conflict with the pope often acquiescing to Napoleon. Pius wanted the Papal States returned to the papacy; however, in 1809 Napoleon annexed all the remaining Papal States to the French empire. In 1805, Pius traveled to Paris for the coronation of Napoleon. Pius then excommunicated Napoleon, which led one of Napoleon's officers to kidnap the pope. Napoleon did not object, and the pope remained in confinement in various places over a six-year period until he returned to Rome on May 24, 1814 when Napoleon's troops were being pursued.

The **Congress of Vienna (1814-1815)** restored most of the Papal States to Rome that lasted until 1870 when all were lost permanently, never to be regained. The **Jesuits** were restored and the **Inquisition** revived.

Napoleon fought a series of wars called the Napoleonic Wars culminating with Napoleon's defeat in the **Battle of Waterloo**, his **abdication on June 22, 1815**, his **surrender to the**

**British on July 15, 1815**, and his subsequent exile to **Saint Helena** until his death on **May 5, 1821**.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, much history has been left out, especially the good during this period; nevertheless, what needs to be taken away is a sense of the times in the European Christian community during the period primarily from the 6<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries that led to God's many judgments of it.

At this point, the question is: Do some of these dates actually relate to the holy city being trampled under foot and the two witnesses prophesying? The answer to this question seems to rest with the identity of the two witnesses. Who or what do they signify? What do their actions signify? This is taken up in the next series of study notes.