

A New Look at the Books of Revelation & Daniel End-Time Prophecies

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PART 13

The Temple Will Be Built by Messiah Yeshua, Not the Antichrist

After Messiah Yeshua's Second Coming, the future Millennial Temple, also called the Third Temple or Ezekiel's Temple, will be built. The prophet Zechariah clearly prophesies that Messiah Yeshua, called "Branch", "will build the Temple" when he sits "on His throne" holding the offices of King and Priest. This happens AFTER Yeshua returns to Earth to sit upon His Throne in Jerusalem during the Millennial Kingdom.

Zechariah 6:12 “Then say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, “**Behold, a man whose name is Branch [Messiah Yeshua], for He will branch out from where He is; and He will build the temple of the LORD.**

Zechariah 6:13 “Yes, it is **He who will build the temple of the LORD, and He who will bear the honor and sit and rule on His throne. Thus, He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices [of priest and king]”** (bold emphasis added).

The incorrect teaching that the Antichrist will rebuild the Temple is based on the error that the 70th Week of Daniel is not fulfilled, as well as other errors in Biblical interpretation. In this study, these errors are corrected as the essential foundation to understand that the future Temple will be built by Messiah Yeshua after His Second Coming. (See *A New Look at the Books of Revelation & Daniel End-Time Prophecies*, Part 14 The Future Temple of the Millennial Kingdom, free study at www.messengers-of-messiah.org).

THE COVENANT OF DANIEL 9:27 IS THE NEW COVENANT, NOT A FALSE PEACE TREATY MADE BY ANTICHRIST WITH ISRAEL

As we have detailed in Part 2 of this study, the 70th Week of Daniel has already been completely fulfilled. The teaching that a future Antichrist will rule the world during a seven-year Tribulation and make a false peace treaty with Israel with the provision to rebuild the Temple is built upon a major error regarding the Daniel 9:27 covenant. (See *A New Look at the Books of Revelation & Daniel End-Time Prophecies*, Part 2 The 70 Weeks Prophecy of Daniel – The New Covenant Is the Covenant of Daniel 9:27, free study at www.messengers-of-messiah.org.)

But the covenant of Daniel 9:27 is the New Covenant made by Messiah Yeshua, not a false peace treaty made by Antichrist with Israel.

Daniel 9:26 “Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off [killed] and have nothing, and the [Roman] people of the prince [Titus] who is to come

will destroy the city [Jerusalem] and the sanctuary [Temple]. And its [Jerusalem's] end will come with a flood [of Roman soldiers]; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.

Daniel 9:27 “And **he [Messiah Yeshua] will make a firm covenant [the New Covenant] with the many ~~for~~ one week [70th Week]**, but in the middle of the week he [Yeshua] will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering [by His once-for-all-time sin-atonement sacrifice]; and on the wing of abominations will come one [Rome] who makes desolate [destroys Jerusalem], even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one [Rome] who makes [Jerusalem] desolate” (emphasis added).

Note that the word “for” (“**for** one week” in Daniel 9:27) is not in the original text. Adding the word “for” is misleading because it leads to misinterpreting that the covenant is limited to a seven-year period. However, once the word “for” is deleted and the understanding that “one week” refers to the 70th Week, we have a clearer understanding that the New Covenant was made by Messiah Yeshua during the 70th Week. Yeshua's ultimate sacrifice for sin atonement “put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering” because no other sacrifice for sin was either acceptable to God or efficacious for sin atonement.

Yeshua prophesied about the destruction of the Temple to His disciples:

Matthew 24:1 And Jesus [Yeshua] came out from the temple and was going away when **His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him.**

Matthew 24:2 And He answered and said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, **not one stone here shall be left upon another, which will not be torn down.**”

Matthew 24:3 And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be, and what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?” (bold emphasis added).

Yeshua's prophecy about the destruction of the Temple is a major prophecy that was fulfilled. Yet the prophecy teachers who teach a future seven-year Tribulation fail to understand that much of what Yeshua describes in Matthew 24 deals with the events leading up to the catastrophic destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by the Romans in AD 70. Instead, they place all these events during a future seven-year Tribulation.

Yeshua's prophecy about the destruction of the Temple directly links to Daniel's Seventy Weeks Prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in AD 70 (Daniel 9:26-27). The fulfillment of this prophecy has been left out of the wrong interpretation of the prophetic timeline because of the lack of understanding that the covenant in Daniel 9:27 is the New Covenant that has already been fulfilled. The covenant is not a false peace treaty made by Antichrist with Israel. Therefore, the teaching that the Antichrist will rebuild the Temple as a provision of a false peace treaty with Israel is based on the erroneous interpretation of Daniel 9:27. There will be no Temple rebuilt before Messiah Yeshua returns.

The main purpose for Yeshua's First Coming was to establish the New Covenant. That is the main focus of the Seventy Weeks Prophecy. The fulfillment of the prophecy in Daniel 9:27 focuses on the New Covenant – the reason Messiah Yeshua came the first time, to pay the price for sin and to establish the New Covenant.

THE MAN OF LAWLESSNESS (ANTICHRIST) IS NOT A FUTURE WORLD LEADER

In order to correctly understand end-time events, we need to understand that the prophecy about the Man of Lawlessness was fulfilled by Roman Emperor Constantine, who established the false apostate Roman Church. This is the Apostasy, the falling away from Biblical truth that the apostle Paul warned was coming (“the apostasy” – 2 Thessalonians 2:3).

Constantine officially sanctioned and made himself the sole and supreme head of the false apostate Roman Church that corrupted God's Biblical Truth with paganism. Biblical truth was corrupted with pagan beliefs, customs, and doctrines contradictory to the Word of God. God's Appointed Times (Leviticus 23), the true Biblical Holy Days that reveal God's master plan of

redemption – the prophetic picture, pattern, and timeline – were replaced with pagan holidays, thus obscuring the understanding of God’s prophetic timeline and fulfillment of end-time prophecy.

Daniel 7:25 ‘And **he [the Little Horn arising from the Roman Empire]** will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to **make alterations in [God’s appointed] times and in [God’s] law** (emphasis added).

The Little Horn of Daniel 7:25 relates to the Roman Papacy, the head of the false apostate Roman Church that killed millions of true believers.

When we understand these prophecies, it becomes clear that the Man of Lawlessness, also called the Antichrist, is not a future world ruler who makes a false peace treaty with Israel. The Man of Lawlessness has to do with the apostate religious system that corrupted Biblical truth with paganism. The Roman Emperor Constantine officially established the apostate Roman Church, which became the only legal religion of the Roman Empire. Eventually, leadership of the false Church of Rome passed from Constantine and a succession of Roman emperors to the Roman Papacy. (See *A New Look at the Books of Revelation & Daniel End-Time Prophecies*, Part 6 The Man of Lawlessness & the Apostasy – Emperor Constantine & the Roman Church, free study at www.messengers-of-messiah.org.)

There are many pieces of the complex prophetic puzzle that provide the foundation for this study. For that information, see *A New Look at the Books of Revelation & Daniel End-Time Prophecies*, free study at www.messengers-of-messiah.org. Subjects include: the Abomination of Desolation (there are three cases, one each relating to the Greek, Roman, and Islamic domination and conquest of Israel)¹; the Beast from the Sea with Seven Heads and Ten Horns

¹ The abomination of desolation by Antiochus IV Epiphanes (Daniel 11:31); the abomination of desolation at the time the Romans besieged Jerusalem prior to its destruction (Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14); and the current abomination of desolation, the Dome of the Rock, an Islamic shrine on the Temple Mount in the place where the Temple once stood (Daniel 12:11).

(the heads represent the great empires that ruled Israel; the “healed” 6th Head of the Beast does not refer to the Antichrist recovering from a fatal wound, but represents the rise of Papal Rome in place of the “fatally wounded” Roman Empire when it collapsed); the Beast from the Earth with Two Heads (represents the apostate Christian Roman Empire with its two heads, representing the capitals and centers of power: Rome and Constantinople); and the past fulfillment of the Seven Seals and first six Trumpets in Revelation, having to do with the fall of the Roman Empire and the rise of Islamic empires.

THE GREEK WORD *NAOS* IN 2 THESSALONIANS 2:4 AND REVELATION 11:1 DOES NOT MEAN A TEMPLE BUILDING

The erroneous interpretation that the Antichrist (Man of Lawlessness) will rebuild the Temple in which he proclaims himself God comes from misinterpretation of 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 and Revelation 11:1. However, the temple referred to in 2 Thessalonians 2:4 and Revelation 11:1 does not refer to a physical temple building.

2 Thessalonians 2:3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it will not come* unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,

2 Thessalonians 2:4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the **temple** of God, displaying himself as being God (bold emphasis added).

Revelation 11:1 And there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, “Rise and measure the **temple** of God, and the altar, and those who worship in it” (bold emphasis added).

In order to correctly interpret 2 Thessalonians 2:4 and Revelation 11:1, we must understand the difference in meaning between two Greek words: *hieron* and *naos*.

In the New Testament, the Greek word *hieron* (Strong’s #2411) means:

“a sacred place, a temple,” that of Artemis (Diana), Acts 19:27; that in Jerusalem, Mark 11:11, **signifying the entire building with its precincts, or some part thereof, as distinct from the *naos*, “the inner sanctuary”** ... apart from the Gospels and Acts, it is mentioned only in 1 Cor. 9:13. Christ taught in one of the courts to which all the people had access. ***Hieron* is never used figuratively** (bold emphasis added).²

The word *hieron* denotes the actual physical temple building. But that is not the word used in 2 Thessalonians 2:4. The word used is *naos*.

In the New Testament, the Greek word *naos* (Strong’s #3485) means:

“a shrine or sanctuary,” ... used (a) among the heathen, to denote the shrine containing the idol, Acts 17:24, 19:24 in the latter, miniatures; (b) among the Jews, the sanctuary in the “Temple,” into which only the priests could lawfully enter, e.g., Luke 1:9, 21, 22; ... (c) by Christ metaphorically, of His own physical body, John 2:19, 21; (d) in apostolic teaching, metaphorically, (1) of **the church, the mystical body of Christ [Messiah]**, Eph. 2:21; (2) of a local church, 1 Cor. 3:16, 17; 2 Cor. 6:16; (3) of **the present body of the individual believer**, 1 Cor. 6:19; (4) of the “Temple” seen in visions in the Apocalypse, 3:12; 7:15; 11:19; 14:15, 17; 15:5, 6, 8; 16:1, 17; (5) of the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb, as the “Temple” of the new and heavenly Jerusalem, Rev. 21:22 (bold emphasis added).³

When correctly interpreted within the context of 2 Thessalonians 2:4 and Revelation 11:1, the meaning of the word *naos* has to do with “the church”, “the ... body of Christ [Messiah]”, not to a Temple rebuilt by Antichrist.

² W. E. Vine, *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words*, p. 621.

³Vine, p. 621.

If the apostle Paul intended to refer to a rebuilt Temple, he would have used the Greek word *hieron*, referring to the actual physical Temple building. But that is not the case. In Paul's other writings, he also used the word *naos* in the same way, referring to believers as the "temple" of God, the dwelling place of the Spirit of God, the "body" of Messiah Yeshua, of which Messiah Yeshua is its sole and supreme head.

Ephesians 2:19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with **the saints [believers], and are of God's household,**

Ephesians 2:20 having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ [Messiah] Jesus [Yeshua] Himself being the corner *stone*,

Ephesians 2:21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into **a holy temple [*naos*] in the Lord** (bold emphasis added).

1 Corinthians 3:16 Do you not know that **you are a temple [*naos*] of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?** (bold emphasis added).

2 Corinthians 6:16 Or what agreement has **the temple of God** with idols? For **we are the temple of the living God;** just as God said,

"I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM;

AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE

(bold emphasis added).

The context of 2 Thessalonians 2 is the key to understanding the meaning of *naos* in terms of its application to the Church of God. The apostle Paul warns about the coming apostasy, meaning the falling away from Biblical truth that would take place within the Christian Church. In this context, he tells us that the "Man of Lawlessness" would take his seat in the temple of God, meaning that he would falsely claim to take the place of Messiah Yeshua as the sole and supreme head of the Christian Church. This prophecy found its fulfillment in Roman Emperor Constantine.

From the meaning of the Greek word *naos* and the context, we can understand that the “temple” referred to is not a physical building but the false apostate Roman Church that was officially established by the Man of Lawlessness, Roman Emperor Constantine. So what is described in 2 Thessalonians 2 regarding the “temple” of God is not referring to a temple rebuilt by Antichrist in conjunction with a false peace treaty with Israel. Rather it describes the apostasy of the false church of the Roman Empire that corrupted Biblical truth with paganism. In contrast to the false apostate Church of Rome is the True Church of Messiah Yeshua.

The Man of Lawlessness is often referred to as the Antichrist. The word “antichrist” translates from the Greek word *antichristos* (Strong’s #500), *anti* (Strong’s #473) meaning “instead of or against” and *Christos* (Strong’s #5547).⁴ Constantine, who we have identified as the Man of Lawlessness, can therefore be called an antichrist because he falsely claimed to take the place of Messiah Yeshua as head of the Church. Every Pope is also an antichrist for the same reason, falsely claiming to be the one who takes the place of Messiah Yeshua on the Earth as the sole and supreme head of the one, true Christian Church. However, the True Church of Messiah Yeshua has always been and continues to be each and every person who is indwelt by God’s Holy Spirit.

THE APOSTASY IS THE APOSTATE ROMAN CHURCH – 2 THESSALONIANS 2:3

Paul warned about the Apostasy that would take place before the return of Messiah Yeshua (Christ Jesus).⁵

2 Thessalonians 2:1 Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus [Yeshua] Christ [Messiah], and our gathering together to Him [Rapture],

⁴ Spiros Zodhiates, *The Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible*, New Testament Dictionary, p. 2102.

⁵ The Hebrew name *Yeshua* is the shortened form of *Yehoshua* (Joshua), meaning “YHVH is salvation”. YHVH (*Yehovah*) is the name of God. Messiah (Hebrew: *Mashiach*) means “anointed” (Greek: *Christos*, or Christ). *Yeshua HaMashiach* means “Yeshua the Messiah”.

2 Thessalonians 2:2 that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.

2 Thessalonians 2:3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it [Yeshua's Second Coming] will not come* unless **the apostasy [apostasia] comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed**, the son of destruction (bold emphasis added).

The Greek word *apostasia* (Strong's #646) translates as "apostasy", meaning to abandon one's beliefs. The King James Version (KJV) translates the word as "falling away", in this context meaning to fall away from the true Word of God, the true Gospel of salvation in Messiah Yeshua.

Paul's warning was about the rise of the apostate Church of Rome, the religious system of the Beast, which became established as the only legal religion of the Roman Empire, the 6th Head of the Beast. (For an in-depth study of the unbiblical doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, see *A New Look at the Books of Revelation & Daniel End-Time Prophecies*, Part 6 The Man of Lawlessness & the Apostasy – Emperor Constantine & the Roman Church, section III. Why the Roman Church Is the Apostasy, free study at www.messengers-of-messiah.org.)

THE MAN OF LAWLESSNESS IS ROMAN EMPEROR CONSTANTINE – 2 THESSALONIANS 2:3

Paul links the Apostasy, the apostate Roman Church, to the Man of Lawlessness. The Greek word *anomia* (Strong's #458) translates as "lawlessness", referring to violation of the law, in this context meaning violation of God' law or the Word of God.

2 Thessalonians 2:3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it [Yeshua's Second Coming] will not come* unless **the apostasy [apostasia] comes first, and the man of lawlessness [anomia] is revealed**, the son of destruction (bold emphasis added).

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word *torah* (Strong's #8451), translated "law", can also be translated "instruction" or "teaching". In the New Testament, the Greek word *nomos* (Strong's #3551) is used in the same way. In this context, the Man of Lawlessness would be a man who opposed God's law, instructions, and teachings as contained and revealed in the Word of God.

Paul also calls the Man of Lawlessness the "son of destruction" (2 Thessalonians 2:3). The Greek word *apoleia* (Strong's #684) translates as "destruction" (KJV translates as "perdition"). In this context, the Man of Lawlessness would be a man who destroyed spiritual truth, leading to his own spiritual destruction as well as the spiritual destruction of those who became a part of the unbiblical apostasy he officially established – the false apostate Church of the Roman Empire. The man fitting the prophetic picture of the Man of Lawlessness is Roman Emperor Constantine I, called Constantine the Great.

Constantine certainly fits the prophetic description of the Man of Lawlessness by officially establishing the Apostasy in the form of the Roman Church. Under Constantine, Roman Christianity became the religion of the Imperial Court and the favored religion of the Roman Empire. In 391, the Roman Emperor Theodosius outlawed paganism, making the Roman Church the only legal church and religion of the Roman Empire. While it appeared that paganism died out, in fact, paganism was absorbed and transformed into an unbiblical form of Christianity.

THE MYSTERY OF LAWLESSNESS – 2 THESSALONIANS 2:7

Paul tells us that "the mystery of lawlessness" was already at work during his time:

2 Thessalonians 2:7 For **the mystery [mysterion] of lawlessness** is already at work ... (bold emphasis added).

In this context, the Greek word *mysterion* or *musterion* (Strong's #3466) refers to something that is unknown unless and until God gives knowledge, insight and understanding of its meaning.⁶

⁶ William D. Mounce, *Mounces's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words*, p. 461.

As Paul explained to the Ephesians, Satan and his angels (fallen angels – demons) are at work in this world to deceive and destroy humanity –

Ephesians 6:11 Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the **schemes of the devil**.

Ephesians 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the **spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places** (bold emphasis added).

The mystery of lawlessness therefore has to do with the activity of Satan and the demons, who lead people into rebellion against God. Just as Satan deceived Eve into rebellion against God by violating God's commandment, Satan and the fallen angels deceive humanity into rebelling against God by violating His laws.

The mystery of lawlessness was already working false prophets, false teachers, false brethren and false messiahs at the time of the apostles to corrupt the true Gospel.

Matthew 7:15 “Beware of the **false prophets**, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves” (bold emphasis added).

Matthew 24:11 “And many **false prophets** will arise, and will mislead many (bold emphasis added).

Matthew 24:24 “For **false Christs [Messiahs] and false prophets** will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect (bold emphasis added).

Mark 13:22 for **false Christs [Messiahs] and false prophets** will arise, and will show signs and wonders, in order, if possible, to lead the elect astray (bold emphasis added).

Galatians 2:4 But *it was* because of the **false brethren** who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ [Messiah] Jesus [Yeshua], in order to bring us into bondage (bold emphasis added).

2 Peter 2:1 But **false prophets** also arose among the people, just as there will also be **false teachers** among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves (bold emphasis added).

1 John 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many **false prophets** have gone out into the world (bold emphasis added).

Satan and other fallen angels (demons) operate to corrupt the Word of God. They were active in the formation of a false Church of the Roman Empire that caused people to follow the religion of the Beast, a pagan form of Christianity associated with the healed 6th Head of the Beast.

Revelation 13:3 And *I saw* one of his [its – the Beast’s] heads [6th Head – Roman Empire] as if it had been slain [fall of Roman Empire], and his fatal wound was healed [rise of Papal Rome to great power and authority]. And the whole earth was amazed *and followed* after the beast [Papal Rome];

Revelation 13:4 and they worshiped the dragon [Satan], because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?”

Revelation 13:5 And there was given to him [Papal Rome] a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies ...

Revelation 13:7 And it was given to him [Papal Rome] to make war with the saints [believers] and to overcome them; and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him.

Revelation 13:8 And all who dwell on the earth will worship [bow down and submit to] him [Papal Rome], *everyone* whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.

At the time the apostle John wrote these words, the 6th Head of the Beast, representing the Roman Empire, ruled the Mediterranean world. The Fall of Rome in AD 476 marked the final collapse of the Roman Empire in the West. In its place, Papal Rome rose to great political power and influence. This is the meaning of the “fatal wound” that was healed. Papal Rome persecuted, tortured, and murdered believers (“saints”) who would (Revelation 13:7).

CONSTANTINE, THE KING WHO EXALTED HIMSELF ABOVE GOD – 2 THESSALONIANS 2:4

Both Paul and Daniel describe the Roman Emperor Constantine as a man who would exalt himself above every god:

Daniel 11:36 “Then the king [Constantine] will do as he pleases, and **he will exalt and magnify himself above every god**, and will speak monstrous things against the God of gods; and he will prosper until the indignation is finished, for that which is decreed will be done” (bold emphasis added).

2 Thessalonians 2:3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it [Yeshua’s Second Coming] will not come* unless the apostasy [apostate Roman Church] comes first, and the man of lawlessness [Constantine] is revealed, the son of destruction,

2 Thessalonians 2:4 who opposes and **exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship**, so that he takes his seat in the temple [church] of God, displaying himself as being God (bold emphasis added).

In presuming to take God's place as sole and supreme head of the Christian Church, Constantine certainly exalted himself above God. In everything Constantine did, he exalted himself. Daniel provides a prophetic picture of Constantine in Daniel 11:36-39.

Daniel 11:36 “Then the **king [Constantine] will do as he pleases, and he will exalt and magnify himself above every god, and will speak monstrous things against the God of gods**; and he will prosper until the indignation is finished, for that which is decreed will be done.

Daniel 11:37 “And he will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the desire of women, nor will he show regard for any *other* god; for he will magnify himself above *them* all.

Daniel 11:38 “But instead he will honor a god of fortresses, a god whom his fathers did not know; he will honor *him* with gold, silver, costly stones, and treasures.

Daniel 11:39 “And he will take action against the strongest of fortresses with *the help of* a foreign god; he will give great honor to those who acknowledge *him*, and he will cause them to rule over the many, and will parcel out land for a price” (bold emphasis added).

To examine this prophecy in detail, see *A New Look at the Books of Revelation & Daniel End-Time Prophecies*, Part 6: The Man of Lawlessness & the Apostasy – Emperor Constantine & the Roman Church, free study at www.messengers-of-messiah.org.

CONSTANTINE “TAKES HIS SEAT IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD” – 2 THESSALONIANS 2:4

As we have shown, Paul and Daniel describe the Man of Lawlessness in the same way, as the man who “exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship” (2 Thessalonians 2:4), and the man who “will exalt and magnify himself above every god” (Daniel 11:36).

In fact, Constantine falsely claimed to be the sole and supreme head of the Christian Church. In this way, he presumed to take “his seat in the temple of God”:

2 Thessalonians 2:3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it [Yeshua’s Second Coming] will not come* unless the apostasy [apostate Roman Church] comes first, and the man of lawlessness [Constantine] is revealed, the son of destruction,
2 Thessalonians 2:4 who **opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple [church] of God,** displaying himself as being God (bold emphasis added).

THE TRUE TEMPLE OF GOD

The True Temple/Church of Messiah Yeshua is not a man-made religious institution but is made up of believers joined spiritually by the indwelling of God’s Holy Spirit. For this reason, the True Church can never be divided. Messiah Yeshua is the ONLY head of His True Church.

The apostle Paul is clear about this:

1 Corinthians 3:16 Do you not know that **you are a temple of God**, and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? (bold emphasis added).

2 Corinthians 6:16 Or what agreement has **the temple of God** with idols? For **we are the temple of the living God**; just as God said,

“I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM;
AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE
(bold emphasis added).

Ephesians 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as **Christ [Messiah] also is the head of the church**, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body (bold emphasis added).

CONSTANTINE TAKES CONTROL OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Constantine intended to usurp Messiah Yeshua's position by making himself the sole and supreme head of the Roman Church. Usurp means to seize power, position, property, rights, etc. by force without legal right. This is exactly what Constantine did. This is also true of the Roman Papacy that claims to represent Messiah Yeshua on Earth and speak for God in dictating religious doctrines and dogmas.

When Constantine called all the bishops together for the first church council in Nicaea in AD 325, he claimed the right to take control of the Christian Church and to direct and influence the council's proceedings and decisions in an ungodly way. His desire was to unify the various churches under his authority by resolving differences and conflicts about religious doctrine. Constantine understood that religious unity would be a great stabilizing force in his empire.

Constantine spoke and acted against God's Word (Daniel 11:36 he "will speak monstrous things against the God of gods"). At the Council of Nicaea, he condemned those who held to the Biblical observance of Passover on the 14th of Nisan:

Constantine had been appalled to find that a few churches in the east were still employing a Jewish [Biblical] calculation for "the most holy day" of Christianity [Passover]. ... Constantine displayed an antipathy to the Jews. ... He felt that ... Christians should have "nothing in common with the detestable Jewish crowd". ... it was incumbent upon the few churches in Syria and Palestine who continued to follow the Jewish [Biblical] calculation to desist. ... The eastern custom of calculating Easter [Passover] in the Jewish [Biblical] month of Nisan was rejected as improper ...⁷

The Eastern Churches were faithful to observe Passover according to the Biblical commandment and in the way Messiah Yeshua and His disciples observed this Appointed Time of the Lord

⁷ Charles Matson Odahl, *Constantine and the Christian Empire*, p. 199.

(Leviticus 23:5). At the Council of Nicaea, the date for Passover was changed from its true Biblical date and those who continued to observe the Biblical date were condemned and cursed.

CONSTANTINE “DISPLAYING HIMSELF AS GOD” – 2 THESSALONIANS 2:4

CONSTANTINE GLORIFIED HIMSELF AS THE SUN GOD AFTER HIS “CONVERSION”

Eighteen years after his alleged conversion, Constantine glorified himself as the sun god atop the Column of Constantine in the new city he named after himself, Constantinople:

The column was dedicated on May 11, 330 AD, with a mix of Christian and pagan ceremonies.

In Constantine's day the column was at the center of the Forum of Constantine (today known as Cemberlitas Square), an oval forum situated outside the city walls in the vicinity of what may have been the west gate of Antoninia. On its erection, the column was 50 meters [164 feet] tall, constructed of nine cylindrical porphyry blocks surmounted by **a statue of Constantine in the figure of Apollo** (bold emphasis added).⁸

In this way, Constantine displayed himself as the highest god of the pagan pantheon, after his so-called conversion to Christianity, in fulfillment of Paul's prophecy regarding the Man of Lawlessness:

2 Thessalonians 2:3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it will not come* unless the apostasy [apostate Roman Church] comes first, and the **man of lawlessness** [Roman Emperor Constantine] is revealed, the son of destruction,

⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Column_of_Constantine – Wikipedia article: Column of Constantine, section 1: History – accessed 2012.

2 Thessalonians 2:4 **who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship**, so that he takes his seat [as sole and supreme head] in the temple [church] of God, **displaying himself as being God** (bold emphasis added).

In fact, Constantine's favorite god was the sun god:

Constantine did, indeed, retain the pagan high priest's title of *Pontifex Maximus*, and for a decade his coins continued to feature some of the pagan gods, notably **his own favorite deity, the Unconquered Sun** [Sol Invictus] (bold emphasis added).⁹

CONSTANTINE'S VISION OF THE SUN GOD APOLLO

Prior to his Satanic/demonic vision of a false Christ, Constantine had a Satanic/demonic vision of the Greek god Apollo, who became identified with the sun god:

... on the route between Massilia and Trier, the emperor had "turned aside toward the most beautiful temple in the world" – probably the temple of Apollo at Grand, and ... he had experienced a revelation in this holy place. ... **Constantine saw Apollo, accompanied by Victory, offering him laurel wreaths indicating a life and reign of many years; and that in the likeness of Apollo he recognized himself as the saving figure to whom the divine songs of the bards had prophesied "rule of the whole world"** (bold emphasis added).¹⁰

As a result of this vision, Constantine claimed that the highest divinity, the sun god, gave him divine right to rule the Roman Empire.

⁹ Tim Dowley (Editor), *The History of Christianity*, p. 140.

¹⁰ Odahl, p. 94.

By presenting himself as the chosen one of Apollo, Constantine was rejecting tetrarchic theology and resorting to Solar syncretism for defining divine patronage. Since Apollo was customarily syncretized with *Sol Invictus* – the “Unconquered Sun” and “Highest Divinity” revered by the earlier Illyrian emperors and popular across the empire – **Constantine claimed a higher source of divine power** for religious sanction (bold emphasis added).¹¹

“Solar syncretism” refers to sun gods of various pagan religions being merged into one solar deity. Constantine understood that the worship of a universal sun god could bring all the various pagan sun god cults together into one unifying religion of the Roman Empire.

Like Claudius, Aurelian, and possibly his father, **he came to see “the Unconquered Sun” as a “Highest Deity” around which the subjects of the Roman Empire might find religious unity.** Thus, after 310 Hercules disappeared and Mars declined in use on the coins of Constantine. They were replaced by the universal Sun god, who appeared on reverse motifs holding the globe of power with the inscription SOLI INVICTO COMITI, “to the Unconquered Sun the [emperor’s] Companion.” By using dynastic succession and Solar syncretism to strengthen his position, Constantine was breaking the bonds of tetrarchic ideology and making a claim for universal monarchy (bold emphasis added).¹²

All the evidence indicates that Constantine regarded the Christ of the Christians as the sun god by another name, showing that his conversion was not a true spiritual conversion because he could not distinguish the difference between the pagan sun god and the true Son of God.

It is important to understand Constantine’s previous religion, the worship of the Unconquered Sun [Sol Invictus]. If the story of the cross in the sky is true, he may have interpreted the sign as his own special deity recommending the worship of

¹¹ Odahl, p. 95.

¹² Odahl, p. 95.

the Christian God. Perhaps **Constantine continued to identify the sun with the Christian God** ... (bold emphasis added).¹³

The apostate Roman Church of Constantine corrupted the true Biblical faith by blending sun-god worship and Biblical truth. This is why so many elements of sun-god worship are found in the Roman Church, including Sunday, the weekly holiday of the sun god; December 25th, the rebirth of the sun god; halos; and the sun-burst monstrosity holding a solar-disk-shaped communion host (Eucharist) for adoration as God.¹⁴

For the complete study on this subject, see *A New Look at the Books of Revelation & Daniel End-Time Prophecies*, Part 6: The Man of Lawlessness & the Apostasy – Emperor Constantine & the Roman Church, free study at www.messengers-of-messiah.org.

CONSTANTINE’S ROME (VIDEO)

Constantine’s Rome with Dr. Bernard Frischer. Created by Beth Harris and Steven Zucker.

A project between Khan Academy and Rome Reborn (published August 12, 2015)

13:46 minute YouTube video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e_phjB19ZEg

Rome in AD 320, peak of Rome’s urban development

Emperor Constantine the Great

Soon after, Constantine moved capital from Rome to Constantinople (“New Rome”).

Colossal statue of the sun god by the Colosseum and Constantine’s Arch – 5:43

Constantine’s Arch 5:58

Colossal Statue of Constantine in the Basilica of Maxentius 7:59

¹³ *The History of Christianity*, p. 140.

¹⁴ See books by Richard Rives: *Too Long in the Sun* – <http://toolong.com/product/too-long-in-the-sun-book-by-richard-rives/> and *Time Is the Ally of Deceit* – <http://toolong.com/product/time-is-the-ally-of-deceit-book/> – accessed August 22, 2016.

GOD’S HOLY SPIRIT IS THE RESTRAINER – 2 THESSALONIANS 2:6

The apostle Paul tells us that believers at Thessalonica in Greece understood who restrained the Man of Lawlessness from being revealed:

2 Thessalonians 2:5 Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?

2 Thessalonians 2:6 **And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he may be revealed.**

2 Thessalonians 2:7 **For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work;** only he who now restrains *will do so* until he is taken out of the way (bold emphasis added).

The revealing of the Man of Lawlessness refers to his coming on to the historical scene and fulfilling the prophecy regarding the establishment of the apostate Church of the Roman Empire. Ultimately, it is the Spirit of God who restrains lawlessness, rebellion against the Word of God. The Spirit of God works in various ways throughout the world, not only through believers indwelt by His Holy Spirit. Because the 70th Week of Daniel has already been fulfilled and is not about a future seven-year Tribulation, Paul was not referring to the removal of believers in the Rapture when he said: “only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way”. This shows the error of the teaching that the Antichrist will be revealed after the Rapture.

God works throughout the course of human history in various ways so that all Biblical prophecy is fulfilled. A period of instability and disintegration of the Roman Empire allowed Constantine to rise to power. Also, Satan was allowed to operate to lead Constantine to establish the Roman Church. It was God’s will to remove the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit for these events to take place. Paul also tells us that God sends a deluding influence because people do not receive the love of the truth in order to be saved (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12).

SATANIC ACTIVITY ASSOCIATED WITH CONSTANTINE & ROME'S CHURCH – 2 THESSALONIANS 2:6

Paul tells us that Satanic activity would be associated with Constantine and Rome's Church:

2 Thessalonians 2:9 *that is*, the one whose coming is in accord with **the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders** (bold emphasis added).

Satan performed supernatural signs in order to deceive Constantine, to guide and direct him to officially establish the apostate Roman Church and a pagan form of Christianity.¹⁵ This includes Constantine's vision of the cross with the Chi-Rho sign, as well as his dream with a false Christ instructing him to conquer under the Chi-Rho sign.

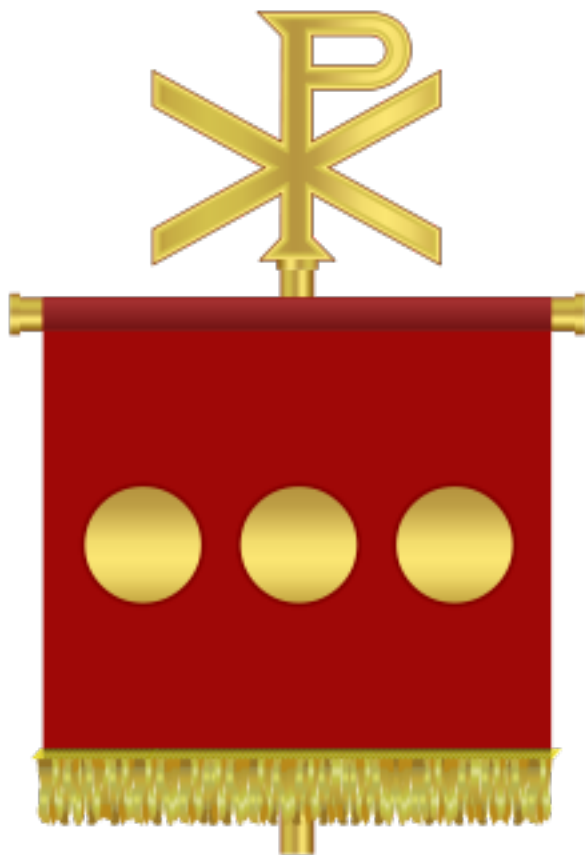
CONSTANTINE'S VISION

Prior to the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in 312, Constantine claimed to have a vision and receive instruction in a dream about the use of a sign under which to conquer his rivals to the throne of the Roman Empire:

From Eusebius, two accounts of the battle survive. The first, shorter one in the *Ecclesiastical History* promotes the belief that God helped Constantine but does not mention any vision. In his later *Life of Constantine*, Eusebius gives a detailed account of a vision and stresses that he had heard the story from the Emperor himself. According to this version, Constantine with his army was marching (Eusebius does not specify the actual location of the event, but it clearly is not in the camp at Rome), when **he looked up to the sun and saw a cross of light** above it, and with it the Greek words "Ἐν Τούτῳ Νίκα", *En toutō nika*, usually translated into Latin as "*in hoc signo vinces*," both phrases have the literal meaning "In this sign, [you shall] conquer;" a more free translation would be

"Through this sign [you shall] conquer". At first he was unsure of the meaning of the apparition, but in the following night **he had a dream in which Christ explained to him that he should use the sign against his enemies**. Eusebius then continues to describe the labarum, the military standard used by Constantine in his later wars against Licinius, showing the Chi-Rho sign¹⁷ (bold emphasis added).¹⁶

Illustration: Labarum of Constantine I, displaying Chi-Rho symbol above.¹⁷



¹⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_the_Milvian_Bridge – Wikipedia article: Battle of the Milvian Bridge, section 2. Vision of Constantine – accessed 2012.

¹⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labarum#/media/File:Labarum_of_Constantine_the_Great.svg

See also <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labarum> - Wikipedia article: Labarum, section: Introduction – accessed August 12, 2016.

As previously explained, Constantine had a vision of the Greek sun god Apollo, who conveyed to him that he was chosen to rule the world. Constantine later claimed that Christ gave him the sign under which to conquer. It would not be Messiah Yeshua who provided such a sign, for He said His kingdom was not a worldly kingdom.

John 18:36 Jesus [Yeshua] answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting, that I might not be delivered up to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm”.

It was Satan who offered the kingdoms of the world to Yeshua if He would bow down and worship Satan.

Matthew 4:8 Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory;

Matthew 4:9 and he said to Him, “All these things will I give You, if You fall down and worship me.”

Luke 4:5 And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

Luke 4:6 And the devil said to Him, “I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.

Luke 4:7 “Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours.”

Satan would have been the “angel of light” appearing as a false, sun-god Christ to offer Constantine a great kingdom in exchange for worshipping him.

2 Corinthians 11:14 And no wonder, for **even Satan disguises himself** as an **angel of light** (bold emphasis added).

Galatians 1:8 But even though we, or an **angel** from heaven, should preach to you a **gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you**, let him be accursed (bold emphasis added).

In fact, the sign of a cross above the sun links Constantine’s vision to the sun god because the cross in many forms has pagan origins and has nothing to do with the crucifixion.¹⁸ Another example of Satanic activity associated with the sun is called the “Miracle of the Sun”, an event that occurred on October 13, 1917 in Fatima, Portugal.¹⁹ This supernatural event was associated with what is called a Marian apparition, a Satanic apparition of the Roman Catholic Virgin Mary – not the Biblical Mary, who did not remain a virgin after Yeshua’s birth – operating “with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders (2 Thessalonians 2:9).

PAGAN ORIGIN OF THE CHI-RHO SIGN

The Chi-Rho sign was not associated with Christianity before the time of Constantine:

The accounts of the two contemporary authors [Lactantius and Eusebius], though not entirely consistent, have been merged into a popular notion of Constantine seeing the Chi-Rho sign on the evening before the battle. **Both authors agree that the sign was not readily understandable to denote Christ, which corresponds to the fact that there is no certain evidence of the use of the letters chi and rho as a Christian sign before Constantine.** Its first appearance is on a Constantinian silver coin from c. 317, which proves that Constantine did use the sign at that time, though not very prominently.¹⁸¹ He made extensive use of

¹⁸ Messiah Yeshua was crucified on a tree, not a Roman cross, as stated in Acts 5:30; 10:39; 13:29; Galatians 3:13; 1 Peter 2:24. The Greek word *xulou/xulon* in each passage is correctly translated “tree” in the King James Version, New King James Version, New International Version, and Amplified Bible. In other passages, such as John 19:31, *stauros* is translated “cross” but refers to the crucifixion tree as an “upright pole” or “stake”. In Luke 23:26, *stauros* refers to the crossbar that Simon carried. Romans did use trees at times for crucifixion. See *The Rod of an Almond Tree in God’s Master Plan*, free online book at www.messengers-of-messiah.org.

¹⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miracle_of_the_Sun – Wikipedia article: Miracle of the Sun – accessed 2012.

the Chi-Rho and the Labarum [military standard] only later in the conflict with Licinius (emphasis added).²⁰

The Chi-Rho sign is formed by superimposing the Greek letters Chi (χ) and Rho (ρ), the first two letters of *Christos* ($\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma$). (Note: the χ stands for “Ch”.) Early followers of Messiah Yeshua never used the Chi-Rho sign. Constantine is responsible for its adoption as a sign of Christ by the Roman Church. A coin of Constantine minted about AD 337 shows the Chi-Rho sign on the Labarum, Constantine’s military standard.²¹



The Chi-Rho sign is also found on a coin of Ptolemy III about the year 247-222 BC.²²

²⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_the_Milvian_Bridge – Wikipedia article: Battle of the Milvian Bridge, section: 2. Vision of Constantine – accessed 2012.

²¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labarum> - Wikipedia article: Labarum, section 2: Vision of Constantine – accessed 2012.

²² http://www.constantinethegreatcoins.com/CONSTANTINE_THE_GREAT_THE_COINS_SPEAK.Pdf – Victor Clark, *Constantine the Great: The Coins Speak*, p. 16 (Thesis, Department of History, Middle Tennessee State University) – accessed August 23, 2016. See also C. J. Koster, *Come Out of Her, My People*, p. 33.



Ptolemy III

Chi-rho between the legs of the eagle

Clearly, the Chi-Rho sign is of pagan origins because it existed long before the time of Messiah Yeshua. Further proof is that the Chi-Rho symbol has been found on rock inscriptions dating to about 2500 BC, interpreted as the combination of two sun symbols.²³ Again, we see the connection to the sun god – Constantine’s favorite deity – known by various names throughout the world since ancient times.

SATAN APPEARED TO CONSTANTINE AS THE SUN GOD AND FALSE CHRIST

Surely, it was not Messiah Yeshua who appeared to Constantine and gave him the Chi-Rho sign to conquer the world. It was Satan, who can appear as an “angel of light”, who appeared to Constantine first as the sun god Apollo and later as a false, sun-god Christ (2 Corinthians 11:14; 2 Corinthians 11:4 “another Jesus”). Therefore, it is no coincidence that the false Jesus Christ of the Roman Church has all the attributes of the pagan sun god:

²³ Koster, p. 33.

Some^[9] have interpreted the vision in a solar context (e.g., as a solar halo phenomenon), which may have been reshaped to fit with the Christian beliefs later expressed by Constantine. It is interesting to note that **coins of Constantine depicting him quite overtly as the companion of a solar deity were minted as late as 313, the year following the battle. The solar deity, Sol Invictus, is often pictured with a nimbus, or halo.** Various emperors portrayed Sol Invictus on their official coinage, with a wide range of legends, only a few of which incorporated the epithet *invictus*, such as the legend SOLI INVICTO COMITI, claiming the Unconquered Sun as a companion to the Emperor, used with particular frequency by Constantine.^[10] **Constantine's official coinage continues to bear images of Sol until 325/6.** A solidus of Constantine as well as a gold medallion from his reign depict the **Emperor's bust in profile twinned ("jugate") with Sol Invictus**, with the legend INVICTUS CONSTANTINUS.^[11] The official cults of Sol Invictus and Sol Invictus Mithras were popular amongst the soldiers of the Roman army. Statuettes of Sol Invictus, carried by the standard-bearers, appear in three places in reliefs on the Arch of Constantine. **Constantine's triumphal arch was carefully positioned to align with the colossal statue of Sol by the Colosseum**, so that Sol formed the dominant backdrop when seen from the direction of the main approach towards the arch (bold emphasis added).^{[12]24}

Constantine's victory over Maxentius at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge near Rome led to him becoming the sole ruler of the Roman Empire. The triumphal Arch of Constantine dedicated three years later was aligned with the colossal statue of the sun god, had no Christian inscriptions or symbolism, but was decorated with images of Sol Invictus and Victoria (pagan goddess of victory), as well as sacrifices to pagan gods such as Apollo, Diana, and Hercules.²⁵

²⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_the_Milvian_Bridge – Wikipedia article: Battle of the Milvian Bridge, section: 2. Vision of Constantine – accessed 2012.

²⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arch_of_Constantine – Wikipedia article: Arch of Constantine – accessed 2012.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constantine_the_Great – Wikipedia article: Constantine the Great – accessed 2012.

SATAN DECEIVES THOSE WHO DO NOT LOVE THE TRUTH OF SALVATION

Paul tells us that people are deceived by Satan's lie because they do not love the truth:

2 Thessalonians 2:10 and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, **because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.**

2 Thessalonians 2:11 **And for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence** so that they might believe what is false,

2 Thessalonians 2:12 in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness (bold emphasis added).

Paul also tells us that God sends a deluding influence. This is similar to God sending an evil spirit to torment Saul because of his disobedience and rebellion against God (1 Samuel 16:14-16, 23; 18:10; 19:9). Satan and the fallen angels/demons are under God's sovereign control and cannot operate without His permission. When people reject the truth of the Word of God, they are open to deluding and deceiving spirits, who have permission to operate in their lives because of their rejection of truth and rebellion against God.

God tests people to see whether they seek and follow the truth – God's Word is Truth (Psalm 119:160; John 17:17). This is why God allowed Satan to tempt Eve in the Garden of Eden. And this is why God allows Satan and the fallen angels/demons to operate and deceive humanity into following false religions and false humanistic philosophies. When people fail to seek and follow the truth, they are deceived by the lies of Satan, who is the father of lies (John 8:44).

God allowed Satan to deceive Constantine, a man interested in power, not Biblical truth. The history of the Roman Church shows that the Roman Papacy is also about power, not Biblical truth. Satanic and demonic activity continues to operate in the Roman Church through Marian apparitions (that proclaim and confirm unbiblical doctrine); unholy Eucharist communion hosts manifesting flesh and blood (forbidden by God to consume); weeping and bleeding statues and images (forbidden by the Second Commandment); Satanic/demonic healings attributed to the Roman Catholic (not Biblical) Virgin Mary (who did not remain a virgin after Yeshua's birth)

and Roman Catholic (not Biblical) saints; and through demonic visions, demonic attacks and stigmata associated with Roman Catholic mystics.

WORSHIP GOD IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH, HOLD FIRM TO THE TRUE GOSPEL

God's true worshipers worship Him in Spirit and Truth:

John 4:23 "But an hour is coming, and now is, when **the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth**; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.

John 4:24 "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (bold emphasis added).

Paul warns believers not to be deceived by any gospel contrary to the Word of God:

Galatians 1:8 **But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed.**

Galatians 1:9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed (bold emphasis added).

Paul exhorts believers to stand firm and hold to the true Gospel and teachings that he and the other apostles of Messiah Yeshua taught:

2 Thessalonians 2:14 He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus [Yeshua] Christ [Messiah].

2 Thessalonians 2:15 So then, brothers, stand firm and **hold to the teachings we passed on to you**, whether by word of mouth or by letter (NIV, bold emphasis added).

THE DONATION OF CONSTANTINE – FRAUDULENT DOCUMENT CLAIMED TO TRANSFER CONSTANTINE’S HEADSHIP OVER THE CHURCH TO THE POPE

As previously explained, the Man of Lawlessness, Roman Emperor Constantine, officially sanctioned the Roman Church and set himself up as its sole and supreme head (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). After Constantine, a succession of Roman Emperors assumed this position. Eventually, the Bishop of Rome claimed the position based upon a forged document, called the Donation of Constantine.

The *Donation of Constantine* (Latin: *Donatio Constantini*) is a **forged Roman imperial decree** by which the emperor **Constantine the Great** supposedly transferred authority over Rome and the **western part of the Roman Empire to the Pope**. Composed probably in the 8th century, it was used, especially in the 13th century, in support of claims of political authority by the papacy.^[1] **Lorenzo Valla**, an Italian **Catholic** priest and **Renaissance humanist**, is credited with first exposing the forgery with solid **philological** arguments in 1439–1440,^[2] although the document's authenticity had been repeatedly contested since 1001.^[1]²⁶

The text, purportedly a decree of **Roman Emperor Constantine I** dated 30 March, in a year mistakenly said to be both that of his fourth consulate (315) and that of the consulate of Gallicanus (317), contains a detailed profession of Christian faith and a recounting of how the emperor, seeking a cure of his leprosy, was converted and baptized by **Pope Sylvester I**. In gratitude, he determined to bestow on the see of Peter "power, and dignity of glory, and vigour, and honour imperial", and "supremacy as well over the four principal sees, **Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Constantinople**, as also over all the churches of God in the whole earth". For the upkeep of the church of Saint Peter and that of Saint Paul, he gave landed estates "in **Judea, Greece, Asia, Thrace, Africa, Italy** and the various islands". To Sylvester and his successors he also granted imperial insignia,

²⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donation_of_Constantine – Wikipedia article: Donation of Constantine, section: Introduction – accessed July 31, 2016.

the tiara, and "the city of Rome, and all the provinces, places and cities of Italy and the western regions".^{[4][5]}²⁷

During the [Middle Ages](#), the *Donation* was widely accepted as authentic, although the Emperor [Otto III](#) did possibly raise suspicions of the document "in letters of gold" as a forgery, in making a gift to the See of Rome.^[9] It was not until the mid-15th century, with the revival of Classical scholarship and textual criticism, that **humanists, and eventually the papal bureaucracy, began to realize that the document could not possibly be genuine.** [Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa](#) declared it to be a forgery^{[10][11]} and spoke of it as an [apocryphal](#) work. Later, the Catholic priest [Lorenzo Valla](#), in *De falso credita et ementita Constantini donatione declamatio*, proved the forgery with certainty.^[12] This was the first instance of modern, scientific [diplomats](#). Independently of both Cusa and Valla, [Reginald Pecocke](#), Bishop of Chichester (1450–57), reached a similar conclusion. **Among the indications that the Donation must be a fake are its language and the fact that, while certain imperial-era formulas are used in the text, some of the Latin in the document could not have been written in the 4th century;** anachronistic terms such as "[fief](#)" were used. Also, the **purported date of the document is inconsistent with the content of the document itself**, as it refers both to the fourth consulate of Constantine (315) as well as the consulate of Gallicanus (317) (bold emphasis added).

... scholars further demonstrated that other elements, such as Sylvester's curing of Constantine, are legends which originated at a later time.²⁸

Based on this forged document, the Bishop of Rome, also called the Pope, claimed to be the sole and supreme head of the apostate Roman Church. As we follow through 2 Thessalonians 2,

²⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donation_of_Constantine – Wikipedia article: Donation of Constantine, section 1 Content – accessed July 31, 2016.

²⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donation_of_Constantine – Wikipedia article: Donation of Constantine, section: 3 Investigation – accessed July 31, 2016.

we see that the “Man of Lawlessness” leads to the “lawless one” that “the Lord [Messiah Yeshua] will slay ... and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming” (2 Thessalonians 2:8). The “lawless one” can be understood to refer to what was established by the Man of Lawlessness, the apostate Roman Church, including the Roman Papacy.

GOD’S JUDGMENT AND DESTRUCTION OF THE APOSTATE ROMAN CHURCH – 2 THESSALONIANS 2:8

Paul tells us that Messiah Yeshua will destroy the “lawless one” at the time of His Second Coming –

2 Thessalonians 2:7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains *will do so* until he is taken out of the way.

2 Thessalonians 2:8 **And then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord [Messiah Yeshua] will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming** (bold emphasis added).

Paul strongly warns believers against the Satanic and demonic “signs and false wonders” associated with the apostate Roman Church. Paul also warns that God sends a “deluding influence” upon those who do not love the truth, those who reject truth and prefer to believe “what is false” –

2 Thessalonians 2:8 And then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming;

2 Thessalonians 2:9 *that is*, the one whose coming is in accord with **the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders,**

2 Thessalonians 2:10 **and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.**

2 Thessalonians 2:11 **And for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false** (bold emphasis added).

Revelation 18 describes the judgment and destruction of the city of Rome, and with it Vatican City, the city-state and central government of the Roman Church ruled by the Pope. The Lord calls His people to come out of the apostate Roman Church –

Revelation 18:4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, “**Come out of her, my people, that you may not participate in her sins and that you may not receive of her plagues;**

Revelation 18:5 for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities” (bold emphasis added).

One of Satan’s greatest deceptions is deceiving Christians into believing that the Roman Church is the True Church of Messiah Yeshua, and that the Pope is the highest spiritual authority on the Earth. Today, many non-Catholic Christians are being deceived and led to unify with the apostate Roman Church. Not only does the Roman Papacy seek to unify all Christians under the Pope’s spiritual headship, it seeks to unify the world’s major religions into one apostate religious system. This is the false religious system of the Beast of Revelation and believers are warned not to come into unity with it.

THE TRUE CHURCH OF MESSIAH YESHUA – REVELATION 11:1

Revelation 11:1 describes the measuring of the Temple of God:

Revelation 11:1 And there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, “Rise and measure the **temple** [*naos*] of God, and the altar, and those who worship in it” (bold emphasis added).

As we have previously explained, the Greek word *naos* is translated “temple” and in this context refers to the True Church of Messiah Yeshua (“the temple of God”). This is consistent with the use of the word *naos* in other New Testament passages that refer to the Church, the body made up of individual believers indwelt with God’s Holy Spirit.

This understanding is in agreement with the Historicist interpretation of Revelation 11:1 –

The **temple of God** (v. 1) throughout the New Testament is always the church (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; 2 Thess. 2:4).²⁹

In contrast to the spiritual Temple of God was the physical Temple that stood on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. During the First Temple period, God’s presence continuously dwelled in Holy of Holies of the Temple built by Solomon. However, the Shekinah (the Glory Cloud of God’s Presence) departed prior to the Babylonian destruction of the Temple because of corruption and idolatry (Ezekiel 10:4, 18, 19; 11:23).

Yeshua came during the time of the Second Temple, which was not continuously indwelled by the Shekinah. On the day of Pentecost following Yeshua’s ascension into Heaven, God’s Holy Spirit began to indwell believers in Messiah Yeshua (Acts 2). In this way, believers became the living Temple of God.

In Revelation 11:2, there is reference to the “court ... outside the temple” and the nations “treading” on the holy city of Jerusalem.

Revelation 11:2 “And leave out **the court which is outside the temple**, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months (bold emphasis added).

The “court which is outside the temple” refers to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, where the Temple used to stand. From the time that the Second Temple was destroyed by the Romans in AD 70 until today, there has been no Temple on the Temple Mount. Since that time, the Temple Mount has been conquered by a succession of invaders and empires. Today the Temple Mount

²⁹ Steve Gregg (Editor), *Revelation – Four Views: A Parallel Commentary*, p. 220.

is at the center of the conflict between Israel and the nations of the world, in particular the Islamic world.

Understanding that the “temple of God” refers to the True Church of Messiah Yeshua (all those indwelled by God’s Holy Spirit) fits the context of Revelation 11, which points to the Rapture. Events leading up to the Rapture and Second Coming are revealed, including the death and resurrection of the Two Witnesses, coinciding with the Rapture (Revelation 11:3-12). This occurs at the time of the Seventh Trumpet of Revelation (Revelation 11:15). The prophetic picture shows the True Church of God through time up until the Rapture, when those alive on the Earth who trust in Messiah Yeshua will be caught up to Heaven for the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. (See *A New Look at the Books of Revelation & Daniel End-Time Prophecies*, Part 12 The Seventh Trumpet: The Rapture and Second Coming of Messiah Yeshua, free study at www.messengers-of-messiah.org).

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