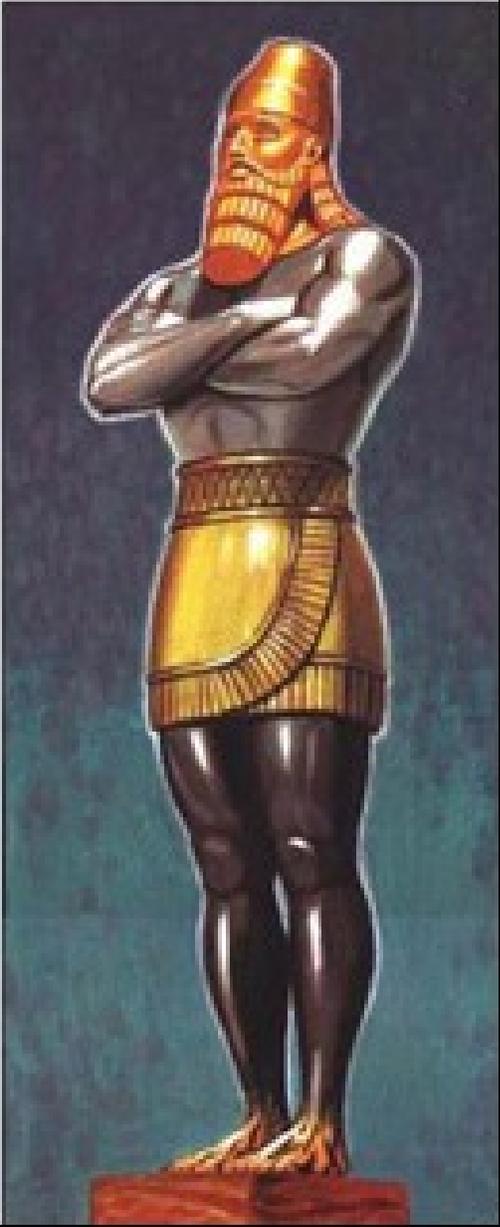


CHAPTER 6

“We have a full agenda today, class,” Mr. Dell remarked as he dimmed the lights and picked up his remote. “For those of you who attended Pastor Jordon's Revelation Seminar in August, this lesson will be a bit of a review. We are going to be reading from the chapter entitled, 'How God's Church Was Driven Into the Wilderness.' As we go through this chapter, we will refer to this image from Daniel chapter two to help us understand the flow of history as shown to King Nebuchadnezzar.”

<u>WORLD HISTORY</u> <u>FORETOLD</u>	<u>Nebuchadnezzar's Dream</u> <u>Daniel 2:31-45</u>
Head of Gold BABYLON B.C. 605-539	
Breast of Silver PERSIA B.C. 539-331	
Thighs of Brass GREECE B.C. 331-168	
Legs of Iron ROME B.C. 168- A.D. 476	
Feet of Iron and Clay REVIVED ROMAN EMPIRE A.D. 476 - 2nd Advent The European Union	

http://www.globaloutreach-ministries.org/images/articles/neb_dream.jpg

HOW GOD'S CHURCH WAS DRIVEN INTO THE WILDERNESS

While the Celtic church in the British Isles was gaining stability and strength under Patrick and other godly leaders, there were sweeping changes taking place in Europe which would greatly affect God's true church. These events did not surprise students of Bible prophecy because God clearly revealed the future through His servant Daniel. If you'll remember, hundreds of years before Jesus was born God gave King Nebuchadnezzar a dream of a large metal man. The various parts of the statue – from his head to his toes – showed the important kingdoms that would rule the world from the time of Babylon until Jesus' Second Coming.

The head of gold represented Babylon, the silver chest symbolized Medo-Persia, the thighs of brass stood for Greece and the iron legs portrayed Rome. When Daniel gave the king the interpretation for that dream he explained that the ten toes, consisting of both iron and clay, represented ten kingdoms which would never be united together. Many Bible students believe the ten divisions began to form as the Roman Empire slowly lost power between the years AD 250 – 500 as Western Europe was sectioned off into ten new nations. Those nations were the: Franks, Alemanni, Burgundians, Visigoths, Vandals, Heruli, Ostrogoths, Lombards, Suevi and the Anglo-Saxons.

Many years after Nebuchadnezzar's dream, God showed Daniel a prophetic beast with ten horns. In Daniel 7:24 we read, "And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings." Those who study secular history in the light of Bible prophecy agree that the ten horns refer to the same ten divisions of Europe represented by the ten toes in Nebuchadnezzar's image. Yet to really understand the complete history of that time period we need to learn about the rise of the other horn Daniel saw – one we sometimes call the "little horn."

For hundreds of years a spiritual struggle took place in the ten countries of Europe. As pagan Rome lost more and more of her power the ten kingdoms developed their own strength and sovereignty. Each kingdom had to choose between three spiritual directions: (1) They could keep their pagan customs and beliefs, (2) they could accept the Celtic religion which was linked with the church at Antioch, or (3) they could give allegiance to the growing domination of the Church of Rome. While the Celtic Church upheld the truths found in God's Word, the leadership in Rome encouraged the mingling of pagan beliefs with Christian doctrines. They created a comfortable church environment for worshipers from all backgrounds. The Roman Church encouraged unity on common points while urging tolerance for beliefs that were different. Such a philosophy brought many types of Christians into the growing Roman Church.

During times of peace many worldlings joined the Christian church. However, the early church experienced time of terrible persecution under some of the infamous Roman emperors such as Nero, Trajan, Decius and Diocletian. During those dreadful times the half-pagan Christian converts quickly renounced their faith to save themselves from torture and death.

However, others refused to deny their faith and they, like the brave apostles Peter and Paul, almost always suffered martyrdom. We are told of Perpetua, a young mother who had been thrown into prison for following Jesus. She was offered freedom if she would publicly deny her Lord. What a temptation. Freedom was so simple – Perpetua simply had to offer a pinch of incense to a pagan god and she would be home again. Whatever her test, history tells us that she refused the pleas of her parents and friends to deny her faith. Rather than deny her Lord she chose death. Although a bull gored her to death, Perpetua's courageous example challenges us to be "faithful unto death," so that we also may receive a crown of life.

Here Mr. Dell paused in his reading to pass out a map to the students. “This map shows how the Roman Empire was divided into ten parts – or toes - to go back to Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Please circle in black the areas inhabited by the Visigoths, the Heruli and the Ostrogoths.



“These were the three kingdoms that were uprooted by the 'little horn power' that we will read about in Daniel 7:23-25.

“Please take out your Bibles,” directed Mr. Dell. “Emily would you read this passage for us, please?”

Emily cleared her throat and began, “Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.”

“Thank you, Emily,” Mr. Dell nodded. “We are going to look closely at the three kingdoms that were 'subdued' and the kingdom that 'shall rise after them' to take their place. Let's continue with our story.

There was almost continuous war in Europe as the Roman Empire slowly lost her power. Monarchs looked to extend their territory and protect the lands they already controlled. Each king looked for allies to help him in battle. The Franks, who were pagans, looked at the rich farmland of southern France occupied by the Christian Visigoths and decided they wanted those fertile fields. Clovis, king of the Franks, came up with a brilliant plan to gain control of such desirable land. He pretended to convert to the Roman Church then appealed for other

Catholic nations to help him conquer the Visigoths. In this rather dishonest way the Franks brought southern France and what today is modern Spain under their control. Of course Roman Catholicism became the dominant religion in that whole region.

First the Heroli were defeated in AD 493, then in AD 507-508 Clovis took the kingdom from the Visigoths, and finally in AD 538 the Ostrogoths were overthrown by order of Emperor Justinian. As the nations that opposed the papacy were conquered one by one, it gave additional strength to the papal power. Now that the three “horns” were removed, the papacy (or the “little horn”) began to assume control throughout Europe. Since Clovis had been helpful in giving power to the Roman Church, he was named “the first Catholic Majesty” by the emerging papacy. Clovis' army provided the military might Rome needed to gain strength and power over the surrounding nations.

Emperor Justinian also played an important role in strengthening the papacy's power. After becoming a Christian he issued an edict demanding that within three months every person within his empire was to become a Roman Catholic. Anyone refusing to accept the papacy's authority would lose their livelihood and have their home and property taken from them. Many people, especially the Celtic Christians, refused to join the Roman Church. They were driven from their homes and some were forced to leave behind even the very clothes they were wearing. Some persecuted Christians tried to escape to other lands such as India, but most were stopped at the mountain passes where their jewels and money were seized and many were murdered. Their faithfulness to truth is recorded in the books of heaven and they will receive their reward when Jesus comes to gather His children home. It must be sadly noted, however, that all through that terrible time of oppression the bishop of Rome (known today as the pope) did not condemn such injustices nor do anything to stop them.

In AD 538 Justinian declared the pope to be “The Head of all the Holy Churches”. It was at this time that the papacy began its 1260 year rule as the “little horn” which Daniel had seen in vision. As the pope gained power he ordering the kings of neighboring countries to compel their people to submit to the Roman Church. The union of church with state power brought persecution on those refusing to give allegiance to the Roman Church.

“Isn't that a perfect snapshot of human nature?” Mr. Dell commented as he removed his glasses. “As soon as the Roman Church held power it began to persecute.”

“Didn't they remembered how cruel Nero and other Roman emperors were to the early Christians?” questioned Aaron. “How could they forget early Christians being thrown to the lions and other horrible punishments? My mom read about how they crucified people on crosses, set others on fire and even attached rocks to people before throwing them into the sea to drown.”

“God's kingdom works on totally different principles, doesn't it, Aaron? In Deuteronomy 30:15-18 we read that God plead with Israel to make good choices. He promised that He would bless them if they obeyed His commandments and laws, but warned that there would be curses if they refused to listen to Him. The spirit of compulsion or force always comes from Satan, not God. In fact, one of the things that Jesus accomplished on the cross was to give us an opportunity to choose between obedience to God or obedience to Satan. Without Jesus as our sacrificial lamb, everyone – from Adam and Eve to you and me – would be totally under Satan's power. Jesus' death bought us a probation of time to choose which leader we will follow. But we must keep moving on. Let's continue with our chapter.”

Every earthly ruler must have a territory and subjects to rule over. The pope's kingdom is

known as the Vatican. It is a well-known fact of history that Rome was built on seven hills, but what you may not know is that across the Tiber River from those seven hills there was an ancient site for spirit worship. Marcus Aurelius (the Roman emperor from AD 161-180) built a temple on that hill, which he dedicated to Mithra – the sun god. Many years later that same spot would become the site of St. Peter’s Basilica - the spiritual center of Roman Catholicism.

Those who visit Rome recognize the Vatican as a very tiny kingdom, but don’t be fooled by its size. Although it is made up of only ten square miles, that city-state has worldwide power and influence. The Vatican appoints ambassadors, has its own currency and postal service, makes its own laws and provides its own security.

“We certainly see the Vatican's power today,” remarked Mr. Dell as he paused. “The influential people of the world - including kings, presidents and prime ministers - all travel to Italy to meet with the pontiff. Do you remember that when Pope Paul II died in 2005 that Prince Charles of England even postponed his wedding so he could attend the funeral? That is the power of the Vatican.”

“Have you been to the Vatican, Mr. Dell?” questioned Ashley.

“Yes, I have. I was extremely impressed by all the gold and marble that we saw. This is a very wealthy church we are learning about,” answered Mr. Dell as he laid down the worship book.

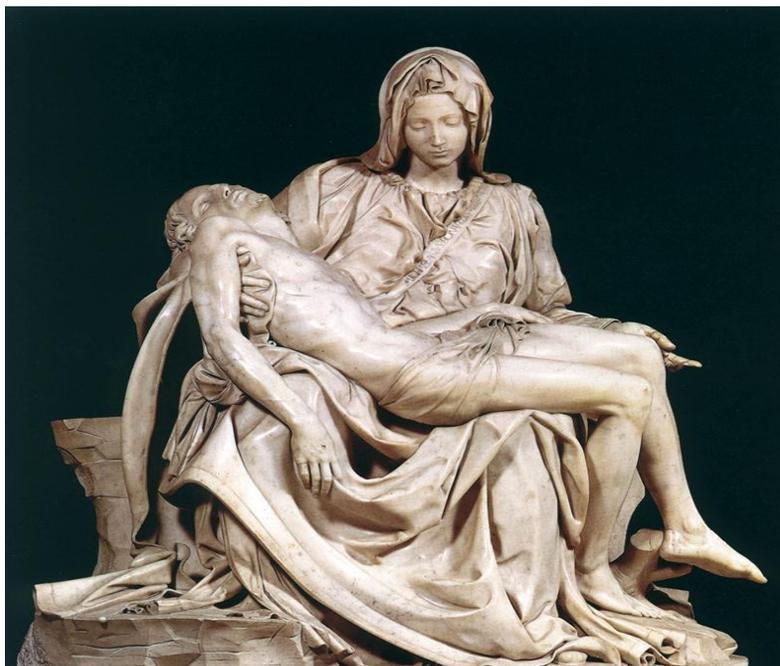
“What does “Vatican” means?” Jay questioned.

“It is an interesting word. The Vatican borrows its name from the hill on which it is built - *Vaticanus*. ‘*Vatis*’ means ‘foretell, prophesy, or divine; and ‘*can*’ means ‘serpent’ - so perhaps we could say it means ‘the divining serpent’.”

“What was your favorite thing in the Vatican, Mr. Dell?” Cory asked.

“Oh, there are so many beautiful things!” recalled Mr. Dell. “Let me see if I can find a few pictures to show you...Ah, here we are,” he clicked a picture folder marked “Rome”.

“Michelangelo's *Pieta* is fabulous. It is one of the few pieces of art in the Vatican that is free from halos or other symbols. It is just an exquisite life-size sculpture of Mary holding the dead Jesus.



<http://crazymindseye.files.wordpress.com/2008/05/pieta4.jpg>

“After seeing the *Pieta*, which is close to the doors of St. Peter’s Basilica, we noticed a long line

of people queued up to kiss the toe of a metal statue said to be 'St. Peter'. Actually, the statue is the original 'Jupiter' taken from the Pantheon in Rome and rechristened as Peter. Notice the sun wheel above his head. That should be our first clue that this is a pagan sculpture. The second clue is the way the two fingers are prominent on the right hand. For those who have studied into the mysteries, they recognize that particular hand symbol as an occult blessing.

“What’s also interesting about this statue is that the right foot is smooth and nearly worn away from all the pilgrims who touch or kiss the toe every day. When I was there, we were told that the foot we were looking at was at least the second foot on that statue - the first one had been worn off by the faithful over the centuries!



<http://www.turnbacktgod.com/wp-content/uploads/2008/08/bronze-statue-of-st-peter-enthroned.jpg>

“For those of you who appreciate great architecture, seeing St. Peter's Basilica is quite an experience. The massive dome is gorgeous. Some consider it the “greatest architectural achievement” of Michaelangelo. Unfortunately, he did not live to see the dome completed. That honor went to Giacomo della Porta. If you’re in good shape you can walk up the 320 stairs to get a bird’s-eye view of the basilica – those who don't want that type of workout can take the elevator! When you reach the gallery area you can see millions of tiny tiles that make up the mosaics which decorates the inside of the dome. There is also a great view of the top of Bernini’s canopy and the center altar.”



http://farm1.static.flickr.com/91/281765816_09a5fdf2d3.jpg

“Did you get to see the Sistine Chapel?” Carrie raised her hand. “It would be cool to see the room where they choose a new pope.”

“I did see it – although we had to wait in a very long line to get in! Did you know that the measurements of the Sistine Chapel are exactly the same size as Solomon’s temple? – I thought that was interesting.”



“Most people who visit the Sistine Chapel want to see the painting, ‘The Creation of Adam’, by Michelangelo. It is one of the best-known pictures in the world.”

“Is that the one where God is reaching His hand toward Adam’s finger to give him life? Their fingers are almost touching, but not quite?” questioned Jeremy as Mr. Dell clicked on another picture.

“That’s the one,” Mr. Dell said as the picture brightened up the screen. “Can you imagine painting for four years while lying on your back? My shoulders hurts just think of poor Michelangelo painting the whole ceiling with pictures telling the stories of Genesis. He was a genius in my opinion!”



<http://www.thecaveonline.com/APEH/creation.gif>

“And just one more rather obscure tidbit from history...” Mr. Dell picked up the Bible book and prepared to read. “...Did you know that Michaelangelo was a secret Protestant? He did not openly express his beliefs, but instead hid behind an outward conformity to Catholicism. Calvin, the great reformer, had a name for such 'closet Christians'. He called them *Nicodemites* because they were hiding who they really were.” [see *Under the Inquisition*]

When Justinian authorized his imperial army to enforce the laws of the Roman Church, the papacy immediately began to flex her muscles. She claimed authority over all pastors and churches on all religious matters. She did this by forcing them to accept her traditions as being equal with the authority of the Scriptures. Each new “tradition” that she enforced – whether Easter or Sunday, calling Mary the “Queen of Heaven”, or showing reverence for relics – added to the power of the bishop of Rome. It was at that time he became known as the pope.

The Roman Church continued her persecutions. Many fleeing religious persecution found refuge with the Waldenses who lived in the mountains of northern Italy and southern France. It was during that time that the words of Revelation 12:14 became a reality: “And to the woman (God’s Church) were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time (1260 years) from

the face of the serpent.”

As the papacy assumed greater control Europe descended into the Dark Ages. It was indeed a dark time for those who obeyed God. They were persecuted, their Bibles burned and many faithful were martyred. It was a time of darkness for worldly learning as well. The papacy feared freedom of speech and thought so schools were closed and it was forbidden to teach mathematics or Greek.

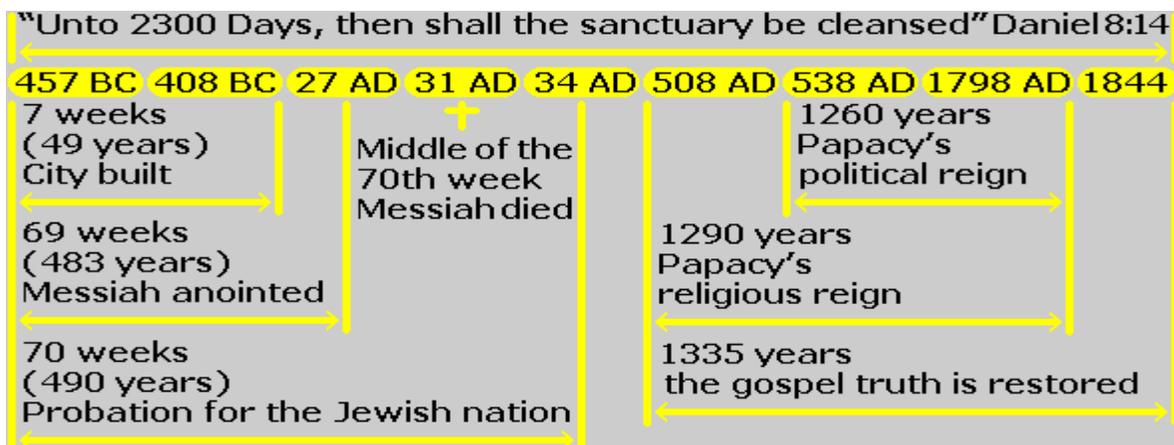
The Church also attempted to control the understanding of science. Papal leaders believed our world was the center of the universe, so they taught that the sun revolved around the earth. Galileo, a famous astronomer, contradicted that belief with scientific evidence and was convicted of heresy. However, due to the people's deep respect for Galileo, the church allowed him to finish his life under house arrest rather than experience the fate of most heretics.

The papacy incorrectly believed that because the Bible talked about “the four corners of the earth,” that our world was flat. It was forced, however, to change its position when men like Columbus began to explore the seven seas and did not fall off the “edge” of the world.

Not content with their control over the educational system, the strengthening papacy began to suppress business and art as well. Artists were no longer able to create paintings or sculpture from myths and legends or recreate things from nature. They were only allowed to produce religious art portraying Bible stories or great Christian events. Many successful businessmen and useful tradesmen fled persecution in Europe and before long the knowledge of their craft was lost.

When the people lost the ability to provide a livelihood for themselves, their standard of living went down. It became difficult to finance homes or to buy clothing, household items and tools. As people lost their work skills and were no longer able to read and write, they became poor, lazy and illiterate. This was truly a time when truth was hidden in the wilderness awaiting a favorable time to shine again.

“This chart,” Mr. Dell passed around a new handout, “is based on Daniel 8:14 that talks about a prophecy spanning 2300 days. Because the Bible uses a “day for a year” principle when dealing with prophecy (see Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6) we know that this is not referring to just over six literal years, but rather a large expanse of time – literally 2300 years.



“If you look at the chart you will see that Jesus began His ministry right on time and that He died right on time. That alone gives us faith in the “day for a year” principle, but please note the 1260 years between the year AD 538 to 1798. This 1260 years time period was prophesied in Daniel 7:25; Daniel 12:7 and Revelation 11:2,3. This is when God's true church experienced severe persecution and the church had to hide in the wilderness just to survive.”

Mr. Dell held up his chart and pointed to 1798. “It wasn't until here that the persecuting power (the papacy) was 'wounded'. That happened when Napoleon's General Berthier marched into Rome and took Pope Pius VI captive. Berthier then took the pope to France where he died in exile. That put an end to the papacy's 1260-year political reign.

“The bell is going to ring in just a moment,” Mr. Dell glanced at the time. “Would any students with a Scottish heritage remain after class for just a moment, please. I need your help for class on Monday.”

B.G. Wilkinson, *Truth Triumphant: The Church in the Wilderness* (Teach Services, Inc., Brushton, NY, 1994) Chapter 10

R.L. Odom, *Sunday in Roman Paganism* (Teach Services, Inc., Brushton, NY 2003) says that “memorials of Mithra worship have been found in the very place where the Vatican now stands.”

Uriah Smith, *Daniel and Revelation* (<http://www.littlebookopen.org/history/dr1toc.htm>) Chapter 7 Daniel Chapters 2 and 5

Vance Ferrell, *The Fabulous First Centuries of Christianity* (Harvestime Books, Altamont, TN, 2006) Part 4

[www. markbeast.org](http://www.markbeast.org)

Elizabeth H. Walsh, *Under the Inquisition* (Inheritance Publications, Neerlandia, Alberta, 2009)

Martyr of the Catacombs (Christian Light Publications, Inc., Harrisonburg, Virginia, 2005)