



## 20. IMPERIAL REMNANT: Why So Many Religions

There are about 41,000 Christian denominations today! How do you find the truth among so many? Why are there so many denominations? Does God have a church today? Does it really matter? Don't all roads lead to heaven? Isn't it just different courses for different horses?

The Bible says there is one church: "One body (Church)...one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:4,5). God's desire is one united Church (John 17:21; 1 Corinthians 12:25). But it also predicted a departure from truth (Acts 20:30). Christian teachers would arise and distort the truth. When Constantine became the first Christian Emperor in 313 AD, it resulted in a Church-State union. As a result, Rome became Christian, but Christianity became pagan. Most Biblical teachings were altered or dropped through pagan influence: Sunday replaced Sabbath; the doctrine of the Immortal soul appeared; Baptism by sprinkling came into the church. Only a few teachings remained intact, such as the divinity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, which was taught by Jesus (Matthew 28:19). This means the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are the one triune God. That's what I like about my friends in the Church of Rome. They still hold that teaching.

Then came the year 538AD. The Bishop of Rome was made "The head of the church and the true and effectual corrector of heretics" by the Emperor Justinian. Sadly church traditions were placed above the Bible, and this led to the Dark Ages. Over the next twelve hundred years calls were made for reformation of the Dark Age church. Faithful bishops, priests, nuns and lay people wanted the church to get back to the Bible and its teachings. Tragically they were persecuted. Often the Bible was banned and locked up in languages such as Latin to keep the people in ignorance of its truths. The Bible says of this time: "...The dragon...persecuted the woman, who brought forth the man child. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and sixty days" (Revelation 12:13,6). The 1260 days, according to the Biblical prophetic principle of 1 day = 1 year, represent 1260 years. The light of truth went out in Dark Age Europe.

But a godly priest, Martin Luther, at the Wittenberg University in Germany lit a match. Luther re-discovered the truth of the centrality of the Bible to guide God's people (2 Timothy 3:16; Matthew 4:4). He discovered we are saved by grace alone through faith in Jesus (Ephesians 2:8,9). Thus the Lutheran church began with its emphases on: the Bible alone and Grace alone. That's what I like about my Lutheran friends.

But there was more light yet to be restored to God's church (Proverbs 4:18). So God raised up John Calvin, a French refugee who fled from religious persecution in France to Switzerland. He taught the sovereignty of God and the security and assurance of salvation that is found by faith in Christ (1 John 5:11-13). Thus the Reformed and Presbyterian Churches began, with the teachings of the sovereignty of God, and the security and assurance of Salvation in Christ. That's what I like about my Calvinist and Presbyterian friends.

But God had still more light for His Church. Sadly the new denominations that were raised up did not go further than their founding fathers, so God raised up other instruments to restore truth to the church. John Smyth left the Anglican Church and England for Holland in 1607. Smyth baptized people by immersion, according to the Bible, and his followers set up the first Baptist Church in 1612 (Colossians 2:12). Thus the Baptist Church began, teaching believer's baptism by immersion. And that's what I like about my Baptist friends.

As time went on, the Anglican Church became formal as people advanced no further than their leaders. So God raised up John Wesley to bring back truth to His church. Wesley heard the amazing grace and salvation of God one night at a meeting in Aldersgate Street in London. Peace flooded his mind at the knowledge of the forgiveness of all his sins. He began to preach Jesus to anyone and everyone, to lead them to Him. The discovery that he brought to the attention of the world was, "Living like Christ" - His life in us (Galatians 2:20). So the Methodist Church was born, emphasizing "living like Christ" – His life in us. That's what I like about my Methodist friends.

Thus over time as each new group built on the re-discoveries of the previous group, truth was slowly being restored. The Church of Rome went into the Dark Age tunnel in 538AD, but 1260 years later, by 1798, many denominations had appeared. Each group had some Bible truth, but none had all of it. Then in 1798 the Pope was imprisoned. As scholars, priests, ministers and lay people of all denominations (Roman Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Congregational, Baptist etc) saw that the 1260 years met its fulfilment with the imprisonment of the Pope, they then began serious study of Daniel 8:14, the sealed portion of Daniel: "Unto 2300 days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed" (Daniel 8:14). All of them believed something was to happen in 1843/1844. Some didn't know what would happen, but many felt they knew. William Miller, a Baptist, began an interdenominational movement of some 500,000 people, made up of Baptists, Methodists, Congregationalists, Anglicans and others, who believed and taught that Jesus would return on October 22, 1844. But when Jesus didn't return on that date they were shattered. This is known as the Great Disappointment.

A diverse group of these disappointed people began to study together, seeking the answer to the question that filled their minds at this time: "Why didn't Jesus come?" They knew the date, 1844, was correct, because part of the 2300 day prophecy was the 70 weeks or 490 years of Daniel 9, which as we have seen in a previous program, was an exact fulfilment: Jesus was baptised in 27 AD and was crucified in 31AD exactly as the prophecy of Daniel 9 had predicted. Since the date was correct, they wondered, "what went wrong?"

William Miller had taught that the sanctuary was the Earth, which was to be cleansed with fire at Christ's return. But as they studied the Bible these people discovered there was a temple in heaven, and that the cleansing of heaven's temple was to take place during a judgment that begins before Jesus returns. By comparing Daniel 7 & 8 it is clearly seen that the opening of the judgment in heaven in Daniel 7:9,10 is the same as the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8:14. They saw that judgment began in 1844 and that we are to be judged by the Ten Commandments (James 2:10-12). Thus they began to keep the neglected seventh day, Saturday Sabbath.

In Revelation 10 they also discovered their mission: "And he said to me, you must prophesy again to many peoples and nations and tongues and kings" (Revelation 10:11). Thus they began to proclaim the global messages of the 3 angels (Revelation 14:6-12): Firstly - "The hour of God's judgment has come"- since 1844 we have been living during God's judgment that is taking place in heaven; Secondly: "Babylon has fallen..." and the accompanying message of Revelation 18:1-4 - "Come out of her my people"; Thirdly, "Don't receive the mark of the beast". Beside the Sabbath, and the visible second coming of Jesus, this interdenominational group found other lost Bible truths, such as death as a sleep. Thus in the 1860's the Seventh-day Adventist church emerged.

So which denomination, which church? Remember Jesus said He would have "...one flock and one shepherd" (John 10:14,15). Remember, Paul said, "one body (one Church)...one faith (one set of beliefs), one baptism..." (Ephesians 4:4-6). The dragon went to make war with the remnant of the woman's seed (Revelation 12:17). Her seed in chapter 12 is Jesus. Since her seed is Jesus, then the remnant is the remnant of Jesus, the remnant of His body, or His church. Thus, God does have an end-time remnant church. But which church?

Revelation gives 6 identifying characteristics of God's end-time remnant Church: 1. It keeps God's commandments, which includes the 7<sup>th</sup> day, Saturday Sabbath (Revelation 12:17); 2. It has the faith of Jesus (Revelation 14:12). This means they have faith in Jesus alone for forgiveness, salvation, a new life

of powerful loving living with victory over Satan and sin in this life (Revelation 12:11). But “the faith of Jesus” also means the teachings or doctrines of Jesus (Jude 3; 1 Timothy 4:1). Jesus believed and taught: baptism by immersion, death as a sleep until the resurrection at His visible return for His friends; hell fire at the end of the world; the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath; 3. They proclaim the 3 angel's messages of Revelation (Revelation 10:11; 14:6-12); 4. It is a global movement (Revelation 10:11: 14:6); 5. It emerges after 1798 or the end of the 1260 day/years (Revelation 12:6,17); 6. It has the testimony of Jesus or the Spirit's gift of prophecy (Revelation 12:17; 19:10).

God has an end-time remnant church and has given these identifying features so we can find it and be a part of it and its mission to prepare people for the soon return of Jesus. So which denomination, which church – what one body fulfils all these criteria? I humbly submit to you that only the Seventh-day Adventist church fulfils all these criteria. However let me hasten to add that God has his children in other folds at this time, and that while the Seventh-day Adventist church is the remnant church of Bible prophecy, not all of its members are his end-time remnant people, because it is a matter of the heart – loving God and His children unreservedly. The Seventh-day Adventist church does have the faith or beliefs of Jesus: The Bible as the only rule of faith and practice; Salvation by faith in Jesus alone; The 7th Day Saturday Sabbath; Christ's visible return; Death as a sleep until Christ's return; Caring for our body, the temple of God, by following Biblical principles of health; Proclamation of the messages of the 3 angels. While not the largest church, it does go globally with God's 3 angels messages of Revelation 14 in practically every country of the world today.

The Seventh-day Adventist remnant church of Bible prophecy began as people from various churches became one as they “came out” of churches not following all of the Ten Commandments and Christ's teachings. Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me...**Other sheep I have that are not of this fold, them also I must bring.** They too will listen to my voice, and there will be **one flock** and one shepherd” (John 10:14-16). We must listen and respond to the Good Shepherd who says – “Babylon has fallen - it can't be repaired - Come out of her my people” (Revelation 18:4). There are only two groups on earth in the end: those in Babylon and the Remnant who come out of Babylon. My friend, this world is about to experience the worst crisis in history – earth's final crisis. Jesus wants to take you through it safely. But he can only do that if you are part of His end-time remnant. Why not tell God right now that you will “come out” in obedience to his call, and become part of His end-time remnant church?

John saw a prostitute riding a scarlet coloured beast, with the name, “*Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of the Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth,*” written on her forehead (Revelation 17:3,5). Who or what is Babylon the great prostitute? Revelation's symbols are interpreted by the Bible. In Revelation there are contrasting pairs: A marriage supper of the Lamb and a supper of the vultures; the seal of God and the mark of the Beast; a pure woman and a prostitute. To understand one of the pair, it is important to study the other also.

John saw a woman clothed with the sun (Revelation 12:1,2). She symbolized God's faithful people through the ages: “*I have likened the daughter of Zion to a comely and delicate woman*” (Jeremiah 6:2). This woman of course referred to the Old Testament people of God. The vision continued: “*Then being with child; she cried out, in labour, and in pain to give birth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her child as soon as it was born. She bore a Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her child was caught up to God, and His throne*” (Revelation 12:2,4,5). God's Old Testament people longed for the Christ. “*And when the dragon saw he was cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who brought forth the man child*” (Revelation 12:13). This woman now represented God's faithful people since Christ, who the Bible calls Christ's bride: “*...For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I might present you as a chaste virgin to Christ*” (2 Corinthians 11:2). Paul is clearly referring to the true and loved Church or people of God in New Testament times.

Understanding who this pure woman is, we can now understand more easily who the adulterous prostitute represents. She symbolizes an apostate or fallen Church or people of God. The Bible says, “*Adulterers*

*and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?" (James 4:4). So adulterers here refers to Christians who belong to the world while professing love for Christ.*

Babylon, the Great Prostitute, is made up of 3 parts: *"Now THE GREAT CITY was divided into THREE PARTS and...GREAT BABYLON was remembered before God" (Revelation 16:17-21). What are the 3 parts?: "And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river, the river Euphrates; and the water of it was dried up, so that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared" (Revelation 16:12). King Cyrus came from east of Babylon, dried up the Euphrates river and took Babylon. Euphrates is code for Babylon the Great: "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet" (Revelation 16:13). End-time Babylon consists of: the dragon or Satan and all non-Christian religions and world views that are used as his fronts; secondly, the Sea Beast or Dark Age church, revived after receiving a deadly wound; and the Land Beast or False Prophet, representing Protestant USA, no longer following Bible truth. Thus Babylon in Revelation represents all religions and world views opposed to God.*

John saw, *"The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication" (Revelation 17:4). Christ likened his teachings, or doctrines to "New Wine" or unfermented grape juice (Luke 5:37). Thus the golden wine cup in her hand represents the intoxication of false doctrine. Paul predicted: "Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons" (1 Timothy 4:1). The intoxicating wine is the false doctrines of Babylon, such as: baptism by sprinkling, which replaced baptism by immersion; the immortal soul doctrine, that replaced death as a sleep; Sunday sacredness, which replaced Saturday, the 7<sup>th</sup>-day-Bible Sabbath; eternally burning hell, that replaced the fires of destruction at the end of the world that go out after they have done their work. This is why a second angel was sent with the following message: "A second angel, followed, saying, 'Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, because she made all the nations drink of the WINE of the wrath of her fornication'" (Revelation 14:8). Babylon's false teachings have influenced and corrupted the entire world!*

These 3 powers gather everyone to the Battle of Armageddon. How? *"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils working miracles, which go forth to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon" (Revelation 16:13,14,16). Demonic Deceptions from these three entities gather everyone to The Battle of Armageddon! Revelation gives more information earlier in the book: "He (The Land Beast) performs GREAT SIGNS, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he DECEIVES those who live on the earth by those SIGNS which he was granted to do...And he...causes the earth and those who dwell in it to WORSHIP the first Beast...So they WORSHIPED the Dragon (Satan) who gave authority to THE BEAST" (Revelation 13:13,14,4). These deceptive signs and wonders lead ultimately to the global worship of Satan!*

Are signs and wonders - miracles to deceive the world, taking place today? What about signs and wonders in non-Christian religions and world views? Just think of Hollywood for a moment. Over the last few years the world has been fed from Hollywood a movie diet heavy on the supernatural – Harry Potter; Ghost; The Blair Witch etc. Go into any book store and you will discover the New Age movement is growing exponentially. An increasing number of new age books can be seen on book shelves. Witchcraft and magic are increasing. Live Television séances are occurring. Yet we know it is not the dead appearing or talking because the Bible says, *"The dead know NOTHING..." (Ecclesiastes 9:5). Look in magazines and you will notice reports of reincarnated lives are increasing as the west gets further into eastern religions. We know it can't be reincarnated lives that are communicating because the Bible says, "The dead know NOTHING..." (Ecclesiastes 9:5). The Bible also says, "It is appointed unto men ONCE to DIE, and after that the Judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). No question that signs and wonders are increasing in non-Christian religions and world views today.*

What about signs and wonders in the Church of Rome? Is it happening? In a book called, "The Thunder of Justice" by a Roman Catholic couple, is a report on the increasing number of Marian apparitions or appearances that are taking place globally today: Time Magazine ran an article called, "MARY: Handmaid or Feminist?" Notice what the article said, "*He (Pope John Paul II) firmly believes that her (Mary's) personal intercession spared his life when he was shot at St. Peter's Square in Rome in 1981.*" Mary the mother of Jesus died like all of us, and the Bible says, "*The dead know NOTHING*" (Ecclesiastes 9:5). So it is not Mary who is speaking. Someone else is appearing or speaking like Mary. No question signs and wonders are increasing in the Church of Rome.

What about signs and wonders in American led Protestant Christianity. Is it happening? The main activities of the Protestant signs and wonders movement are healings and prophecies. The Bible supports prophecies and healing, but it also warns us that we need to beware of the signs and wonders movement: "*Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name and done many wonders in Your name? And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you: depart from me, you who practice lawlessness!'*" (Matthew 7:22,23). We must test who is behind such people by the fruits of their actions and by whether they follow God's word and His commandments (1 John 4:1; Matthew 7:16,20,21; Isaiah 8:20). No question signs and wonders are increasing in American led Protestant Christianity.

How can we avoid demonic deceptions? Paul, talking of these things said, "*The coming of the LAWLESS ONE [Anti-Christ] is according to the working of Satan, with ALL POWER, SIGNS and LYING WONDERS, and with ALL UNRIGHTEOUS DECEPTION among those who perish, BECAUSE THEY DID NOT RECEIVE THE LOVE OF THE TRUTH, that they might be saved*" (2 Thessalonians 2:9,10). We will not be deceived if we love and follow the truth wherever it leads us.

Demonic deceptions will lead almost the whole world to worship Satan. The result is End-time destruction at the Battle of Armageddon. Because of His great love God sends Earth's final message, when a fourth angel joins the second angel: "*After this I saw ANOTHER angel coming down from heaven. He had great authority, and the earth was lighted by His splendour. With a mighty voice he shouted: 'Fallen! Fallen is BABYLON the Great. She has become a home for DEVILS and a haunt for every EVIL SPIRIT... Then I heard ANOTHER VOICE from HEAVEN say: 'COME OUT of her MY PEOPLE, that you have no part in her sins and that you receive none of her plagues; for her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her sins'*" (Revelation 18:1,2,4,5). Babylon – all religions and world views opposed to God's word have fallen beyond repair! So God himself cries out in the darkness of this world's evil, "Come out MY people before it is too late!" There are only two groups in the end: 1. Those in Babylon; and 2. those outside of Babylon. Who are those called who come out of Babylon? Come to ancient Babylon, which was situated on the Euphrates River. Cyrus the Medo-Persian conquered Babylon. God had said to His people living in Babylon, "*Leave it (Babylon), my people! Run for your lives! Run from the burning anger of the LORD*" (Jeremiah 51:45). A REMNANT came out of Babylon: "*And there shall be a highway for the REMNANT of his people that shall remain, from Assyria (taken over by Babylon); as there was for Israel in the day they came up out of the land of Egypt*" (Isaiah 11:16). Just as a REMNANT came out of ancient Babylon, so a REMNANT comes out of End-time spiritual Babylon: "*And the dragon was angry with the woman, and went to make war with the REMNANT of her SEED...*" (Revelation 12:17). In a previous program we saw that the woman's seed or offspring is Jesus. So this is "The Remnant of Jesus" - the Remnant of His Body or Church - those faithful to God while the majority are unfaithful. Notice what Paul says: "*Elijah appealed... 'Lord they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars.'... And what was God's answer to him? 'I have... 7000 who have not bowed the knee to Baal.'*" So too (as in Elijah's time) at the present time (Paul's time) there is a REMNANT chosen by GRACE" (Romans 11:2-5). Elijah and the faithful 7000 were a REMNANT, and the early Christian Church was a "REMNANT" - The Jews faithful to God while the rest turned from God by crucifying Christ. During end-time global unfaithfulness, God will have a faithful end-time REMNANT people.

How is their faithfulness to God revealed? "*And the dragon was angry with the woman, and went to make war with the REMNANT of her seed who KEEP the COMMANDMENTS of God and have the testimony of Jesus*" (Revelation 12:17). Their faithfulness is seen in keeping all of God's commandments. But why are

they faithful? *“Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and have THE FAITH of JESUS”* (Revelation 14:12). They have put their trust firmly in Jesus, and so obey all of His commandments, no matter the cost. Just as Israel was able to come out of Egypt after sprinkling the blood of slain lambs on the doors of their homes, so only the blood of Jesus will give us the strength to come out of belief systems and religions that are not following all God’s commandments (Exodus 12; 15; Revelation 15:1-3). Why not determine right now to be among God’s faithful end-time Remnant who keep all of His commandments, including His 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath. Call on God by trusting in the death of Jesus for the power and strength that you need. He will help you abundantly.