

Beware of the False Prophet

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The Bible reveals to us that in the last days a future false prophet will arise and with that in mind, let's go to Revelation 16 and see the prophecy of this false prophet arising at the end of the age. Revelation 16, we'll read verses 13 through 15. Notice as we read this what this false prophet is going to do. It's very important to God's people.

Revelation 16:13, it says:

Revelation 16:13. *And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon ... (KJV)*

And we know that to be Satan.

Revelation 16:13b. *... and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.*

14) For they are the spirits of [demons] ... (KJV)

Now notice this.

Revelation 16:14b: *... working miracles [demons working miracles], which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. (KJV)*

These demons coming out of the false prophet particularly are going to convince people that Christ is the enemy and they are, therefore, going to fight Jesus Christ. Verse 15:

Revelation 16:15. *Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that [watches] ... (KJV)*

This is talking to us.

15b) ... and [keeps] his garments ... (KJV)

Meaning: Keep them clean and unspotted and unsoiled.

15 continued) ... lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. (KJV)

Now skip over to Revelation 19:20. It talks about the fate of the beast and the false prophet, but notice something else that adds to the narrative that we'll be talking about. Revelation 19:20 and it says:

Revelation 19:20: *And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him ... (KJV)*

Meaning: the beast. The false prophet is going to work miracles on behalf of the beast and in front of the beast. Going on:

Revelation 19:20b. *... with which he [the false prophet and the beast together] deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. (KJV)*

So we see here very clearly that the false prophet is going to work miracles supported by demons in an attempt to get the entire world to worship this system and, as we're going to see, to get God's people to worship this system.

Now the Greek word for "false prophet" is Strong's number 5578 and it's the Greek word "pseudoprophetes" (psyoo-dop-rof-ay'-tace). And the word "pseudo" comes directly over into English. The word "pseudo" means *false or fake*. So, these two words together comprise the meaning that we understand, *false or fake prophet*. And the Greek definition means *a spurious prophet*. That is, *a pretended foreteller or a religious imposter*.

These scriptures reveal that the false prophet is indeed a religious imposter and he's going to work miracles to deceive the world into worshipping this system. So, we have to ask the question: Why is this important to God's people? What does it have to do with us?

We're going to find out that there is going to be an attempt at a great deception upon the people of God to get us to follow this false prophet and this system. It seems logical with what we know today that the false prophet is going to be the head of the largest false religious system on earth, the Catholic Church with the Pope as its head.

Let me give you... We're just speculating, but hypothetical. With all the war in the world, what if this false prophet, probably the Pope at some point, what if this false prophet says "God has inspired me to bring peace."? And he makes a trip down to a warring area. It might be the factions in Syria or it might mean Hamas and Israel, whatever it turns out to be. And he goes down there and he brokers peace. And all of a sudden a spirit of peace comes across all parties and they put down their arms and everybody's happy. And this false prophet goes back home as a miracle worker.

Or what if he prophesies about a natural disaster? He says, "In two weeks (or a month), this certain disaster is going to occur. And you had better take heed of that." As a result, maybe ten of thousands, hundreds of thousands of people are saved or are spared from this disaster.

Or, let's say, as he gives his address from the balcony overlooking Saint Peter's Square, what if he just started to levitate? And what if he came off the balcony and went through

the air around Saint Peter's Basilica over the crowd, all looking up at him. He's up in the air. And he talks to them up in the air and then comes back down on the balcony. If that happened and that was spread worldwide on television, people would bow down and they would start worshipping this man. Now, the question for us is: If that happened and we saw it, would some of us be tempted to kneel down and worship this man? Or kneel down and say, "Hey, I've been wrong all these years. This is obviously the work of God and I'd better get with the program."?

Now this is important because one way or another, things like this will happen. Let's go to Matthew 24. We're going to read verses 23 and 24. Christ prophesied that something like this is going to happen. My guess is that it's going to happen more than once, probably several times before we're finished. Matthew 24 beginning in verse 23, Christ warned us. He says:

Matthew 24:23. *Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there [is Christ; don't] believe it.*

24) For there shall arise false Christs [people claiming to be Christ or stand in the place of Christ], and false prophets, ... (KJV)

Now, today to date, there have been 266 Popes. And, as we're going to see, they have said that they stand in the place of Jesus Christ.

And these false Christs and false prophets:

24b) ... shall [show] great signs ... (KJV)

Now, the Greek can mean *miracles*.

24 continued) ... and wonders ... (KJV)

The Greek can mean *an omen or a prophetic sign*.

They are going to show miracles and show prophetic signs before this is all over with.

24 continued) ... insomuch that, if it [was] possible, they shall deceive the very elect. (KJV)

The firstfruits! The Greek means *those selected or those chosen*, referring to us.

Now, this false prophet, as well as the Pope today and the 265 Popes before him, have a claim to legitimacy as far as being those sitting in place of Jesus Christ. Now the Catholics claim that the Pope is, in their terms, "The Vicar of Christ." That means *one who stands in place of Christ on this earth*. The Catholics claim that the Apostle Peter was the first Pope. He was the first Vicar of Christ and they are just following in his footsteps. And for centuries the Popes have been buried next to what they claim is the grave of the Apostle Peter. So, again, they're following in his footsteps. And the Popes

claim to this very day that the chair they sit on in the center of Saint Peter's Basilica is the same chair that Peter made and Peter sat on himself. So, they are saying that all of these add up to the legitimacy of the Papacy—and ultimately the legitimacy of the false prophet that's going to work miracles.

So, my point is if we understand the truth about these claims and the original of the office of the Pope and the successors of the Pope, we can better resist any attempt on his part and on Satan's part to deceive us, who are the very elect.

So, the title of the sermon is:

Beware of the False Prophet

And we're going to look at three areas. We're going to look at the three proofs that the Catholic Church brings forth to claim that Peter was indeed the first Pope. Then we're going to examine those three proofs in detail to see if they are true. And then, thirdly if Peter was not the first Pope, then who was the first Pope?

The first thing we're going to do now is look at the proofs from the Catholic Church that Peter was indeed the first Pope. Now they give three proofs basically. I'm distilling a great deal of reading and a great deal of research. They give three basic proofs.

First, they say scripture supports the fact that Peter was the first Pope.

Now the scripture that they give, the main one they give, is familiar to us all—Matthew 16. Let's go there and we're going to read verses 15 through 19. Matthew 16 verses 15 through 19. Christ is addressing the apostles. And in Matthew 16 verse 15:

Matthew 16:15. *He [says] unto them, But [who] say [you] that I am? (KJV)*

"Who do you say I am?" Peter gave an inspired answer.

Matthew 16:16. *[He] said, [You are] the Christ, the Son of the living God. (KJV)*

Now, that was inspired by God—a true answer. Verse 17:

Matthew 16:17. *And [then] Jesus answered and said unto him, ... (KJV)*

He said, in essence, "Because you have said this, Peter:"

Matthew 16:17b. *... Blessed [are you], Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood [has] not revealed it unto [you], but my Father which is in heaven.*

18) And I say also unto [you], That [you are] Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (KJV)

So, the Catholic Church claims that their Church is built upon Peter. Verse 19, Christ goes on to say:

Matthew 16:19. *I will give unto [you] the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever [you shall] bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever [you shall] loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (KJV)*

So, they claim that the Catholic Church has the ability to decide laws, has the ability to decide who is going to be in the kingdom of heaven, and who can be shut out of the kingdom of heaven. And the Catholics say that Peter, and then the subsequent Popes, are to rule this earth in the place of Jesus Christ based on this scripture.

Now, the Catholics also use another scripture to prove in their view that Peter was actually in Rome. Let's go to 1 Peter 5 and verse 13. They say the Bible says absolutely that Peter was in Rome, which substantiates their claim that he was the first Pope. 1 Peter 5 and verse 13, Peter is writing this epistle and he is saying something that they claim leads to the fact that he was in Rome. 1 Peter 5:13.

1 Peter 5:13. *The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, [salutes] you; and so [does Mark] my son. (KJV)*

Now the Catholic Church correctly points out that that the Bible identifies Rome as a type of Babylon. We won't turn there, but you find that in Revelation 17 verses 5 through 9. So, they are saying that Peter when he used the term "Babylon" was referring to Rome; that he was in Rome with Mark.

Now, let me read from the book The Early Years of the Church by Miles Hodges, p. 32-33. He is now quoting Clement of Alexandria, which was an early church "father" and writer. Clement of Alexandria says: "Peter makes mention of Mark in his first Epistle which they report he wrote in Rome, as he indicates where he calls the city figuratively Babylon."

Therefore, the Catholic Church says that Peter was in Babylon, that Christ gave him the keys to the kingdom, and that he is the foundation of the church; scripture proves it. And that he was, obviously the first Pope. That's the first proof.

Second proof is that the Catholics claim that Peter was actually buried under the high altar at the intersection of the cross in Saint Peter's Basilica.

And right under that are the bones of the apostle Peter.

Now, let me read from the book The Bones of St. Peter by Walsh, p. 104. He says that Peter was killed in the presence of Nero at his "circus." For those of you that have read history, Nero's circus was an arena in his private garden where he had sporting events but he also killed a lot of people for fun. And the Catholic tradition says that Peter was crucified upside down in his (Nero's) arena. He was buried on the spot where he died.

And then when Constantine declared the Catholic religion the religion of the Roman Empire, he had built Saint Peter's Basilica over the very spot where Peter died. And if you look at an aerial view of Saint Peter's, it is in the form of a cross and right at that intersection is right over the spot where Peter died and was buried.

That's the second proof: Peter's bones are right under the altar.

The third proof is that the Pope today sits, on the "High Altar" in Saint Peter's Basilica over the bones of Peter, sits on the very chair that Peter made and that Peter sat upon.

The Catholic tradition is that Peter actually built the chair. The chair is known as "Cathedra Petri," Peter's chair. And it is called today "The Holy See," (s-e-e). Meaning when the Pope sits on that chair, then that is the Holy See from which he speaks for God and he speaks for Jesus Christ. Since the Pope is the one in place of Christ, meaning the Vicar of Christ, then that chair becomes the earthly equivalent of God's throne. The Catholics believe that. And the Pope sits on this chair in the Vatican to this very day.

Now, let me read from The Fundamentals of Catholic Belief by Sullivan, p. 122-123. Sullivan here is talking about what happens when the Pope speaks from that chair. "When, in a matter of faith or morals, he [referring to the Pope; when he] speaks ex-cathedra, that is, from the chair of Peter, as the supreme and universal teacher of God's revelation to mankind, he is divinely preserved from error..." So that means when the Pope is talking about morals, talking about conduct, talking about faith, when he sits on that chair and makes a pronouncement, he is incapable of error; it comes from God. That is known as The Doctrine of Papal Infallibility.

There is nothing new under the sun. It's an aside that some people today ascribe that to Mr. Armstrong. Whatever he said, he is infallible. So, there is nothing new under the sun in that regard.

If the Catholics are correct about these three proofs, if they are correct and Peter is the first Pope, then we are in the wrong religion. We shouldn't be here. We should be at mass tomorrow. So, what we're going to do now is look at these three proofs. We're going to examine them from the scriptures and from history to see if they are indeed true.

Now the first one is scripture. So let's go back to Matthew 16. We'll begin in verse 18 and examine this scripture and see if it really means that the church is built on the apostle Peter. Matthew 16 verse 18, Christ says:

Matthew 16:18. *And I say ... unto [you, Peter], That [you are] Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*
(KJV)

Now, let's stop here. The Greek word for "Peter" is the Greek word "petros." It occurs in the King James 162 times. One hundred and sixty one times it's translated as "Peter." The only other time it's translated as "stone" and it means just that—a stone, something you can hold in your hand. Now, the Greek word for "rock" is a different word. It is the Greek word "petra." And it means a giant rock or a mass of rocks. What Christ is saying is that "Peter, you're a small stone. But upon this giant rock, this mass of rocks..." Now when He said that, tradition has it that He was standing in front of a very specific place and this was a gigantic rock that you find out in the desert in Israel.

Our son hired an archeologist to take him to Israel and take him several places that normally the tour buses wouldn't stop at. But one place was this giant rock that tradition and history indicate that Christ was standing in front of this when He made this very statement. He took a picture. Our son is 6'2" but he's this little speck. And this rock is probably 70 to 100 feet high and it's probably two-three football fields wide. It is solid rock. There is no dirt on it. There is no vegetation on it. It's solid rock.

And you can imagine Christ saying, "Peter, you're a stone, but upon this rock—Me—the church is going to be founded." That's what He said. That's what He meant. That's what the Greek shows. No question about that.

But notice verse 19. He goes on to say:

Matthew 16:19. *And I will give unto [you] the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and [whatever you] bind on earth [is going to] be bound in heaven: and [whatever you shall] loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (KJV)*

Now, this binding and loosing question, we have covered a couple of times before in various sermons and for sake of time, the context is making judgments based on God's eternal unchangeable law. He allowed the apostles to make judgments, practical decisions based on God's law. This does not authorize the apostles to change God's law as the Catholic Church did from Saturday to Sunday or from Passover to Easter. That is not the context; that's not what Christ is referring to.

Let's go to Ephesians 2 and see a scripture that indicates very clearly that all the apostles were on equal footing and there was none elevated one above the other. Ephesians 2 verses 19 and 20. He's talking to the Church at Ephesus and he says this:

Ephesians 2:19. *Now therefore [you] are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints ... (KJV)*

And what are they citizens of?

Ephesians 2:19b. *... and of the household of God; (KJV)*

Then in verse 20, he says, "This household of God is"

Ephesians 2:20. ... built upon the foundation of the [Peter]? (KJV)

No. It's the foundation of "the":

20b) ... apostles ... (KJV)

Plural! All the apostles, not just Peter.

20 continued) ... and prophets ... (KJV)

In addition to the apostles, but then notice:

20 continued) ... [and] Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; (KJV)

The cornerstone was the first stone laid in a foundation and then the foundation branched out from that cornerstone. Everything was based on the location, the size, the dimensions of the cornerstone. It says very clearly that Christ is the head of the Church, the household of God. And, yes, the parts of the foundation are the prophets and the apostles, but if Peter was the one that the Church was built one, you would think it would be said here. But it obviously is not.

We won't turn there but you can use it as a reference, Revelation 21:14 talking about New Jerusalem. And it says, "The walls of New Jerusalem have twelve foundations. And each one of those twelve foundations has the name of one of the apostles." And they are all equal, just like we read in Ephesians. There is not one above the other. If Peter was the Head of the Church, the Vicar of Christ, His representative on earth, you would think that the foundation would have one instead of twelve. You can go to many other scriptures, but there are plenty of scriptures that show that Peter was one of the apostles and certainly an outspoken apostle, but he was not the head of the Church.

Now, let's go to 1 Peter 5:13 about Babylon. We read that before when Peter said "The church that is at Babylon ... salutes you as does Mark my son."

Now let me read from the book Mystery Babylon the Great by Condor. It's on page 197; this is what he says:

There is no proof whatsoever that Peter was in any other place than where he says he was, considering that Babylon, although partly in ruins, was still inhabited by a considerable number of people. History also records that there was an especially large Jewish community living there at the time.

Now we have to remember that Peter... Who was Peter the apostle to? He was the apostle to the circumcision, to the Jews. And if there was a large contingent of Jews in Babylon, it only makes sense that he wrote from Babylon while he was visiting the Jews. There is no indication whatsoever that he was referring to Rome—not any indication at

all. In fact, let's look at another proof. Let's go to Acts 28. We're going to begin in verse 16. Paul is now a prisoner in Rome. This probably happened in the late winter of 61 A.D. Peter was still alive at that time. Acts 28:16, notice what it says.

Acts 28:16. *And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was [allowed] to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him. (KJV)*

He was under what we would call today "house arrest" for a period of time. Verse 17:

Acts 18:17. *And it came to pass, that after three days [after Paul arrived in Rome, he] called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. (KJV)*

Verse 20:

Acts 18:20. *For this cause therefore have I called ... you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain. (KJV)*

And we know that Paul at times was literally in chains, had chains around his arms. Verse 21:

Acts 18:21. *And they [the leaders of the Jews] said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judaea concerning [you], neither any of the brethren that came [showed] or [spoke] any harm of [you]. (KJV)*

But notice verse 22.

Acts 18:22. *But we desire to hear of [you] what [you think]: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against. (KJV)*

Now that tells us very clearly that the Jews in Rome didn't know anything about Christ. They didn't understand anything about Christ. They heard rumors about Christ, rumors about Christians, but they did know and they're asking Paul to "tell us." Now, Peter was still alive. How could this be if he was in Rome? How could it be? If he was in Rome, they would be educated. Peter would have gone to the synagogues and preached Christ and they wouldn't be ignorant.

Let me read from the book History of Rome by Dr. Thomas Dyer, p. 295. This is very important and he establishes a fact relative to what we're talking about, but also another fact that will come up later. History of Rome: "The first Roman converts to Christianity appear to have had very inadequate ideas of the sublime purity of the gospel, and to have entertained a strange medley of pagan idolatry and the Christian truth." Dr. Dyer

is absolutely correct as we will see later. And the fact is that they had a mixture of pagan idolatry and some Christian parts of it. How could that have happened if Peter was actually in Rome teaching as the head of the Church? Obviously, it didn't happen.

So, the conclusion of this first proof is that there is no proof Peter was even in Rome, much less given the keys to the kingdom of heaven, and much less having the Church based upon him. No proof whatsoever.

Now the second proof they use—Peter's bones. Remember the Catholic tradition says that he was killed in Nero's circus in his garden; he was hung upside down; he died and he was buried on the spot where he died.

If you're a student of history, you know that it is very clear that the great fire of Rome when Nero was emperor, he blamed on the Christians. He set it, set the fire, but he blamed it on the Christians.

Now, why would a person hated by Nero be buried on his own property? Think about that. Would you bury your worst enemy in your backyard? You wouldn't do that. And why would Nero, who hated Christians, turn that area of his circus into a Christian graveyard? Why would he do that—the very people he persecuted and hated?

Now let me read from a very interesting book titled The Tomb of Peter. It's written by Dr. Margherita Guarducci. Now Dr. Guarducci, Margherita Guarducci is a devout Catholic and she wrote this book to prove that Peter's bones are under the altar in Saint Peter's Basilica. So, we have to understand where she's coming from. The fact is in this book she does give a very interesting history of the excavations that have occurred under the altar. So, I'm going to read just a little bit from that. I'll paraphrase.

She basically says that in 1939 Pope Pius XII commissioned excavations not under the altar but around the altar to prove that Peter's bones were actually there. Now remember that Catholic traditions since the fourth century have stated that his bones were there. That's for 1700 years the Catholics have said, "The bones are down here." And in 1939, Pope Pius commissions this dig.

Now when they went down there around the altar, they uncovered tombs of pagan wealthy Romans. Near the altar was found [not under, but near the altar] an expensive tomb adorned with the statue of the goddess Isis. They also found another tomb that was adorned with the Greek sun-god Helios. They found a third tomb with Venus rising from the sea during these excavations.

After all of that—not finding anything pertaining to Christianity or Christians or Peter—they asked for permission to dig directly under the altar. They were digging now thirty feet down directly below the altar in Saint Peter's Basilica. Now, the war years interrupted that dig. As we know it consumed all of Europe. So, everything was put on hold until after the war. Then it resumed, this archeological excavation, and in 1949

they found a simple grave of a stout man estimated to be about seventy years old with his head missing.

Now, let me read from The Bones of Saint Peter by Walsh. He says, “Catholic tradition states that the head of Peter had been separated at death and was preserved at a nearby cathedral, the cathedral Saint John Lateran.” And if you go to that cathedral today, there is a skull that they claim is the skull of Saint Peter. That it was separated after he was crucified upside down.

Now in 1949 when this grave was found, the New York Times, August 22, 1949, on the front page of the New York Times, there was a headline “The Bones of Peter Found Under Altar!” Now think about that. This went around the world that at last it’s been proven that Peter’s bones are under the altar.

Now this is from [Walsh’s]¹ book and he said that after all of the hoopla subsided, they carefully examined the bones of this headless man in this one grave. The first shock was that on careful examination the bones of not one person but three people were in this grave. The second shock was that one set of bones was from a woman. And the other two were not seventy years old; the other two were too young to be Peter at that time. And the third shock was in that grave there were some bones of animals. So, this was not as advertised. This was found out after more extensive research after it was first announced in 1949.

In the mid-1950s Dr. Guarducci arrives on the scene, as she says in her book, to prove that this is true that Peter’s bones are indeed down there. Now, she found many sets of bones. Some looked promising, but she found no proof.

What she did find though—and this is from her book—she found symbols on a nearby wall underneath the altar that she claims in her book were Christian. This is found on pages 102-103 of her book The Tomb of Saint Peter. What they found was a vase with the letter “M” on it. And on the wall next to the vase, there was a drawing of a dove. And then there was scratched in the wall the letters “RA”. Now, this is what she said relative to this find: “Now everything becomes clear: The soul [pictured by the dove] turns toward Mary and the mystical vase [with the letter ‘M’] to express the idea that through Mary we reach life [which is Jesus Christ].” Now, that I think all of us would realize that that is a huge stretch from the point of finding bones that are actually Peter’s.

Now let me read from the conclusion of her book. “At the beginning of these pages, I asked whether or not we can accept the tradition that St. Peter’s tomb is at the heart of the Vatican basilica.” Now notice she said, “accept”; she didn’t say “prove.” Going on, “I stated that only a very careful study of the evidence could give us an exhaustive answer. At the end of that study, I can state that the tradition is acceptable.” Again, she doesn’t use the word “proven” or “prove.” “I can state that the tradition is acceptable, indeed, that an objective examination of the evidence has greatly increased its strength

¹ Correction per Rick Railston 07/29/2013

and its value.” But nowhere does she say there is any proof and remember her bias going into this dig.

Now we also need to remember that the symbols unearthed here, the dove, the vase, all of that, are symbols of paganism that were later adopted as Christian. That’s why we don’t have doves and fish in bumper stickers on our bumper or in the trunk lid of our car where some people have fish or doves there proclaiming they are Christian because these are pagan.

And it was a custom back then, as we’re going to see, for pagans to be buried near their temple. That’s why so many pagan bones were found underneath, as we’re going to see. We’ll see why. As an aside, that’s why today, if you go around the country in rural areas you see an old church and guess what? There’s a graveyard right next to the church itself and where people are buried. That is a pagan custom. It’s come to us from Babylon and Egypt, as we’re going to see, and right through the Greek or Roman culture and their multiple gods.

Let me read from Mystery Babylon the Great by Condor on p. 208. “The main temple of Mithra was on Vatican Hill and was taken over by the Catholics of Rome in 376 A.D.”... That’s when Constantine declared Catholicism (Christianity) was the religion of the Roman Empire. This pagan temple was taken over “by the Catholics of Rome in 376 A.D., who would now celebrate their feasts on Sunday rather than the Jewish Sabbath.”

Let me also read from The Women’s Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets by Walker p. 787. “Even Catholic scholars now admit the stories of Peter’s upside-down crucifixion in the presence of Nero, and his burial on Vatican Hill were fictitious.” Catholic scholars today agree that they are traditions but they are fictitious.

So, the conclusion of this second proof is the fact that Peter’s presence has never been proven to even be in Rome, much less the proof of his crucifixion in Rome and the fact that his bones are there in Rome. It’s never been proven—not in the Bible, not by history.

Now, what about Peter’s chair—this chair that the Catholics claim that Peter built and he sat upon as the first Pope. Now Pope Damasus, he was Pope in the fourth century. This was the very first time this happened. He set aside a day called “The Festival of the Chair” where this “holy relic” was worshipped as the chair that Peter built and Peter sat upon.

Now let me read from The Catholic Encyclopedia (This is in their own words.), Vol. 3, p. 437. “On July 18, 1662,” now this is 1300 years after Pope Damasus started this day of worshipping the chair. “[In] 1662, Pope Alexander VII preparing for the ‘Festival of the Chair’ ordered the chair cleaned.” Evidently it had never been cleaned before. They found on this chair, after they cleaned it up, a representation of the “Twelve Labors of Hercules” inscribed on the chair. So, what he did—and this is from The Catholic

Encyclopedia—when that was found, he cancelled the festival and ordered this chair to be covered with beaten out bronze sheeting to obviously cover up the Twelve Labors of Hercules.

Now within a few years, another chair was (and I use in quotes) “discovered,” within a few years. Now it took the place of the first chair until 1775. So, for one hundred thirteen years the second chair took the place of the first. When according to the book The Ancient Symbol Worship by Westropp on p. 97, they found or acknowledged finding an inscription on the back of this chair. And it said, “There is no God but [God] and Mohamet is His Prophet.” Now this is from the Catholic teaching! Now, that is a well-known verse from the Koran. And so, after 1775, they got rid of this chair and they resurrected the first chair which has the bronze sheeting on it now. And that is the chair that the Pope sits upon to this very day.

Now where did all this come from? This chair thing? Let me read from a book The Legends of the Jews by Ginzberg, Vol. I, p. 178, where this legend comes from, “The old Rabbinical tradition says of Nimrod: ‘Not enough that he turned men away from God, he did all that he could to make them pay divine honors unto himself. He set himself up as a god and made a seat for himself as an imitation of the seat of God.’ ” This is Nimrod. Going on, “ ‘This served him as a seat and, as he sate (sic) upon it, all nations came and paid to him Divine homage’ ” as though he were a god.

Remember Ecclesiastes 1:9? It says, “That which has been shall be; and that is done is going to be done in the future.” And then Solomon says, “There is nothing new under the sun.” This chair is nothing more than a reiteration of the chair of Nimrod in Babylon. It went on to be the throne of the pharaohs in Egypt and then on to what we’re reading about now.

Now, remember when the Pope spoke from this chair, he was deemed infallible. Now, let’s talk just a second about the infallibility of the Pope speaking ex-cathedra from this chair. About the time of Columbus, there was a great argument in the scientific circles whether the earth was round or flat. You have to understand most of the universities were associated with Catholic schools and Catholic universities manned by priests. So, a few rebel scientists, including some very famous ones, postulated that the world was round. The accepted tradition and certainly supported by the Catholic Church was that the world was flat and the Pope was called to make a determination. So, about this time, he spoke ex-cathedra from that chair stating unequivocally that the world was flat and, then from that time on, those who said the world was round were persecuted. Some were tortured. Some had to deny that. Now, in 1977, this infallibility was reversed by Pope Paul VI when he said, “Yes, indeed, the world is now round.” Okay, how do you deal with that when the world was flat for over a thousand years and now it’s round?

The conclusion of all of this—and we could go on and on—is that there was no chair from which Peter ever ruled.

So, let's summarize where we've arrived at at this point. We've seen that the scriptures, the bones, the chair used to claim that Peter was the Pope are simply bogus proofs. They are not real. It comes down to Catholic tradition. Let me read from their own works, their own words, The Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. VIII, p. 738, it says—now listen very carefully to this: “No dishonor is done to God by the continuance of an error which has been handed down in perfect good faith for many centuries... Hence, there is justification for the practice of The Holy See...” Meaning: speaking from the seat. “Hence, there is justification for the practice of The Holy See in allowing the cult of certain doubtful ancient relics to continue [the bones, the chair, being part of those cults, the head of Peter at Saint John the Lateran church].” It says, “There is no error in the continuance... There is no harm to God in the continuance of an error. We will continue to worship these relics.”

Now, that's fine if there is no God. But what does God have to say about that? Let's go to Mark 7 verse 7. If you want a reference scripture, Colossians 2:8 says essentially the same thing. Mark 7 beginning in verse 7, Christ says—now He's talking to the religious leaders of his day—

Mark 7:7. *Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*

8) *For laying aside the commandment of God, [you] hold [to] the tradition of men [and He gives some examples], as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things [you] do.*

9) *And he said unto them, Full well [you] reject the commandment of God, that [you] may keep your own tradition. (KJV)*

Verse 13:

Mark 7:13. *Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which [you] have delivered: and many such like things do [you]. (KJV)*

Now granted, He was talking to the religious leaders of His day, but the principle applies today. The principle is: You can't substitute the traditions of men versus the truth or the commandments of God.

And so these traditions that we've just read have no basis in fact whatsoever. So, these three proofs from the Catholic Church are indeed untrue. If all of this is bogus, then we have to ask the questions: Who, then, was the first Pope? Was it somebody real? Or was it a figment of somebody's imagination? And what we're going to find in the balance of the sermon is we're going to find there were two Popes. There were two “Peters”—one before Jesus Christ was ever born and one after He was born.

Now, let's talk about the “Peter,” the Pope, the Papa that was in place before Christ was ever born.

The fact is the name “Peter” existed long before the name of Christ was ever heard. The name “Peter” was used in the Babylonian mystery religions and the Egyptian mystery religions. Priests were called then “interpreters” of the mysteries and their name was a “Peter”, an interpreter of the mysteries. Just like today in the Catholic Church, the priest is an interpreter of the Bible. While these mystery religions were secret and so, you needed an interpreter to present these mysteries to the average supplicant of these pagan churches. In fact, the head of the mysteries was called “the Grand Interpreter”; short was Pope, Papa or Arch-Peter. We get the English word “patriarch” from the word Arch-Peter, the Grand Interpreter.

Now the mystery religion with its head a Peter was introduced into the Greco-Roman culture in the first century B.C. as Mithraism. Now, this is going to blow your mind if you’ve never studied Mithraism. Mithra is an old Persian deity. Let’s now talk about the teachings of Mithraism and notice the similarities between Mithraism and modern-day (and I say in quotes, not the true Christianity but modern-day) “Christianity”: Let me read from the Encyclopedia Britannica, 14th Ed., Vol. XV, p. 621. “Mithraism,” now this is one hundred years before Christ was born.

Mithraism had the worship of the sun, held sacred Sunday, had legends of shepherds giving gifts of adoration to the savior-child, holy water, candles, communion, the 25 of December as the birth of their ‘savior,’ who was born of the ‘virgin queen of heaven’...

This, we know from history, was Nimrod’s mother-wife. Continuing the quote:

... the immortality of the soul, [the concept of] heaven, and eternal damnation in hell.

These are all doctrines of the Mithraic religion. Let me add to that by summarizing a lot of other investigation into other books. I’ll just add this.

- Mithra was born on December 25 which is called, “The Birthday of the Unconquered Sun,” meaning after that daylight gets longer and longer and longer. Therefore, the sun has not been conquered and the sun is now resurrected. The date was taken over by Christians as the birthday of Christ in the fourth century A.D.
- Mithra healed the sick. He made the blind to see, the lame to walk, and he cast out demons.
- The Magi brought gifts into a sacred cave where Mithra was born.
- He was buried in a rock tomb representing his mother’s womb.
- He ascended to heaven on the spring equinox.
- As a Peter, as an interpreter, he carried the keys to the kingdom of heaven.

- And before returning to heaven... Get this! Before returning to heaven, Mithra celebrated a last supper with his twelve disciples who represented the twelve signs of the zodiac. His worshippers partook of a sacramental meal of baked bread marked with a cross, which we today call hot cross buns. We know that's in the Bible.
- His priesthood consisted only of celibate men.
- Followers of Mithra were the only ones who could be saved.
- And sinful ones who followed teachings other than Mithra would be cast into hell along with Ahriman, their version of Satan, and the fallen angels.

Again, nothing new under the sun. It sounds like what some people say today, "If you're not part of our group, you're going into the lake of fire." Well, Mithraism said exactly that.

What happened is the Romans adopted Mithraism. It was very popular a hundred years before Christ and during the time of Christ and for the first four hundred years after Christ's death. Here is the fact: Satan, knowing Christ was going to be born; Satan, counterfeited Christianity in the first century B.C. and then Catholicism adopted the counterfeit. That's the truth. Satan was smart enough and knew God's plan enough that he counterfeited Christianity a hundred years before Christ was born and then the Catholic Church adopted that counterfeit.

Let me read from The Women's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets by Walker, p. 663-664. This is about Mithraism and Christianity. "In 307 A.D., the Roman Emperor declared Mithra a 'Protector of the Empire.' Christians copied many details of the Mithraic mystery religion."

As an aside, Dorothy, when she was in college, decided to do a paper on Mithraism. She grew up a Methodist and she was absolutely shocked to find out that the Mithraic religion a hundred years before Christ was ever born was very similar to the Methodist religion she grew up in. It causes your mind to get scrambled a little bit.

Going on from Women's Encyclopedia:

- Some resemblances between Christianity and Mithraism were so close that even St. Augustine declared the priests of Mithra worshipped the same deity as he did.
- After extensive contact with Mithraism, Christians also began to describe themselves as "soldiers for Christ," to call their savior "light of the world" [Remember they worshipped the sun God.], Helios the rising sun, the sun of righteousness, to celebrate their feasts on Sunday rather than the Jewish Sabbath.
- Also this cave-temple [Mithra, where he was buried] was taken over and seized by the Catholics in 376 A.D.

- The supreme pontiff of Mithra was called “Pater Patrum,” meaning father of fathers, and the title was shortened [This is before Christ.] to Papa or Pope.
- There was a Pope; there was a Papa before Christ was born.

Now, let me read from The Catholic Encyclopedia, out of their own mouth, Vol. X, p. 404. “A similarity between Mithra and Christ struck even the early observers such as Justin, Tertullian, and other Fathers and in recent times has been urged to prove Christianity is but an [adoption] of Mithraism.” They even acknowledge it! And atheists today correctly criticize “modern Christianity” as nothing more than a resurrection of these ancient mystery religions. And they are absolutely correct if they’re looking at “modern Christianity.” Therefore, before the time of the apostles, there was a Pope in place and there was an example of a Peter as head of a religion in Rome before Christ was ever born.

Now, I said there were two Peters. What about the second one? The second one was in place after Christ was dead. A “Peter,” a Simon existed. His name was Simon Magus. He was called “Simon the Magician.” We find that in Acts 8 and we’ll begin in verse 9. Let’s go there, Acts 8:9. Now, ask yourself, “Why would fifteen verses be allotted in the Bible to a guy named Simon if it wasn’t important?” As we go through, ask yourself the question. Acts 8:9.

Acts 8:9. *But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city... (KJV)*

This was where Philip was up in verse 5.

Acts 8:9b. *... used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: (KJV)*

And, as then we’re going to see “great one” meaning throughout the Roman Empire. Verse 10:

Acts 8:10. *To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. (KJV)*

Now this is not some small town little corner guy sitting up on a soapbox yelling and screaming. This is a guy that had a lot of power and a lot of authority, as we will see. Verse 11:

Acts 8:11. *And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries. (KJV)*

He was able to do some kind of magic.

Acts 8:12. *But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.*

13) *Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.*

14) *Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:*

15) *Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy [spirit]: (KJV)*

Now notice verse 16.

Acts 8:16. *(For as yet [it] was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of Jesus [Christ].) (KJV)*

This is why baptism has two parts; the dunking, the baptism itself, and then the laying on of hands. They had had the first, but not the second. Verse 17.

Acts 8:17. *Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy [spirit].*

18) *And when Simon saw that through [the] laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy [spirit] was given, he offered them money, (KJV)*

Which tells you his agenda and his motivation. Verse 19:

Acts 8:19. *Saying, Give me also this power, ... (KJV)*

That's what he was after.

Acts 8:19b. *... that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy [spirit]. (KJV)*

But God revealed to Peter in verse 20 what was going on and Peter said to him:

Acts 8:20b. *... [Your] money perish with [you], because [you have] thought that the gift of God [might] be purchased with money.*

21) *[You have] neither part nor lot in this matter: for [your] heart is not right in the sight of God.*

22) *Repent therefore of this [your] wickedness, and pray [to] God, if perhaps the thought of [your] heart may be forgiven [you].*

23) *For I perceive that [you are] in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. (KJV)*

And, as I said before, if this is not important why would God devote fifteen verses to this whole subject, if this guy was some nobody standing on a corner? Now The Women's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets by Walker on p. 939 says, "Once in Rome, through

his seemingly miraculous deeds, Simon convinced many people to follow him.” The Encyclopedia Britannica, 9th Ed., Vol. XXII, p. 81 says, “The followers of Simon Magus were called Christians” by Justin Martyr. He lived from A.D. 100 to 165. Justin Martyr called the followers of Simon Magus “Christians.” Going on, The Encyclopedia Britannica says, “Hippolytus [the most important third century theologian of the Christian Church in Rome; he lived from 175-235 A.D.] was the first to combine ‘Peter in Rome’ with ‘Simon in Rome.’ Not until after his day ... did the legends become current within the church.” No mention of Peter in Rome until that time.

Then Mystery Babylon the Great, Condor on p. 206-208, I’m just going to take some quotes from there.

After the establishment of false Christianity in Rome, Simon wrote a book according to the ancient historian Hippolytus called *The Great Announcement* where he openly equates the sun, the moon, the pagan gods Dionysus, Adonis, and Attis with Jesus Christ and Mary.

Simon was the first to mix Mithraism, and he was a Peter of Mithraism, to Peter being in Rome.

Going on:

... history clearly shows that before the third century, there was never any mention that the Apostle Peter has ever been in Rome. However, the same history shows that not only was Simon Magus in Rome, but indeed gained the attention of the emperor.

Going on:

Because Simon incorporated Mithraism, which itself had absorbed a good deal of the Egyptian mysteries, he soon had a large following among the sun-god worshipping Romans. Simon even gained the patronage of the Emperor Claudius Caesar, ... by whom it is said, he was honored with a statue because of his magic. On the base was inscribed “Simon the holy god.”

This was after the death of Jesus Christ.

Tradition as to the death of Simon Magus is really interesting. If you look into the history of Simon Magus, it says that Nero crucified Simon Magus upside down. And just before Simon Magus’ burial, Nero had him beheaded. It could well be that that skull at Saint John the Lateran was Simon Magus’ skull and it could well be his bones are down there somewhere under the altar, under Saint Peter’s Basilica. Even Hastings, A Dictionary of the Bible, says the following (Vol. IV, p. 526), “Is not this [Simon] probably the origin of the 25 years’ episcopate of Peter at Rome?”

So what have we learned today? There is no proof whatsoever that Peter was ever in Rome. Peter's bones have never been found in Rome. The chair claimed to be his seat was an admitted fake. But we have seen that there were two Peters in Rome; one was before Christ and one after Christ. We've also discovered that all of these ancient traditions, these ancient traditions of Catholicism, are nothing more than resurrections of traditions of the ancient mysteries and they have been reincarnated as "Christian" traditions. (Again, I say Christian in quotes.)

Mystery Babylon the Great of Condor on p. 211 says, "Simon Magus, the Peter of Rome, was the first Pope of Roman Catholicism, and through this servant of Satan, the Babylonian Mysteries were reintroduced to the modern world under the name of Christianity." That was Satan's goal all along. It started in Babylon, went to Egypt, went to Greece, went to Rome and then became the Catholic Church.

The Women's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets by Walker, p. 787 says and notice this, "The myth of Saint Peter was the slender thread from which hung the whole weighty structure of the Roman Papacy." This myth, it's hung on that one slender thread, which we have seen is not true. The Two Babylons by Hislop on p. 129 says the physician Linacer, a devout Catholic who lived during the reign of King Henry VIII²—and King Henry VIII reigned from 1485 to 1509—this physician Linacer, a devout Catholic had never had the opportunity to read the Bible until late in his life. After finally reading it—he grew up a Catholic and was taught by the priests—after finally reading the Bible, he threw it from himself with a great oath saying, "Either this book is not true, or we are not Christians." And he was right in the sense that those two don't mix—Catholicism and the Bible.

Now, let's ask the question: Where was the real Peter in all of this? What happened? The fact is nobody knows, but there is a hint from the book Saint Paul in Britain by Morgan. I'll quote from p. 184-185. It says: "The canonized Catholic saint and church historian Bede wrote that the remains of both Peter and Paul were taken to England at the express wishes of King Oswy in A.D. 656." Now is this true? Someday we're going to find out, but we know that Peter's bones are not under Saint Peter's Basilica.

Now what we need to do is be supremely thankful that God out of His love for His firstfruits has opened our eyes to know these astounding facts of history. God is a God of love and He loves us and He does not want us to be deceived.

And we have seen how a counterfeit religion combined with (again I say in quotes) "early Christianity" in an attempt to pervert, to lead astray, and to destroy the true Church and the true religion. Now, the important thing is looking forward from here, we are going to see this false religious system with this false prophet at its head do astounding miracles, make prophecies and they will come true, things that cannot be explained in this physical world. And the attempt is not only to deceive the entire world, but even more than that is the attempt to deceive those God has called and given His

² Correction per Rich Railston, 07/29/2013

spirit and to have them at the last minute turn away from the truth and follow this false religion.

So, what we need to do now is prepare ourselves for this time. We need to think about it, fast about it, pray about it, study about it so that when these astounding miracles come, we will not be deceived. So, let's understand the truth of what is happening and what is going to happen around us so that we are not part of this great deception.