



The Death of Protestantism: The "Death Knell" of Freedom of Religion?

By Hope of Israel Ministries Staff

Part 2

END of the Protestant Reformation?

Thus we are witnessing the most dramatic event in the last 400 years of Protestantism -- the END of the Protestant Era -- and the finis of Protestantism!

Getting the ball rolling, Pat Robertson, millionaire founder of the 700 Club, has thrown his support behind the Colson-Neuhaus manifesto of Christian unity. Robertson not only endorsed the Manifesto, as written, but had Charles Colson on his popular 700 Club television program to promote his project. As if that were not enough, he then introduced Priest Richard Neuhaus to his political action group, the Christian Coalition, as a hero, and recently had Neuhaus as a keynote speaker at the Christian Coalition's "1994 Road to Victory Conference" in Richmond, Virginia.

Where is all this leading?

In sum, the vital Protestant Reformation has been betrayed. The modern Protestant/Evangelical leaders of the churches have SOLD OUT to Roman Catholic influence, domination, and control. They have forged an alliance with the devil. They have chartered an agreement with the Anti-Christ! Protestants, Evangelicals, and Catholics together are now in the process of formulating and forging a NEW WORLDWIDE CHURCH! Although it calls itself the "Church of God," it will be the "Worldwide Church of Satan the Devil" in disguise!

This great end-time Church was prophesied in your Bible. Yeshua the Messiah himself foretold in the Mount Olivet prophecy, speaking about the time just before his second coming, "TAKE HEED that no man DECEIVE you. For MANY shall come in my name [many shall come claiming to be his ministers, representing him!], saying, I am Christ [admitting that Yeshua is the Messiah, the Anointed One of YEHOVAH God]; and shall DECEIVE MANY" (Matt.24:4-5).

He added, "And many false prophets [preachers, teachers] shall rise, and shall DECEIVE MANY" (Matt.24:11). Many today are being misled by the ecumenical movement. They are being led to "compromise" proven truths, and to join forces with apostate religion -- to "shake hands with the devil," as it were -- to embrace the legions of spiritual darkness! This will not lead

to worldwide enlightenment, but to a new onrushing period of GREAT DARKNESS -- a new spiritual DARK AGE!

A New DARK AGE Coming

But, Yeshua said, this end-time "Dark Age" will be darker, and worse, and more deadly and sinister, and fraught with peril and terror, than any comparable period in the history of humanity, or the history of the world! We are entering a final age of worldwide RELIGIOUS OPPRESSION, tyranny, and evil! The apostle Paul also foretold it. He prophesied:

"This know also, that in the LAST DAYS perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, TRAITORS, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a FORM of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (II Tim.3:1-5).

Paul said of this end time that men would be "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (verse 7). He added, "But evil men and seducers shall wax WORSE AND WORSE, deceiving and being deceived" (verse 13).

Paul admonished Timothy, in warning about these days (which were paralleled to some extent during his own time, therefore the words apply both to Timothy's day, and to our "last days" see chapter 3, verse 1 again, for the time setting):

"For the time will come when they will NOT ENDURE SOUND DOCTRINE ["truth" no longer matters to them, but rather "church growth," group psychology, advertising and promotion]; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall TURN AWAY their ears from the truth, and shall be TURNED UNTO FABLES [including many Catholic "fables"!]" (II Tim.4:3-4).

That time has come! We are now seeing, worldwide, a wholesale departure from what truth remains within the Evangelical churches and the remaining bastions of "Protestantism" and a widespread stampede -- like a whole herd of millions of buffalo stampeding across the ranges of the Wild West hundreds of years ago -- back into the fold of "the [un-] holy Father," who calls himself the "vicar of Christ"!

The resurgence of wickedness in the last days, and the parallel arising of the Great False Church, was also foretold by Paul in the prophecies in the book of II Thessalonians. He wrote, forcefully:

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day [the day of the Messiah's return -- see verses 1-2] shall not come, except there be a FALLING AWAY [that is, a tremendous APOSTASY] first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple [i.e., church -- the Vatican?] of God, shewing himself that he is God [the "vicar of Christ," "Holy Father," "Prince of Peace," a virtual "God on

Earth"!]. . . . For the mystery of iniquity doth already work [underground, behind the scenes]: only he who now restraineth [Greek] will restrain, until he be taken out of the way [could this be the remaining bastions of Protestantism, including the Evangelical churches, the Church of England, the Lutheran Church, etc.?]. AND THEN [when the restraining powers are demolished and subverted] SHALL THAT WICKED [ONE] BE REVEALED [the final Age-End Pope!], whom the Lord shall consume [destroy] with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is AFTER THE WORKING OF SATAN with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with ALL DECEIVABLENESS of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the LOVE OF THE TRUTH, that they might be saved" II Thess.2:3-10).

The Philips Translation puts this passage in clearer, more modern English. He translates: "Evil is already insidiously at work, but its activities are restricted until what I have called the 'restraining power' is removed. When that happens the lawless man will be plainly seen" (v.7-8)

What is this "restraining power"? Clearly, the power that has held back the advance of Catholicism and a world Catholic superstate, during the past 500 years, has been the Protestant Reformation in Europe, and the independence of European Protestant nations refusing to come under the yoke of Catholicism. Also, the power of the Anglo-Saxon nations, Great Britain (which formed the Church of England as a counter-balance against Catholic power and extremism), and the United States of America -- the world's two most powerful Protestant nations -- has up to now stood in the way of Catholic revanchism.

Few understand it, but the Catholic Church knew the danger of a strong Protestant America to her own ambitions, and Catholic and Jesuit plotting was involved in the cause of the Civil War in America, with the Catholic Church supporting the South in its attempt to break up and sever the Union. The Catholic Church was also involved in the plot to assassinate Abraham Lincoln (see *50 Years in the "Church" of Rome: The Conversion of a Priest, Charles Chiniquy*).

Is this great End-Time Church-State system mentioned in Bible Prophecy?

We read in the book of Revelation, "And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the GREAT WHORE that sitteth upon many waters [nations]: with whom the kings of the earth have committed [spiritual and political] fornication [adultery], and the inhabitants of the earth have been made DRUNK with the wine of her fornication" (Rev.17:1-2).

A great "whore" in the Bible is descriptive language which means a great "false church." It is a great church which "sells itself" and its support, politically, to the nations of this world in turn for which it seeks recognition as the "official church," and the support of the state -- and the long arm of the state which it seeks to use to ferret out and destroy all "heretics."

In the Middle Ages the nations of Europe joined forces with the Papacy to launch "crusades," not only against the Moslems in the Middle East, but against the Albigenses and Waldensians in France, independent Christian groups which foreshadowed the Protestant Reformation by several

hundred years, and "crusades" against the Jews in Eastern Europe. The "cross" of the Church was bathed in blood from one end of Europe to the other, and in Asia.

Blood Bath of the Great Inquisition

Says Adam Clarke in his *Commentary*, regarding the Church of Rome:

"'Who can make any computation,' says Bishop Newton [Sir Isaac Newton, scientist and renown physicist who became a bishop of the Church of England], 'or even frame any conception, of the numbers of pious Christians who have fallen a sacrifice to the BIGOTRY AND CRUELTY OF ROME? Mede upon the place hath observed, from the authorities, that in the war with the Albigenses and Waldenses there perished of these poor creatures IN FRANCE ALONE A MILLION. From the first institution of the Jesuites in 1580, that is, in little more than 30 years, NINE HUNDRED THOUSAND ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS WERE SLAIN, and these all by the common executioner. In the space of scarce thirty years the inquisition destroyed, by various kinds of torture, a HUNDRED AND FIFTY THOUSAND CHRISTIANS. Sanders himself confesses that an INNUMERABLE MULTITUDE OF LOLLARDS [SABBATARIANS] and Sacramentarians were BURNT THROUGHOUT ALL EUROPE, who yet, he says, were not put to death by the pope and bishops, but by the civil magistrates.' The dragon in a new shape, or Roman empire of Germany, acted a very conspicuous part in this nefarious WARFARE against the remnant of the woman's seed, who kept the commandments of God, and had the testimony of Jesus Christ. See the imperial edict of Frederic II, against heretics, in Limborch's History of the Inquisition" (Vol.3, p.1019, Rev.13:7 comment).

When the Protestant Reformation began, it was met head on with military power, and the armies of Catholic Europe sought viciously to suppress the fledgling new movement, and to destroy it before it hatched. But to no avail. YEHOVAH God was behind the Protestant Reformation, and wanted the world to have several centuries of religious freedom -- before the crushing weight of Roman Catholic power would once again rise to the surface, and attempt to stamp out and destroy all dissent, in one final bloodbath at the end of this Age!