

Just What Is The "Synagogue of Satan"?

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We read in the book of Revelation of a mysterious group of people — a church or group of people whom the apostle John describes as the "synagogue of Satan." Many churches have claimed this refers to the Jews, who persecuted the early Church and had Yeshua the Messiah put to death. Is this claim true? Does Satan the devil really have a "synagogue"? Just what is a "synagogue," anyway? Here is new insight into an old and mysterious question.

Notice! In the book of Revelation, we read that YEHOVAH God declares to the church at Smyrna, "I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan" (Rev. 2:9).

Then, in a prophecy regarding the Philadelphia church, He says: "Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee" (Rev. 3:9).

What is the "synagogue of Satan" mentioned in the book of Revelation?

Is this a warning to beware of the Jews, the Pharisees and Sadducees, who persecuted the early Christians? Is it a warning to beware of the Jewish people in general?

A Warning against the Jews?

Some people, in their hatred of the Jews, claim that ALL the modern Jewish people are not really Jews at all, but are descended from Esau — and are really Edomites! Some even go so far as to claim that — believe it or not — the German people are true Jews, whereas the millions whom they sent to the concentration camps and ovens were actually "Edomites," descended from Esau — that is, false Jews!

Some anti-Semitic religious ministers even claim the Jews are the "serpent's seed" — and claim their father was none other than Satan the devil. They even quote the words of the Messiah in John 8:44 as "proof" of this claim.

However, when we read the words of the Messiah, we find he was referring not to the Jewish people as such, but rather to the Jewish religious leaders who were at that moment interrogating him and denying his Messiahship !

To those specific religious leaders who were seeking to kill him (John 8:37), and who sneered and accused him of being born of sex out of wedlock (verse 41), and who boasted that YEHOVAH God was their father — the Pharisees and Sadducees — to them he replied, because of their evil works, "You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him" (John 8:44).

These evil religious leaders, who rejected the Messiah, were on dangerous ground. But Yeshua was not accusing the Jewish people as such. Rather, his remarks were addressed to those Jerusalem rabbis who should have known better, or did, but rejected him anyway. These particular religious leaders he branded as "hypocrites," "snakes," "vipers," "blind leaders of the blind," and worthy of "hell" (compare Matthew 23:13-14, 17, 19, 23, 26-27, 33).

Regarding the term "synagogue of Satan," the *Jewish New Testament Commentary* argues that

Virtually all the commentators ignore the *obvious and straightforward interpretation* that Yochanan [John] is talking here about **Gentiles who pretend to be Jews**. The same kind of expression is used in v.2: "...you tested those who call themselves emissaries [apostles] but aren't — and you found them to be liars." It obviously refers to **false apostles**, and there the commentators accept the literal sense without demur. But here

they opt for the metaphorical interpretation that Yochanan [John] is talking about the Jews who reject Yeshua as the Messiah instead of the literal understanding that these are *non-Jews who lie and say they are Jews but in fact are Gentiles*. In this way a verse which **says nothing about Jews** is given a *virulently anti-Semitic significance*. The result is that over the centuries Jews have had the epithet "synagogue of Satan" hurled at them by Christians who thought they understood the Bible (David H. Stern. P. 795).

Salvation Is "of the Jews"

It is a fact that the early Church was viciously persecuted by the authorities of ancient Judaism. The Sadducees and Pharisees looked upon the new "Christians" as heretics, and a dire threat to the very existence of Judaism. But the Jewish people themselves were not responsible for the misdeeds of some of their religious leaders. Yeshua the Messiah himself said to the woman of Samaria, "Salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22).

Rather than hate the Jews, the apostle Paul exclaimed, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:1-3).

He later wrote, "I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew" (Rom. 11: 1-2).

Although many Jewish people have been "blinded" to the truth of the gospel, Paul goes on, the day is coming when they will be restored to YEHOVAH's truth. He declared, "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, UNTIL the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so, ALL ISRAEL SHALL BE SAVED . . ." (Rom. 11:24-25).

The Jewish religion, Judaism, rejected Yeshua as the Messiah, and they still do. Most rabbis do not admit the credentials of Yeshua the Messiah, but look for another Messianic figure. Nevertheless, Paul explains; this blindness will soon be lifted from their eyes, and they will soon acknowledge the TRUTH — and then all Israel, or Israel as a whole, will be saved! The rabbis themselves will accept the true Yeshua the Messiah of the Bible!

But, the amazing truth is that the Messiah of the Bible is NOT the same "Jesus Christ" that is preached in the vast majority of so-called "Christian" churches in the world! They preach a Gentilized, paganized, corrupted image or form of the Messiah — one who supposedly abolished his Father's Law, repudiated the Ten Commandments, did away with the Sabbath and Holy Days, and whose worship today is fraught with pagan holidays such as Easter, Christmas, Halloween, and Sunday worship.

Perhaps one of the main reasons the Jewish people have rejected the true Messiah, over the centuries, is because of how the pagan "Christian" churches have corrupted the teachings and customs of the original Messiah, so that their "counterfeit Christ" is nothing more than a sanitized rendition of Satan the devil in disguise!

Rising Up of Counterfeit "Christianity"

The apostle Paul warned the early church that many deceivers were entering in, subverting whole congregations, and perverting the true message of the Messiah. He wrote the Corinthians, "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth ANOTHER JESUS, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another GOSPEL, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him" (II Cor. 11:3-4).

Paul warned, "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel: for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed AS the ministers of righteousness; whose end

shall be according to their works" (II Cor. 11:13-15).

Notice carefully! Paul is saying here that Satan the devil has HIS MINISTERS! Paul is also warning us that they are disguised AS IF they were ministers of YEHOVAH's true Church!

Were some of these men leaders of a "synagogue of Satan"?

The idea that this "synagogue of Satan" refers to the Jewish nation is utter nonsense. The New Testament repeatedly shows us the nation itself was composed of REAL JEWISH PEOPLE — and repeatedly calls them what they were, "Jews." They were not lying about it. Yeshua himself called them "Jews." Therefore, they were not "impostors" who were "lying" about being Jews.

What, then, is this "synagogue of Satan" mentioned in Revelation? And why do they call themselves "Jews," even though YEHOVAH God Himself says that they are not Jews?

In the Bible, a "synagogue" is an "assembly" — a religious group, such as a "church" or "synagogue." The Greek word "synagogue" simply means "assembly." ***Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*** explains: "sunagoge, properly 'a bringing together' (sun, 'together,' ago, 'to bring'), denoted (a) 'a gathering of things, a collection' then, of 'persons, an assembling, of Jewish religious gatherings'" (page 614).

Smith's Bible Dictionary defines "synagogue" as "a recognized place of worship." It goes on to say that "a knowledge of the history and worship of the synagogues is of great importance, since they are the characteristic institution of the *later phase of Judaism*."

Unfortunately, neither one of these references — or many others available to the Bible student — state the FACT that synagogues were the places of worship for *several different groups* besides the Jews!

The Gnostic and Samaritan Synagogues

Irenaeus (c. 140-202 A.D.), "Christian" prelate and a Father of the Orthodox Church, stated that all the Gnostics — whom he categorized as heretics and not a part of true Christianity — met in SYNAGOGUES. He referred to them as a separate group from real Christians and Jews. In his work ***Against Heresies*** he writes —

The Church alone offers this pure oblation to the Creator, offering to Him, with giving of thanks from his creation. But the Jews do not offer thus: for their hands are full of blood; for they have not received the Word, through whom it is offered to God. Nor, again, do any of **the SYNAGOGUES of the heretics [the Gnostics]** offer this (IV. xviii.4).

Ernest L. Martin explains that "the places where the *various Gnostic groups* assembled to perform their eucharistic rites (which Irenaeus was talking about) were in places called '**synagogues**.' This certainly means the buildings they used for worship" (***The People That History Forgot***. The Associates for Scriptural Knowledge, Portland, OR. 1993. P. 32).

There is a considerable amount of archaeological evidence that the word "synagogue" was used early on by the Gnostics for the name of the meeting-place where they assembled. ***Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*** states that in the Gnostic *Acts of Philip* the word "**synagogue**," on several occasions, refers to the building where the Gnostic adherents worshipped — see page 841.

This dictionary also comments:

Incontestably the most interesting example is that the *Marcionites* could call their buildings for worship **synagogues** cf. the inscription found in Deir Ali (Lebaba) south-east of Damascus [which records a building as a] Synagogue of the Marcionites (***ibid.***, vol. VII, p. 840. Article "Synagogue").

Professor Reinhard Pummer, in his article ***How to Tell a Samaritan Synagogue from a Jewish Synagogue***, states that: "Ancient literature

hints that **Samaritan Synagogues** may have been located in Rome and Tarsus between the fourth and sixth centuries C.E. Short inscriptions in Samaritan and Greek script found in Thessalonica and Syracuse may have come from **Samaritan synagogues** in these cities during the same period. Apparently, the Samaritans flourished in the Diaspora" (BAR, vol. 24 #3, May/June 1998, pp. 24-35).

One **Samaritan synagogue** in Palestine at Sha'alvim in Judea, northwest of Jerusalem, bears religious inscriptions in Samaritan letters and secular inscriptions in Greek. Another one at Tell Quasile in Tel Aviv shows considerable Greek architectural influence (*ibid.*, p. 30).

An ancient account from the works of a monk named Cassiodorus Senator (484-580), *Variarum Libri Duodecim*, speaks of a **Samaritan synagogue** at Rome: "...the Samaritans in Rome are being accused of falsely claiming that a **synagogue** of theirs had been changed into a church." From this statement, it is evident that the Samaritans once had a synagogue in Rome.

Elaborating on this a Philadelphia University publication states that "the Jewish Community of Rome is amongst the oldest outside the Middle East, having a continuous existence from classical times to the present day. The first record of Jews in Rome is in 161 BCE, when Jason b. Elazar and Eupolemus b. Johanan are said to have gone there as envoys from Judah Maccabee. Two **synagogues** were seemingly founded by freedmen who had been slaves of Augustus and Agrippa, respectively, in the first century and bore their names. There was also from an early date a **Samaritan synagogue** in Rome, which continued to exist for many centuries." In all likelihood the two synagogues founded by the freed slaves were also Samaritan since the majority of the slaves in Rome were of Samaritan origin.

And the Jews who came to Thessalonica in Macedonia — possibly less than a decade after the city's foundation — located their synagogue in the vicinity of the agora. "During the 1st century B.C., a large Jewish community formed near the port, therefore this may have been the synagogue where Paul taught. As attested by a marble inscription, **the city also had a Samaritan synagogue.**

"The fact that Gnostic sects — as well as the Jews — met in synagogues is not normally written about in scholarly circles. The reason for this is explained by Ernest Martin —

It is often assumed, because most Gnostic groups had Christian beliefs associated with them, that the Gnostics would have called their meeting places *ekklesias* (churches) and not synagogues. But the contemporary evidence from Irenaeus and other sources show that *Gnostics were conducting their meetings in synagogues* (even though *ekklesia* and synagogue meant practically the same thing in this early period). This shows that any archaeological discovery of an ancient synagogue should not automatically justify the conclusion that the synagogue was a mainline Jewish building. It could very well be a **Samaritan synagogue**, or even a **Gnostic synagogue** (*The People That History Forgot*, p. 33).

Now that we have determined that the term "synagogue" can also refer to a meeting place for Gnostics and Samaritans as well as Jews, we need to clearly define these names.

Gnosticism

A description of Gnosticism, found in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, shows how remarkably it conforms to the practices of modern Roman Catholicism — notice!

These little Gnostic sects and groups ALL lived in the conviction that they possessed a secret and *mysterious knowledge*, in *no way accessible to those outside*, and not based on reflection, on scientific inquiry and proof, but on *revelation*. It was derived directly from the times of primitive Christianity; from the Saviour himself and his disciples and friends, with whom they *claimed to be connected by a secret tradition*, or else from later prophets, of whom many sects boasted. It was laid down in *wonderful mystic*

writings, which were in the possession of the various circles (Liechtenhahn, *Die Offenbarung im Gnosticismus*).

In short, Gnosticism, in all its various sections, its form and its character, *falls under the great category of mystic religions, which were so characteristic of the religious life of decadent antiquity*. All alike boast a MYSTIC REVELATION and a DEEPLY-VEILED WISDOM. As in many mystic religions, so in Gnosticism, the ultimate object is **individual salvation**, the assurance of a **fortunate destiny for the soul after death**....And as in all mystical religions, so here too, HOLY RITES and FORMULAS, ACTS OF INITIATION AND CONSECRATION, all those things which we call **SACRAMENTS**, play a very prominent part. The Gnostic religion is full of such sacraments. Indeed, sacred formulas, NAMES AND SYMBOLS are of the *highest importance* among the Gnostic sects (1943 edition. Vol. 10, p. 453).

The *Encyclopedia* goes on to show that early Christianity and Gnosticism had a *magnetic attraction* for each other:

...the essential part of most of the conceptions of what we call Gnosticism was already in existence and *fully developed before the rise of Christianity*. But the fundamental ideas of *Gnosticism* and of *early Christianity* had a kind of MAGNETIC ATTRACTION for each other. What drew these two forces together was the energy exerted by the *universal idea of salvation in both systems*. **Christian Gnosticism** actually introduced only one new figure into the already existing Gnostic theories, namely that of the historical Saviour Jesus Christ....Above all the Gnostics represented and developed the distinctly ANTI-JEWISH tendency in Christianity....In approximately all the Gnostic systems the doctrine of the seven world-creating spirits is given an *anti-Jewish tendency*, the god of the Jews and of the Old Testament appearing as the highest of the seven (1943 edition. Vol. 10, p. 454).

The importance of sacraments and mystical ideas, such as we find in the Catholic Church, have their source in the Gnosticism of the first few centuries of our era:

The Gnostic religion also anticipated other tendencies. As we have seen, it is above all things A RELIGION OF SACRAMENTS AND MYSTERIES. Through its *syncretic origin* Gnosticism introduced for the first time **into Christianity** a whole mass of sacramental, mystical ideas, which had hitherto existed in it only in its earliest phases. Gnosticism was also THE PIONEER OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH in the strong emphasis laid on the idea of *salvation in religion*.

Finally, it was *Gnosticism* which gave the most decided impulse to *the consolidation of the Christian Church* as a church. Gnosticism itself is a free, natural-growing religion, the religion of isolated minds....Its adherents feel themselves to be the isolated, the few, the free and the enlightened, as opposed to the sluggish and inert masses of mankind degraded in matter, or *the initiated as opposed to the uninitiated*....This freely-growing Gnostic religiosity aroused in the Church an **increasingly strong movement towards unity and a firm and inelastic organization, towards authority and tradition**. An **organized hierarchy, a definitive canon of the holy scriptures, a confession of faith** and a rule of faith, and **unbending doctrinal discipline**, these were the means employed. A part was also played in this movement by a free theology which arose within the Church itself, a kind of Gnosticism which aimed at holding fast whatever was good in the Gnostic movement, and obtaining its recognition within the limits of the Church (Clement of Alexandria, Origen). — *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1943 edition. Vol. 10, p. 454).

The *dualistic element* found in Gnosticism is also prevalent in the Catholic Church. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* explains —

The conception of a *resurrection of the body*, of a *further existence for the body after death*, was unattainable by almost all of the Gnostics, with the possible exception of a few Gnostic sects

dominated by Judaeo-Christian tendencies. With the dualistic philosophy is further connected an attitude of **absolute indifference** towards this lower and material world, and **the practice of asceticism. Marriage and sexual propagation are considered either as absolute evil or as altogether worthless, and carnal pleasure is frequently looked upon as forbidden.** Then again asceticism sometimes changes into wild libertinism. Here again *Gnosticism has exercised an influence on the development of the [Catholic] Church* by way of contrast and opposition....It was just at this point, too, that *Gnosticism started a development which was FOLLOWED LATER BY THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.* In spite of the rejection of the ascetic attitude of the Gnostics, as a blasphemy against the Creator, a part of this ascetic principle became at a later date **DOMINANT THROUGHOUT ALL CHRISTENDOM** [read, Catholic Church]. And it is interesting to observe how, e.g., St. Augustine, though desperately combating the **DUALISM** of the Manichaeans, yet afterwards **introduced a number of dualistic ideas into Christianity**, which are distinguishable from those of Manichaeism only by a *very keen eye*, and even then *with difficulty* (1943 edition. Vol. 10, p. 454).

S. Gusten Olson, in *The Apostasy of the Lost Century*, adds the following: "Gnostic **DUALISM** nevertheless made such heresies [as Simon Magus'] **APPEAR TO BE CHRISTIAN.** As the author of *The Rome of the Early Church*, on page 36, noted: '...when the great tide of these Eastern beliefs encountered the pure stream of the Gospel, it **MUDDIED THOSE WATERS** with this distorted conception of life. *Christianity has never recovered...*" (Nordica SF Ltd. England. 1986, p. 101).

Olson goes on to show how the early Church in Rome compromised with its conscience and gave in to the national worship popularized by Simon Magus —

In an age when Christianity, even the Gentile version, was a prohibited religion, it is not surprising that the Church in the Imperial City soon found itself pastored by bishops who *compromised* with their conscience and with the national worship which **"was not held incompatible with foreign cults"** (*The Student's Roman Empire*, Murray, p. 577).

"It is one of the paradoxes of history that the *State-cult of Rome*...proved **THE MODEL** for the organization of institutional Christianity..." (*Phases in the Religion of Ancient Rome*, Bailey, p. 275).

Bailey explained also that Christianity in its **TRADITIONAL FORM** was **INFLUENCED BY MYSTERY RELIGIONS** and contemporary philosophy. The Greek and Latin fathers failed to distinguish between the character of apostolic Christianity and that of the Roman Church in the latter half of the second century (*ibid.*, p. 114).

Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons in Gaul or France, wrote that Simon Magus was "the **FATHER OF GNOSTICISM**" — see the Introduction to ***Work Against Heresies***. Adding to this, author Jacques LaCarriere elaborates —

...in its beginnings, in the first centuries when Christianity itself was fighting for its survival and seeking its own path, *Gnosticism could still create the illusion that it was a Christian doctrine.* It could do so on two essential counts: **first**, because of its content, since it *borrowed a number of elements from the teaching of the apostles and the texts of the Gospels*; **second**, in its *form*, for in the early days it was preached by men who, **LIKE THE APOSTLES**, traveled the highroads of Samaria, Palestine, Syria and Anatolia, and, in many places, *came into direct confrontation with the disciples of Jesus.*

The most ancient of these wandering **GNOSTIC PROPHETS** is known to history as **SIMON MAGUS** (*The Gnostics*. E.P. Dutton, NY: 1977. P. 44).

With the evidence of Simon's activities after his rejection by Peter, it is easy to see why Luke thought it most important to tell the real condition of this man, proving that he was in actuality **NEVER** an apostle of the Messiah. In this regard, notice the comment of ***Hasting's Dictionary of the Apostolic***

Church, Vol. 2, p. 496: "But it need NOT be supposed that when Simon broke with the Christians HE RENOUNCED ALL HE HAD LEARNED. It is more probable that he carried some of the Christian ideas with him, and that he wove these into a system of his own. This system did contain some of the later germs of Gnosticism. Thus he became a leader of a retrograde sect, perhaps nominally Christian, and certainly using some of the Christian terminology but in reality anti-Christian and exalting Simon himself to the central position which Christianity was giving to Jesus Christ."

What, one might ask, made Samaritan Gnosticism so fascinating to early believers? The fact that these false apostles got *full mileage* out of the existence of biblical *mysteries!* The Samaritan Gnostics majored entirely on *mysteries*. They early allegorized the scriptures to the extent that they paralleled the ancient Babylonian Mystery Religion with its secret handshakes, symbols, sacred terminology, hidden language and its emphasis on a sensuous liturgy, and added highly volatile sexual practices in the higher ranks or degrees of their Orders.

A Brief History of the Samaritans

For three years — from 721 to 718 B.C. — the Assyrian armies besieged Samaria. In the ninth year of Hoshea's reign (718 B.C.), after successive waves of invading Assyrian armies had conquered increasingly larger amounts of Israel's territories, taking massive numbers of captives, transporting them into Assyria, into the land between the Black and Caspian seas, SAMARIA, capital city of the northern ten-tribed Israel, fell. And the transported Israelites became...LOST FROM VIEW!

"Therefore the Eternal was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was **none left but the tribe of Judah only**" (II Kings 17:18).

The Eternal removed who? Israel! It is Israel which was removed and driven from the Eternal's sight until they became lost from view. They were broken as a kingdom. They were annihilated as a nation — taken into captivity and deported as slaves.

Israel was taken into captivity — *wholly removed from the land* — and Judah (the Jews) was the only tribe remaining in the land of Palestine, over seven hundred long years before the Messiah! Who was left? Judah ONLY — only the Jews! Israel was now gone! They became known as the LOST Ten Tribes and are so designated today.

Notice now Kings 17:22-23: "For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them; until the Lord *removed Israel out of his sight*, as he had said by all his servants the prophets. So was Israel [not Judah — not the Jews] carried away out of their own land to ASSYRIA unto this day [written about 620 B.C.]." Observe that the people who had the national title "Israel" and the birthright promises, who were NOT the Jews, were carried away out of their own land — Samaria. They left that land never yet to return!

The Assyrians practiced **massive deportation and resettlement**, reasoning that displaced populations could not form any cohesive guerrilla forces or significant underground, that Assyria would not be threatened from within.

Now note the following verse of this same passage: "And the king of Assyria **brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed THEM in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof**" (II Kings 17:24).

There were originally *five Babylonian tribes* who had been transported to the area where Northern Israel once lived before Israel's inglorious defeat and captivity by the Assyrians. When these five tribes moved INTO the vacant land of Samaria, they brought their Babylonian and Assyrian gods with them.

It is these foreigners who were living in the land of Samaria in the time of the Messiah and who were called Samaritans in the Gospel records. It is well to keep that in mind. For **the Samaritans of the New Testament were not in any sense a racial mixture with the Israelites.** After a short time in their new country, they were ravaged by lions. They interpreted this

as coming upon them because they failed to honor the god of the new land. They asked the Assyrian king to send back one of the priests of Israel to teach them the former religion in order that the plague of lions would be stayed. The Israelitish priest who was sent to them taught the religion of Northern Israel. But that priest was one of the former calf-worshipping priests of the rebel Israelites. He was as pagan as the Babylonians themselves! Only **one individual** — a priest-returned from among the captive Israelites to teach the newly planted Gentiles the corrupted religion of Israel (II Kings 17:27-28).

These people from the land of Babylon, however, did not follow YEHOVAH God, nor YEHOVAH's ways, nor His religion. The very next verse shows this: But "every nation [still] made gods of their own..." (II Kings 17:29).

This priest of Israel taught the Babylonians — now called SAMARITANS — to adopt the former worship of the Northern Israelites. The priest taught them to revere YEHOVAH as the "God of the Land." Thus, these Samaritans finally took upon themselves the NAME: The People of YEHOVAH; but their religion was *outright paganism* — a mixture of Israelitish calf-worship and Babylonianism — just as Simon Magus later was eager to appropriate the Messiah's NAME, but continue his pagan abominations!

The general state religion of the Assyrians and Babylonians was the **Chaldean mystery religion**. This was the religion of Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8) who believed Philip's miracles, appropriated the name "Christian," and started a new counterfeit "Christianity" after the apostle Peter rejected him as being bound in "iniquity" — i.e., "lawlessness." He took the name of the Messiah, rejected YEHOVAH's law, and added licentious false "grace" to the Babylonian mystery religion, calling it "Christianity." This false "Christianity" has deceived millions down to this present generation!

Notice what YEHOVAH God says about the final condition of these Samaritans —

So these nations feared the LORD [calling themselves YEHOVAH's people], AND served their graven images, both their children, and their children's children: as did their fathers [the Babylonians], so do they unto this day (II Kings 17:41).

The house of Israel did not return to Palestine with the Jews in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, as some erroneously believe. Those who returned to rebuild the Temple and restore worship in Jerusalem at that time, 70 years after Judah's captivity, were only those **of the house of Judah** whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried to Babylon.

Note well these facts:

1. In 721-718 B.C. ISRAEL began to be "carried away out of their own land to Assyria" (II Kings 17:23). They were soon **all removed — completely**. "There was none left but the tribe of Judah only" (II Kings 17:18). *JUDAH, only, remained.*
2. More than 130 years later, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon carried the Jews — Judah — who only remained in Palestine away to Babylon. So **none of the house of Israel** dwelt in Palestine at the time of this captivity of Judah.
3. Those who returned to Palestine to rebuild the Temple and restore worship 70 years after Judah's captivity were ALL of the house of Judah — all JEWS — all of those whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away. They returned again "unto Jerusalem and Judah, every one unto his city" (Ezra 2:1).

Only those of the tribe of Judah, together with remnants of Benjamin and Levi, who constituted the house of Judah, returned at that time. "Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites" (Ezra 1:5).

There are, of course, those who reject this truth YEHOVAH God has seen fit now, in our time, to reveal — and who falsely represent that ALL Israelites, including the ten-tribed house of Israel, returned to Jerusalem at the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.

They will sift out instances where the word "Israel" is used in connection with

individuals or people of the HOUSE OF JUDAH and misrepresented that they are the HOUSE OF ISRAEL. Let it be unequivocally stated and emphasized: **Jews are Israelites — but only part of the Israelites are Jews.** The term "Jew" is a nickname for the national name JUDAH. Jews are, truly, men of Israel or people of Israel — but they are *not* of the NATION called the HOUSE OF ISRAEL, or KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.

Those who refuse this truth turn to such a passage as this: "And the residue of Israel, of the priests, and the Levites, were in all the cities of Judah, every one in his inheritance" (Neh. 11:20). Because the word "Israel" is used, they will claim these are all twelve tribes. But it is specifically speaking of priests and Levites — and they are of the house of Judah, but not of the ten-tribed house of Israel. They were truly the "residue of Israel" — the "residue" of the twelve tribes; they were Israelites, but they were not of the nation called the house of Israel. They returned to their inheritance in the land of Judah.

Nehemiah says plainly: "These are the children of the province, that went up out of the captivity [the captivity to Babylon-captivity of JUDAH, **not the house of Israel**], of those that had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away..." (Neh. 7:6). And **none of the Ten Tribes had been left in Palestine** after the Assyrian captivity more than 100 years before (II Kings 17:18).

Ezra says: "And the children of Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the dedication. ." (Ezra 6:16). These were people of the kingdom of Judah — *not* the kingdom of Israel — but they were "children of Israel."

Names and genealogies are given in Ezra and Nehemiah of those who went back to Palestine from Babylon — and there was *none from any of the Ten Tribes!* Consequently those in Jerusalem at the time of the Messiah were of these three tribes, *not of the house of Israel.* And most, if not all, of those converted were of the tribe of Benjamin, as Paul said he was.

The Gospel and Epistles of John

Now that we have established that the Jews were not the only people that worshipped in synagogues, and have established the nature of Gnosticism and the origins of the Samaritan people, we can move on to the writings of the apostle John.

To single out the one apostle who seems to have made the most deliberate and planned attack on the false Christianity of Simon Magus — we must look to John. Take his Gospel for instance. While he records a history of the Messiah's ministry, he has an entirely different approach to the subject than the other three.

John wrote late. Times had changed. John knew that the teachings of the Messiah were being corrupted by a well-known plot to destroy the TRUTH. To understand John's approach to his Gospel we must be aware of his endeavor to expose this false system which had arisen and was gaining momentum.

Notice how John constantly hits at the necessity of keeping the commandments of YEHOVAH God. Why? Because the false system was preaching LIBERTINE doctrines.

Notice also John's particular geographical settings for his Gospel. He was the one who mentions the Messiah's meeting with the woman of Samaria. John is clearly striking home at something in this Samaritan incident that the Church of his time NEEDED to know.

All the other Gospels mention SAMARIA about five times, and even then only casually or in order to give a simple geographical indication. But, when we get to John, writing years after the others, he devotes more space to matters in SAMARIA than is done in all the rest of the New Testament put together. He had a definite and precise REASON for doing so.

John is noted for his plan of "tying up" or "capping off" the Gospel accounts of the Messiah so as to give the Church a well-rounded Gospel — bringing in the extra points which were necessary for our understanding.

Also, John's epistles are jam-packed with specific information regarding the

conspiracy to overthrow the Truth. But yet, none of these works of John mentioned above represent his LAST efforts to warn the Church of that conspiracy which was very much present.

In John's third epistle we read —

To the beloved Gaius, whom I love in **truth**: Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the **truth** that is in you, just as you walk in the **truth**. I have no greater joy than to hear that *my children walk in truth*.

Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren and for strangers, who have borne witness of your love before the church. If you send them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God, you will do well, because they went forth for His name's sake, *taking nothing from the Gentiles*. We therefore ought to receive such, that we may become fellow workers for the **truth** (III John 1-8).

Notice that John refers often — almost to the point of monotony — to what he calls "the truth." This is a clear indication that he was contrasting *YEHOVAH God's truth* with something else currently in circulation. Modern scholars recognize the fact that John is combating "gnosticism."

John then goes on to say,

I wrote to the church, but **Diotrephes**, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. Therefore, if I come, *I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words*. And not content with that, *he himself does not receive the brethren*, and forbids those who wish to, *putting them out of the church*.

Beloved, do not imitate what is evil [John considers this new *version* of Christianity to be absolutely EVIL], but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God. Demetrius has a good testimony from all, and from the **truth** itself. And we also bear witness, and you know that our testimony is true (III John 9-12).

It seems that Bible scholars have failed to take note of the fact that John has unceremoniously labeled Diotrephes as "EVIL" — having never "seen" YEHOVAH God! Diotrephes was a henchman of the Samaritan synagogue!

The Messiah gave his last written message of WARNING of this system through John in Revelation! He tells us specifically the VERY NAMES OF THE SYSTEM TO WATCH FOR in a remarkable and hidden way. Hidden, and yet SO PLAIN once the KEYS are understood. YEHOVAH God certainly does NOT leave His Church in the dark.

The Book of Revelation

This book is perhaps the most important in determining who or what constitutes the "synagogue of Satan." Why? Three clear-cut reasons —

1. The book of Acts gives us the PAST history of the Church. It tells us about Simon Magus who started the false system. Without the book of Acts identifying the MAN behind it all, the activities of that false system as recorded in the epistles becomes obscured and in some cases unintelligible. So, the book of Acts is vitally important!!
2. The epistles then come on the scene, describing the false system. With the epistles, the incident of SIMON MAGUS in Acts represents virtual dynamite!! Each section of Scripture is designed to fulfill specific duties. It is when we understand those duties that the Bible really makes sense.
3. Now to the all-important book of Revelation. While Acts describes the beginning of the false system and the epistles nail down its doctrines and describe its activities, the Book of Revelation next comes to the foreground showing the false system's PROPHETIC HISTORY THROUGH ALL ERAS OF THE CHURCH. We must remember that Revelation intends to show us "things which shall be hereafter." This is

its duty — and it marvelously performs what it was intended to do.

The Seven Churches of Revelation

This section of Revelation gives us a big **KEY**. It describes a brief prophetic history of the Church until the coming of the Messiah. But also — and this is important — it continually shows the false system with which the **TRUE** Church would come in contact. Though *different names* are used to describe the corrupters of the Truth, careful study shows the Messiah is referring to **ONE general false system** — perhaps with ramifications, but nevertheless **ONE system** which will counter the True Church in its entire history.

And in regard to this, the Messiah tells us in the plainest of words what people it will be who represent this false system. He tells us it will be **SAMARITANS!** That is, it will be Samaritans, alias Christians or, plainly, the followers of **SIMON MAGUS!**

The Messiah gives us double witness of this identification in a most remarkable way. What he tells us in Acts of **SIMON MAGUS** being the beginning of the diabolical scheme, he reinforces by telling us in Revelation that **Simon's followers will make up the false system until the Messiah returns to this earth**. Dr. Schaff, speaking of Simon Magus, says that "plain traces of this error appear in...the messages of the Apocalypse to the seven Churches."

But before seeing these clear references, we must say that the material to follow would have been in the past classified as **ABSURD** in the extreme, but recent discoveries put a whole new complexion on the matter. Let us see.

THE SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN

The Messiah identifies the people behind the false system with several names, but these are simply different names of the same system. Notice this. In two distinct **AGES** of the Church we read of these people with a distinct description. In the message to the **Smyrna Church** we read —

I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those **who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan** (Revelation 2:9).

We also read of these false people, called by this same name, afflicting the Christians of the **Philadelphia church era**:

"Behold, I will make **them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews and are not, but do LIE**: behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet" (Revelation 3:9).

This is a promise for US today in the Philadelphia Church. The identification is repeated **TWICE** and both are describing conditions hundreds of years apart. Now the question remains:

WHO ARE INTENDED? "The answer is so clear. They are **Samaritan-Christians**, that is, the followers of **SIMON MAGUS** the Samaritan! Remember, the Jews were not the only ones worshipping in synagogues!

Look again at this verse "**....which say they are Jews and are not, but do LIE....**"

If we would take that expression out of its Biblical context and, for example, place it into an ordinary secular work written in the first century, that expression could **IDENTIFY** only one people — and especially if a Jew was doing the writing: **THE SAMARITANS**.

The Samaritans were the only distinct people in the world in the first and second centuries who said they were Jews, and yet were **NOT** Jews and they knew it. The Samaritans were **LIARS!!**

Notice what Josephus said at the end of the first century — just about the time John wrote Revelation. He is speaking of the Samaritan nation: "When the Jews are in adversity they [the Samaritans] deny that they are kin to them, and **THEN THEY CONFESS THE TRUTH**, but when they perceive that some good fortune hath befallen them, they immediately **PRETEND** to have

commune with them, saying, that they belong to them, and desire their genealogy from the posterity of Joseph, Ephraim, and Manasseh" (*Antiquities*, XI, 8, 6).

This is plain history! The Samaritans, if to their advantage, called themselves Jews. But they were LIARS! They knew better. Their own records showed they came from *Babylon and adjacent areas*. This is exactly what the Old Testament says. They were clearly, Gentiles.

Josephus continues about these Samaritans: "And when they see the Jews in prosperity, they PRETEND they are changed and allied to them, and call them kinsmen, as though they were derived from Joseph, and had by that means an original alliance with them; but when they see them falling into a low condition, they say that they are no way related to them, and that the Jews have no right to expect any kindness or marks of KINDRED from them, but they declare that they are sojourners, *that come from OTHER countries*" (*Antiquities*, IX, 14, 3).

Now this should begin to make sense. At the time of Simon Magus it was clearly an advantage to the Samaritan followers of Simon (and Simon himself) to call themselves JEWS. Why? ALL the prophecies stated that the Messiah and Christianity would come from the Jews. There was no way around this. So Simon went over to the time-honored custom of his Babylonian ancestors and contemporaries of calling themselves Jews WHEN IT WAS TO THEIR ADVANTAGE.

The Jews, however, never had any real association with these Babylonian impostors. Even when the Messiah discussed matters with the Samaritan woman at the well, she acknowledged — with amazement because the Messiah, a Jew, talked with her — that "the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans" (John 4:9).

But even though the Samaritans were Gentiles, they consistently lied about their origin when it was profitable to them.

Notice that the woman at the well carried on the fiction of kinship with the Jews when she said, "Are you greater than OUR father Jacob, who gave us the well?" (John 4:12). They claimed to be a type of Jew, but they were LIARS.

This is made plain by the Messiah himself when he first sent forth the twelve. He charged them: "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10:5, 6).

Pretty plain, isn't it? The apostles were to go to the Jews and Israel — but not to the Gentiles or Samaritans. The Samaritans were plainly Gentiles — NOT Jews!

With the foregoing in mind, let us now go back to the two identifying scriptures in Revelation. The whole matter becomes so plain when the KEY about Simon Magus and the **Samaritan-Christian heresy** is realized. "Behold, I will make them of the **synagogue of Satan** [inspired by Satan himself], which say they are Jews, and are NOT, but do LIE; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet" (Rev. 3:9).

*The **synagogue of Satan** are those "Samaritan-Christians" — the followers of Simon Magus!*

The phrase "which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie" could easily be set off by brackets, for that is the way John intended it. He meant only one people — the "Christian" Samaritans.

When we now look at the other indications about this heretical system, the Simon Magus (and followers) identification becomes exact. Look, for example, at the **Ephesus Church era**. Notice the group they had to counter. "And you have tested those WHO SAY THEY ARE APOSTLES and are NOT, and have found them LIARS" (Rev. 2:2).

Now, if we let the Bible be our guide in understanding this matter, it shows only one man who heretically sought an APOSTLESHIP and never repented of his desire to have that office — it was Simon Magus. History shows us that Simon established his own "Christianity" with his own apostles.

And also, notice this important point. Compare the statements about the

Samaritans — "Which say they are JEW'S, and are NOT, but do LIE" (Rev. 3:9) — with our present scripture under discussion "which say they are APOSTLES, and are NOT, and hast found them LIARS" (Rev. 2:2).

The only differences are the words "JEWS" and "APOSTLES." But — if we get the point at which John is driving — he is saying that these people were calling themselves JEWISH APOSTLES, but that they were all LIARS.

If we go now to the message to the **Pergamos Church** we find additional proof that the apostle John is referring to ONE FALSE SYSTEM that is rearing its ugly head in his day —

But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the *doctrine of Balaam*, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. Thus you also have those who hold the *doctrine of the Nicolaitans*, which thing I hate (Revelation 2:14-15).

What was the "doctrine of Balaam" and the "doctrine of the Nicolaitans"? According to the book *Hard Sayings of the Bible* "the clue to the real meaning of this term [Nicolaitans] is found in **the identification of the Nicolaitans with 'the teaching of Balaam'** in Revelation 2:14-15. Not only is it possible that 'Nicolaitan' is a Greek form of 'Balaam' (as understood by the rabbis), but, more important, this interpretation *fits both the text and the first-century situation*....The Nicolaitans, then, appear to be a group that corrupted God's people by suggesting *compromise* with the culture of the day. Rather than worship God and him alone, they suggested that it was appropriate to engage in patriotic ceremonies (such as feasts associated with the worship of the emperor) and other cultural institutions...(Kaiser, Davids, Bruce and Brauch. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois. 1996. Pp. 760-761).

Also, regarding the Pergamos Church, Howard B. Rand adds that

When Babylon was overthrown **the Chaldean Mysteries transferred its seat from Babylon to Pergamos**. The Lord refers to the Church at Pergamos as dwelling 'even where Satan's seat is.' Not only was Pergamos *the seat of Satanic power*, with its iniquitous system of worship, but the Church of this period was now popular in the court of the adversary. Reference is made to Antipas, a faithful martyr. The word is supposed to be from two words *anti*, opposed, and *papas*, pope, father. Evidently it is a reference to the faithful who were in strong opposition to the '**mystery of iniquity**' that was already beginning to work in the Church....The doctrines of the Nicolaitans were now advocated and accepted in the establishment of authority and power over the Church through ecclesiastical orders (**Study in Revelation**. Destiny Publishers, Merrimac, MA. 1985. Pp. 13-14).

Kurt Rudolph, in his book *Gnosis: The Nature and History of Gnosticism*, maintains that the name "Nicolaitans" is a term for ALL of the heresies mentioned in the messages to the seven churches of Revelation — notice!

In this connection the "Letters to the Seven Churches" which are inserted into the Revelation of John are also noteworthy, for in them a *libertine-gnostic tendency* which spread in the congregations of Asia Minor, Pergamon, Thyatira and Ephesus, towards the end of the 1st century (Revelation may be dated in about 95) is similarly attacked. *This party* is for the first time given a name: **the "Nicolaitans."** In Thyatira they are led by a prophetess and teacher, Jezebel by name. About their teaching not much is said: they claim "to know the **deep things of Satan**," and trace themselves back to the "**teaching of Balaam**," of the kind we know from the contact of the gnostics with the Old Testament. In practice they stand for libertinism; they take part, without more ado, in pagan cult meals (idol sacrifices) and commit "fornication"...Their name is linked with that of the deacon Nicolas of Antioch, known to us from the Acts of the Apostles, which may be quite correct...(Harper and Row, 1987. Pp. 304-305).

Regarding this Nicolas of Antioch, Ivor C. Fletcher writes that "another of **Simon's [Magus'] followers**, Nicolas of Antioch, is said to have **founded**

the sect of the Nicolaitans (Rev. 2:15) and promoted 'the doctrine of promiscuity.' The **doctrine of 'antichrist'** was also expounded by Simon Magus" (*The Incredible History of God's True Church*. Triumph Publishing Co. Altadena, CA. 1984. P. 118).

According to Ernest L. Martin: "The name 'Balaam' means in Semitic tongues 'Conqueror of the People.' This was the exact proper name the Greeks used to designate NIMROD. They called him NICOLAUS, which also meant 'Conqueror of the People.' In the New Testament we read of people following the doctrines of NICOLAUS (Nimrod). They were called Nicolaitans. *McClintock and Strong's Encyclopaedia* speaking of them says: 'The sect of the Nicolaitans is described as following the doctrine or teaching of Balaam — and it appears not improbable that this name is employed symbolically, as NICOLAUS is equivalent in meaning to BALAAM' (vol. 1, p. 621). Yes, the two names NICOLAUS and BALAAM are exactly the same in meaning — they both point to NIMROD, the originator of paganism. We also find that *when Simon Magus (alias Simon Peter) 'Christianized' the religion of NIMROD, John the apostle plainly labels his followers NICOLAITANS and followers of BALAAM*. All of the heresies mentioned in the Seven Churches are of **only ONE system** — the system of NIMROD, **under the leadership of Simon Magus" (*Simon Magus and the Origins of the Catholic Church*, pp. 21-22).**

The term "sexual immorality" in Revelation 2:14 comes from the Greek word *porneia* and does not refer to premarital sex in this instance, but refers to *temple prostitution*. YEHOVAH's people were being led astray by Samaritans into the ancient Babylonian Mystery Religion under the cloak of Gnosticism. "Indeed," writes Les Gosling, "even Tertullian [160?-220? A.D. — first important 'Christian' ecclesiastical writer in Latin], when he gave us the word *fornicatio*' did so primarily because in Italy the word referred to special places where men could go in the city and pay for sex. Many of the women who frequented these particular areas were *priestesses of rife and secret sex cults*" (*Why a Universal Salvation? A Mystery of God Revealed!*, p. 5).

In verse 17 of Revelation 2 we read that "to him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a WHITE STONE, and on *the stone* a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it." What was this "white stone" John mentions here? In the ancient world a **white stone** was used as an admission ticket to public festivals. The sect of the Essenes held secret meetings and it took a polished white stone — inscribed with a members pseudonym known only to the doorkeeper — to gain admission to the worship assemblies.

This revelation tells us much — that the true Christians were reduced to holding secret meetings in that region where Satan dwelt — the head of the Samaritan Mystery Religion of Gnosticism! In the future, believers will be admitted to the Messianic feast, and on their stones will be written either their own new name or that of YEHOVAH God — see Revelation 19:12.

The Prostitute Prophetess — Simon's Female Counterpart

It is well-known that the history of Simon and his religion is connected with the old Babylonian idea of the male and female religious principles.

Simon's Helen (alias Semiramis) figured high in his system.

It would seem odd if the book of Revelation didn't mention something of the female side of the false system. However, the Messiah seems to emphasize the male portion of the system in six of the Church eras — the genders are all masculine. But, when he comes to the **Thyatira era**, the Messiah switches remarkably to the female part. Yet, there are not different false systems being discussed, but only ***the various divisions of the ONE system***.

It is when we come to Thyatira that we find the system described under the symbol of a woman — the woman Jezebel. This analogy was *deliberately chosen* for many obvious reasons. Reasons so plain that John's first century readers could not help but comprehend what he was talking about.

We must remember that John was writing to **seven literal Churches all contemporaneous with one another**, and he was using language or symbols with which they were acquainted. We, of course, realize the prophetic

meaning of the seven churches, but we know that John also had distinct and pertinent messages to the seven congregations which existed in his day. By keeping this obvious fact in mind, the *real truth* of what John was talking about is made clear to us today.

First, we notice that John says this "Jezebel" called herself a "prophetess" (Rev. 2:20). There must have been a particular false prophetess which had caused YEHOVAH's servants to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed to idols. By looking on this "Jezebel" as having been contemporaneous with all the heresies of the other Churches — and that these heresies were in reality only **ONE false system which originated with Simon Magus** — we can then easily see that this "Jezebel" can be equated with the "Female Principle" which Simon introduced into his "Christianity." None other than Simon's Helen — the reclaimed temple prostitute from Tyre. Helen WAS a prostitute — what better type of person is there who could so expertly "teach" and "seduce my servants to commit fornication," literally as well as spiritually?

Simon Magus came in contact with a priestess of Tyre who had been a temple prostitute. The Samaritans worshiped SUCCOTH-BENOTH who was the goddess VENUS. Her devotees continually prostituted themselves. It was their religious duty to do so.

This woman was overawed by Simon's demonistic power and was persuaded to follow him — to live with him — to become the female principle, the necessary counterpart to his claim as being a type of male deity. Relative to this, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 25, p. 126, quoting from Justin states: "And almost all the Samaritans and a few among the other nations, acknowledge and adore him as the first god. And one Helen, who went about with him at the time, who before had had her stand in a brothel, they say was the First Thought that was brought into being by him."

This is interesting because Justin was himself a Samaritan — born and reared in the country. He certainly knew his people's native traditions and teachings. What he says agrees exactly with the New Testament revelation of how the Samaritans regarded Simon. They actually called him the "great power of God" (Acts 8:10). It is because of this that they believed him to have creative powers. He himself said he created Helen, his female companion whom he later elevated to a goddess.

"Irenaeus, Theodoret, and Epiphanius agree in identifying Simon with the Supreme God and Helena with ennoia, the first conception of his mind and his agent in creation" (*Dict. of Religion of Ethics*, vol. 11. p. 517).

What blasphemy!! But this is what he taught everywhere he went — and under the guise of Christianity.

It was Simon's plan to bring about a UNIVERSAL religion under the powerful name of Christianity. Remember that Simon NEVER gave up the Christian name.

His followers were called Christians. In amalgamating the pagan Babylonian religious beliefs with Christianity, he placed himself at the head — the personification of the chief pagan gods of old, and Helena as his companion in creation, the personification of the female deities. The name Helena for his consort fit his plan exceptionally well.

"There existed a wide-spread cult of the moon goddess in Syria and Egypt under the name **Helene**; she was identified with Aphrodite, Atargatis, and the Egyptian **Isis**, who was after represented with Horns to betoken her relation to the moon. One feature of the myth of **Helen** can be traced to the very ancient connection of the religion of Osiris with Syria. According to legend, **Isis spent ten years at a brothel in Tyre** during the course of her wanderings in search of the scattered limbs of her husband. The imprisonment of Helen (Simon's **Helen**) is then only a variant of the many myths relating the degradation of the Queen of Heaven" (*ibid.*).

How important these observations are, for Osiris was clearly Nimrod and Isis was Semiramis. Thus, Simon Magus said that he had been the power that motivated Nimrod and that Helen was Semiramis — the Queen of Heaven.

Now let us carefully note that Simon brought his "Female Principle" from the

City of TYRE. And who was the original Jezebel — the woman who seduced Israel to worship BAAL? She was the daughter of the king of the Sidonians whose capital city was TYRE. (1 Kings 16:31). **The original Jezebel was also from TYRE.**

And not only that, Helen claimed herself to be the creation of Simon — that it was Simon who brought her into existence (*Ency. Britannica*, vol. 25, p. 126). She was, in a sense, the daughter of Simon. But, the original Jezebel WAS THE LITERAL DAUGHTER OF THE KING OF TYRE (1 Kings 16:31).

John's Death Blow

With all of these things in mind, we can see why John hits hard at the Samaritans in his Gospel, as well as the book of Revelation. He was the only Gospel writer who mentions the incident of the Samaritan woman at the well. He saw it absolutely necessary by his time, for doing so.

Actually, the whole incident at the well is of relative unimportance if it was simply put there to show us that the Messiah could perceive that the woman had had five husbands. But there was MUCH more to it than that. If we will carefully notice what the conversation between this Samaritan woman and the Messiah was, we will see that John is giving the DEATH BLOW to the claims of the "Christian"-Samaritans of his day — *the anti-Christ system*.

1. "You worship what you do not know" (John 4:22). The Messiah meant by those words that the Samaritans were NOT worshiping the True God at all. They were worshiping something foreign to the God of the Bible. It was the Devil.
2. "We know what we worship: FOR SALVATION IS OF THE JEWS" (v. 22). We can see why John saw the necessity of explaining what the Messiah really said on this matter. Yeshua said the JEWS would give forth salvation, NOT the Samaritans — and he was even talking to a Samaritan at the time. John put this here primarily to show that Simon Magus, the Samaritans and his followers, were in COMPLETE error in their grandiose claims.

And to further emphasize the true Messiahship of Yeshua — who was a Jew — John records that one whole city even of the Samaritans recognized Yeshua as the Messiah (vs. 39-42). He was showing that some of the people in Simon's own home-ground knew that Yeshua the Messiah and the Jews were responsible for salvation.

John tells us that the woman at the well had FIVE husbands. This is to be taken literally, but isn't it remarkable that the original Babylonian tribes which became the Samaritans were FIVE in number and they each brought their false deities with them. Thus, according to the figurative language of the Old Testament, these Samaritans — who claimed to be worshippers of YEHOVAH — were in reality like the woman at the well, committing adultery with FIVE spiritual "husbands."

The expression "**synagogue of Satan**" has nothing whatever to do with the millions of Jewish people who claim descent from the patriarch Judah! Such a teaching is just one form of the ancient "lie" of Satan the devil, to persecute and attempt to destroy, the people of YEHOVAH God — to create racist hatred of YEHOVAH's people, who have preserved the Torah — the Old Testament Scriptures — the Word of YEHOVAH God! Satan the devil hates the Jewish race which has preserved the Scriptures and oracles of YEHOVAH (Rom. 3:1-3). Therefore, his church teaches that the Jews are the "synagogue of Satan," when the truth is that they themselves constitute such a "synagogue" or "assembly" of Satan!

The Growth of the Synagogue of Satan

The pages of the New Testament expressly reveal that the apostasy was already in full swing long before the death of the apostle, John. Satan wasted no time in confusing the minds of men with his doctrines of Babylonian paganism in order to draw men away from the glorious promises of YEHOVAH God. "False leaders (actual Simonites) calling themselves 'apostles' were getting control over many of the Christian churches of John's time, and John's writings of **I, II, III John** and the **Revelation** all bear testimony to that effect" (*Why a Universal Salvation? A Mystery of God Revealed*, by Les Gosling, P. 3).

The apostle John is the only Biblical writer who actually uses the term "Antichrist." Writing at a time when the doctrines of Simon Magus and his followers were making the rounds, the burden of John's message was for true Christians to hold fast to the original faith as taught in the beginning:

That which was from the *beginning*, which we have heard [from the Messiah]...declare we unto you....This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you (I John 1:1-5).

John speaks of the instruction they "had from the *beginning*" and the word which they had "heard from the *beginning*" (2:7).

Let that therefore abide in you which you have heard from the *beginning*. If that which you have heard from the *beginning* shall remain in you, you also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father (2:24)....the message that you heard from the *beginning* (3:11).

John mentions "that which we had from the *beginning*" (II John 5) and "as you have heard from the *beginning*, you shall walk in it" (verse 6). The reason that John placed such strong emphasis on that which was taught "AT THE BEGINNING" was because many had departed from the original faith into the false doctrines of the Nicolaitans. Those who had departed he called "**antichrists**."

Notice I John 2:18, 19 —

Little children...you have heard that ANTICHRIST is coming, even *now* many antichrists have come....*They went out from us...*"

Now these "antichrists" — a type of the Antichrist that was to come — were people who **PROFESSED TO BE CHRISTIANS**. The phrase "went out from us" means they **departed DOCTRINALLY** from the truth delivered to them by the followers of the Messiah. "'Went out from us,' that is, *doctrinally*. Doubtless then, as now, the deniers of the Son [the Messiah] still called themselves Christians" (*Scofield Reference Bible*, p. 1322).

We read, in I John 2:22-26:

Who is a LIAR but he who *denies* that Jesus is the Christ? He is ANTICHRIST who *denies* the Father and the Son. Whoever *denies* the Son does not have the Father either....Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the *beginning*. If what you heard from the *beginning* abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father....These things I have written to you concerning those who try to *deceive* you.

Again, those who taught things contrary to that which was delivered from the beginning, were termed "**antichrist**." By teaching doctrines within the Church that were DIFFERENT from those delivered from the beginning, they *denied* YEHOVAH God and the Messiah. But it was not a blatant, barefaced denial that leapt out and hit those early Christians in the face, for the apostle John mentions the *seductive* and *deceptive* nature of these teachings. Comments Fred J. Peters in *The Mystery of Antichrist* —

When we teach that the PAPACY (the dynasty of popes) is the ANTICHRIST, in common with all the great Reformers and Protestants for 1000 years past, we are often told...that the Antichrist has to be an unbeliever, an atheist, an infidel, which the Pope is not. Thus with a wave of the hand is the MIGHTY PROPHETIC TEACHING, that shook the PAPACY to its foundation, dismissed....Often an earnest seeker asks of some *futurist preacher* if the Pope is the Antichrist of the Bible, and the matter is settled in a minute, in the most *superficial way*, by saying, "No, for he does not *deny* the Father and the Son"....and that ends the subject, for the seeker does not seek further along that line, unless he has a firm resolve to know **all the truth**, and **why** the old Reformers and Protestants thus taught (Blackwood, NJ: Old Fashioned Prophecy Magazine, reprint of 1942 edition. P. 29).

"So those 'antichrists' that John mentioned," explains Ralph Woodrow, "were NOT atheists, but PROFESSING CHRISTIANS. Their teachings were 'seducing' [or 'deceiving'] Christians into *counterfeit doctrines*. Teaching

atheism would not have this seductive effect, for it does not even pretend to be a Christian doctrine. What, then, is meant by the statement that they *denied* the Father and the Son? It was *not* that they denied the existence of God. They denied him in other ways — mainly **by claiming to be Christians, yet adhering to false doctrines which were not the original teachings of the church**" (*Great Prophecies of the Bible*. Riverside, CA. 1989. P. 150).

This is exactly how the followers of Simon Magus operated!

The apostle Peter wrote of apostasy that would develop *within* the church: "There will be false teachers *among you*, who will secretly BRING IN destructive heresies, even DENYING the Lord who bought them....And *many* will follow their destructive ways..." (II Peter 2:1, 2). Clearly, the false teachers were not denying the existence of YEHOVAH God, for that would not have deceived the Christians to whom Peter wrote. The way they denied Him — and Yeshua the Messiah — was **by teaching erroneous and deceptive doctrines**.

Likewise, Jude writes of these deceivers, saying that "**CERTAIN MEN** have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into *licentiousness* and DENY the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 4). It seems perfectly clear that Jude is here referring to the licentious doctrines of the Nicolaitans.

By the end of the second century, Christians who ardently "contended for the faith once delivered" — handed down to them by the immediate followers of the Messiah — were rapidly becoming a minority. Mosheim, in ***The Ecclesiastical History***, tells us that

Christian churches had scarcely been organized when men rose up, who, not being contented with the simplicity and purity of that religion which the Apostles taught, attempted innovations, and *fashioned religion according to their own liking*.

By the closing years of the second century the Roman bishop Victor attempted to "excommunicate" the churches of Asia Minor for refusing to abandon practices handed down to them from the apostles of the Messiah. Professor J.B. Lightfoot, in ***The Christian Ministry***, informs us that

with Victor, the successor of Eleutherus, A NEW ERA begins. Apparently the first Latin prelate who held the metropolitan see of Latin Christianity [?], he was moreover the first Roman Bishop who is known to have had *intimate relations with the imperial court*, and the first also who advanced those claims to UNIVERSAL [CATHOLIC] DOMINION which his successors in later ages have always consistently and often successfully maintained...the close of the second [century] witnessed the *autocratic pretensions of the haughty pope Victor*, the prototype of a Hildebrand or an Innocent (pp. 223-224).

"The harsh action of Victor against the believers in Asia," writes S. Gusten Olson, "can now be seen in the light of his close relations with the Imperial Court. The Latin Christianity which emerges AT VARIANCE WITH THE ORIGINAL FORM can now be understood in relation to the *uncompromising Imperial Policy*" (***The Apostasy of the Last Century***, p. 177).

Olson goes on to say that "by the end of the second century, the conflict between Victor and the Christian leaders in Ephesus and Smyrna revealed a *spirit of apostasy* among the Romans from the direction of the exalted Christ in the Church" (*ibid.*, p. 181).

The Christian historian Eusebius (who was a contemporary of Constantine the Great) ties the apostles' statements right into the heresies of Simon Magus — notice!

And what is more surprising, the same thing [faking conversion] is *done to this day* by those who follow his [Simon Magus'] most impure heresy. For they, after the manner of their forefather, SLIPPING INTO THE CHURCH, like a pestilential and leprous disease *greatly affect* those into who they are able to infuse the deadly and terrible poison concealed in themselves (***Ecclesiastical History***, II. 13. 5, 6).

Soon a new "gospel" began to be preached which praised the Messiah and his virtues but DENIED his all-important message that he would RETURN to this earth and set up the KINGDOM OF YEHOVAH GOD! Asserts Ivor C. Fletcher

When the Roman or Latin form of Christianity became the *state religion* of the empire under Constantine, men saw less need for the return of Christ and sought to establish their own *ecclesiastical empire*, with ROME, not Jerusalem, as its headquarters.

The "little flock" which constituted the true Church of God were now classified as "heretics" by Constantine's "Christian" empire and true to prophecy (Dan. 12:7, Rev. 12) were forced to flee into the wilderness or die as martyrs for their faith (***The Incredible History of God's True Church***, Triumph Publishing Co. Altadena, CA. 1984. P. 131).

"The primary person," expounds Ernest Martin, "who was responsible for establishing the syncretic development of MIXING PAGANISM INTO CHRISTIANITY, so the New Testament and the early Christian scholars inform us, was *Simon Magus*. It took about 300 years for the syncretic principles of Simon Magus to make an impact on orthodox Christianity. But, with Constantine the Great, the seeds of the syncretism fell on fertile ground. From then on, *idolatry and pagan doctrines and customs began to enter mainline Christianity*" (***The People That History Forgot***, p. 159).

During the time of Constantine we find the real COMPLETION of the Babylonian and the diasporaic Samaritan movements to Rome and to Italy. The religion, philosophy and even the government of old Babylon had been transferred to Rome and, with an acceptance of the Constantine form of Christianity (the type which introduced *Babylonian idolatry and pagan teachings* into the bosom of the Christian Church), the **ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH** had now arisen which was to govern the future western world — a powerful, *paganized* force which is still influencing us today!

Those of YEHOVAH's people who continued to keep His commandments were now forced to flee for their very lives into remote, wilderness areas of Europe, hopefully beyond the reach of their Catholic persecutors. "The new state religion, A BIZARRE BLEND OF CHRISTIANITY AND PAGANISM, now began to dominate Europe for over **a thousand years**, leaving the true Church in 'a place prepared of God' (Rev. 12:6) — the remote mountains and valleys of central Europe" (***The Incredible History of God's True Church.***, p. 132).

During this 1,000 year period the Universal (Catholic) Church of SIMON MAGUS conducted a campaign of systematic SLAUGHTER against those who disagreed with the Papacy and the Babylonian rites it espoused. "One thinks immediately," writes Dave Hunt, "of the Inquisitions (Roman, Medieval, and Spanish) which for centuries held Europe in their terrible grip."

When all the numbers are added up, a number of historians have concluded that during the 1,000-year period the Catholic Church dominated Europe and areas of the New World, more than **50 MILLION PEOPLE** died at the hands of the Vatican's inquisitors and representatives — **50,000,000!!** This makes Adolf Hitler, Pol Pot, Idi Amin, Saddam Hussein and others RANK AMATEURS when it comes to mass murder! The Roman Catholic Church has been the greatest persecutor of both Jews and Christians the world has ever seen, and has martyred far more Christians than even pagan Rome or Islam. She has been exceeded only by Mao and Stalin — but they hardly claim to be acting in the Messiah's name! No wonder one of the first things the Messiah will set his hand to when he returns to this earth is to DESTROY the vipers nest of apostasy and murder centered in Rome — called by the apostle John "**Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth**" (Revelation 17:5).

Baron Alfred Porcelli wrote that the very title which the Pope bears — "**Vicar of Christ**" — can only be turned into Greek as "*Antichristos*" — that is, the **Vice-christ, substitute Christ, or ANTICHRIST!** (***The Antichrist — His Portrait and History***, p. 12). So the popes claim a title that is the equivalent of the word coined by the apostle John! Just like the "antichrists" of when John wrote, the popes have DENIED YEHOVAH God and the Messiah by promoting the false doctrines they have inherited from Simon Magus and his followers. They have even DARED to *oppose* the Messiah by teaching things that are the *exact opposite* of what Yeshua and the apostles taught!

The Roman Catholic Church has inherited all the doctrines of the Synagogue of Satan mentioned in the book of Revelation and is, therefore, the **SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN** in today's world — along with all her "daughter" churches that expound similar doctrines.

Recognizing the Synagogue of Satan

Let us recapitulate, then. What are the identifying "marks" of the synagogue of Satan?

1. The **Synagogue of Satan** says that: "Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honoured with **equal** sentiments of devotion and reverence" (*Catechism*, 82).

Tradition is a fine thing — unless it negates or contradicts the Word of YEHOVAH God. Yeshua the Messiah made *strong objection* to the religious Pharisees of his day for setting aside YEHOVAH's plain commands through their traditions, i.e., "making the word of God of *no effect* through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do" (Mark 7:13).

2. The **Synagogue of Satan** says that: "The task of interpreting the Word of God authentically has been entrusted **solely** to the Magisterium of the Church, that is, to the Pope and to the bishops in communion with him" (*Catechism*, 100).

The Magisterium of the Church of Rome — the Pope and the bishops — *cannot substitute* for the **spirit** of YEHOVAH God, which function is to interpret and teach the Word of YEHOVAH God to the individual believer. "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another helper, that it may abide with you forever....But the helper, the holy spirit, which the Father will send in my name, it will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you" (John 14:16, 26). Beware of anyone who substitutes another teacher for the holy spirit of YEHOVAH God — for that teacher will lead you into another gospel!

3. The **Synagogue of Satan** says that: "The Lord made Simon alone, whom he named Peter, the "rock" of his Church. He gave him the keys of his Church and instituted him **shepherd of the whole flock**" (*Catechism*, 881).

Roman Catholics are taught that Peter was given such a superior position that the entire church was built upon him! The scripture that is used in an attempt to support this claim is Matthew 16:18: "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it." If we take this verse in its setting, however, we can clearly see that the church was NOT built on Peter, but on the MESSIAH.

In the verses just before, the Messiah asked the disciples who men were saying that he was. Some said he was John the Baptist, some Elijah; others thought he was Jeremiah or one of the prophets. Then Yeshua asked: "But who do you say that I am?" To this Peter replied: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Then it was that Yeshua said, "you are Peter (*petros* — a stone, a rock), and on this rock (*petra* — a mass of rock — the great foundation rock of *truth* that Peter had just expressed) I will build my church." The rock upon which the **true** church was to be built was connected with Peter's *statement* — "You are the Christ" — and so the **true** foundation upon which the church was built was **the Messiah himself** — NOT Peter! The church was built on the Messiah. He is the true foundation and there is no other foundation — see I Corinthians 3:11.

According to Ralph Woodrow —

Another mixture of scripture with paganism occurred at Rome and involved "keys." For almost 1,000 years the people of Rome had believed in the mystic keys of the *pagan* god Janus and the goddess Cybele....When the emperor claimed to be the successor of the "gods" and the Supreme Pontiff of the mysteries, the keys came to be symbols of his authority. Later, when the bishop of Rome became the

Pontifex Maximus in about 378, he automatically became the possessor of the mystic keys. This **gained recognition for the pope from the pagans** and, again, there was the opportunity to mix Peter into the story. Had not Christ said to Peter, "I will give unto thee the **keys** of the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 16:19)? It was not until 431, however, that the pope *publicly claimed that the keys he possessed were the keys of authority given to the apostle Peter...*

The **key** given to Peter (and to all the other disciples) *represented the message of the gospel* whereby people could enter the kingdom of God (***Babylon Mystery Religion: Ancient and Modern***, pp. 82-83).

4. The **Synagogue of Satan** says that: "Christ endowed the Church's shepherds with the charism of **infallibility in matters of faith and morals**" (***Catechism***, 890).

This papal claim of infallible governing of the "faith and morals" of the church befits an **antichrist**, because *only* the Messiah can rightfully say, "**All** authority has been given *to me* in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18); therefore Yeshua the Messiah — as the head of the church — **alone** can claim infallibility — NOT the Pope!

People naturally questioned how infallibility could be linked with the papal office when some of the popes had set *abominable examples* in morals and integrity! Knowing the history of the popes, several Catholic bishops themselves *opposed* making papal infallibility a dogma. When we consider the morals of past popes and the hundreds of times and ways that they have contradicted each other, we can understand how the idea of papal infallibility is a difficult thing for many people to swallow. "Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the **Antichrist** is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour" (I John 2:18).

5. The **Synagogue of Satan** says: "That is what the dogma of the **Immaculate Conception** confesses, as Pope Pius IX proclaimed in 1854: The most Blessed Virgin Mary was, from the first moment of her conception, by singular grace and privilege of almighty God and by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Saviour of the human race, preserved **immune from all stain of original sin**" (***Catechism***, 491).

Attempts to exalt Mary to a glorified position within Catholicism can be seen in the doctrine of the "immaculate conception." This doctrine was pronounced and defined by Pius IX in 1854 — that Mary, the mother of the Messiah, "in the first instant of her conception...was preserved exempt from all stain of original sin." It would seem that this teaching is just a further effort to make Mary more closely resemble the *goddess of paganism!* In the old myths the goddess was also believed to have had a supernatural conception! The stories varied, but all told of supernatural happenings in connection with her entrance into the world, that she was superior to ordinary mortals, that she was *divine*. Little by little, so that the teachings about Mary would not appear inferior to those of the mother goddess, it was necessary to teach that Mary's entrance into this world involved a supernatural element as well!

To claim that Mary was "preserved immune from all stain of original sin" (***Catechism***, 491), demands that we must *set aside* scriptures that affirm that "**all** we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, **every one**, to his own way" (Isaiah 53:6). While Mary was a godly and virtuous woman, she was as much a **human** as any other member of the human race! "**All** have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23), the **ONLY EXCEPTION** being Yeshua the Messiah himself. Although Pope Pius IX *claimed* the dogma of the Immaculate Conception to be scripture, Mary herself said he is dead wrong! Like everyone else, Mary needed a savior and plainly admitted this when she said: "And my spirit has rejoiced in God **my SAVIOR**" (Luke 1:47). This made her, at some time in her life, a sinner; and thus, **NOT** "preserved immune from all stain of original sin." "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his Word is not in us" (I John 1:10).

6. The **Synagogue of Satan** says that: "The seventh ecumenical council at Nicaea (787 A.D.) justified against the iconoclast the veneration of

The icons of Roman Catholicism are expressly forbidden in the Ten Commandments — notice Exodus 20:4-5:

You shall not make for yourself *any carved image, or any likeness* of anything that is in heaven above or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; *you shall not bow down to them nor serve them*. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me...

The papal veneration of icons is the giving of reverence, adoration, and respect that rightly belongs to the Almighty. And, YEHOVAH God is adamant about His refusal to give His glory to the images and relics of Catholicism. "I am YEHOVAH: that is My Name: and My Glory will I **NOT** give to another, *neither My Praise to graven images*" (Isaiah 42:8).

Dr. Farrar, in his monumental book, *The Life of Christ as Represented in Art*, states on pages 5 and 6 that the early Christians of all ranks regarded the painting or representation of the Messiah as *profanity* and as an *act of irreverence*. There is ample evidence to show that they took the same stand as the Jews as far as art was concerned. They needed no images or pictures to remind them of Yeshua or the Father. Yeshua had said that those who worship him must do so "in spirit and in truth." The **only mediator** between man and the Father is Yeshua — there is *no need* of intermediate pictures or images.

Writes Ernest L. Martin —

This early abhorrence for images and pictures of the Father or Yeshua was so indelibly planted upon the minds of early Christians that for over 300 years after the death of the apostles, there was *no official representation of deity made*...the vast majority of professing Christians, Catholics or otherwise, **refrained from portraying anything connected with Yeshua** until about the fourth century (*Is It Wrong to Have Pictures of Yeshua the Messiah?*, p. 2).

To disobey YEHOVAH God in this matter will bring about the destruction of not only the idols concerned, but Babylon herself! "Declare among the nations, proclaim, and set up a standard; proclaim, and do not conceal it — say, 'Babylon is taken, Bel is shamed. Merodach is broken in pieces; *her idols are humiliated, her images are broken in pieces*'" (Jeremiah 50:2).

7. The **Synagogue of Satan** says: "One who desires reconciliation with God and with the Church, **must confess to a priest** all the unconfessed grave sins he remembers after having carefully examined his conscience" (*Catechism*, 1493).

The instruction within the Bible is to make confession to the Offended Party, and *all sin is against YEHOVAH God!* "Against You, **You only**, have I sinned, and done evil in Your sight — that You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge" (Psalm 51:4). For this reason we are enjoined to make confession to YEHOVAH God for the forgiveness of sins. "If we confess our sins, He [YEHOVAH God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9). Certainly, man ought to be given confession — *if he is the party that has been offended*. "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault **between you and him alone**. If he hears you, you have gained your brother" (Matthew 18:15). Confessing your sins to one another is warranted, if the offended party is to return to healing prayer. "*Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much*" (James 5:16).

The phrase "must confess to a priest" (*Catechism*, 1493) of the Roman Catholic Church viciously rips at the heart of true Christianity because Yeshua the Messiah is **ALONE** our High Priest and Mediator. "For there is ONE GOD and ONE MEDIATOR between God and men, the **MAN**

Christ Jesus" (I Timothy 2:5). Any who would attempt to *supplant* the Messiah's role as our Mediator is "Against Christ" — which would make them an **antichrist**. "Even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour" (I John 2:18). Yeshua the Messiah ALONE is our Mediator. "Who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us" (Romans 8:34). If YEHOVAH God accepts our confession through the mediation of Yeshua the Messiah, then we are truly received by YEHOVAH — regardless of priests who may still reject us. "To the praise of the glory of His grace, by which *He has made us accepted* in the Beloved" (Ephesians 1:6).

"One who desires to obtain *reconciliation* with God and with the Church" (**Catechism**, 1493) implies that the reconciliation is a desirable thing — but this belies the truth! **For the true Christian reconciliation with the Roman Catholic Church is unwanted and abhorred.** "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. **For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?"** (II Corinthians 6:14). It is far better that we make our confession to YEHOVAH God, for only then will our peace be great. "And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7).

Most people read about the "synagogue of Satan," in the Scriptures, and assume that this must be some small, weird, tiny sect of mischievous false Christians — or a renegade sect of Jews. However, contrary to first impressions, the "synagogue of Satan" is the great, world-encompassing Judeo-Christian religious system that dominates the world! It has grown from a tiny "seed" in the first century to become the **ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**, the great visible harlot of Revelation 17 and all her daughter churches — all the roots, branches, mainstream and splinter-groups, that have come out of her down through the ages! Truly, as John recorded, Satan the devil has deceived the entire world (Rev. 12:9).

What about you? Are you still deceived?

If we are truly converted Christians, then in YEHOVAH's sight we are "true Jews." A true Jew does not deny either the laws and commandments of YEHOVAH God, the Torah, nor does it deny the Messiah himself! But the "synagogue of Satan" both DENIES the Messiah, and the Laws of YEHOVAH God!

The "synagogue of Satan," literally fills the earth today, pretending to be "Christian," or "Jewish," pretending to teach the TRUTH of YEHOVAH God and the way of salvation. They are mostly sincere — but they have been deceived!

But very soon, those who belong to it will be brought to repentance. And at that time they will worship before the feet of those who became true followers of the Messiah, in this age. As the Messiah told the Philadelphia Church, "Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are [true] Jews, but are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and *worship before thy feet*, and to know that I have loved thee" (Rev. 3:9).

The day is coming when YEHOVAH God Himself will show who are those who truly serve and worship Him, in truth, and who are the deceived, deluded, misinformed impostors and pretenders.

— Written, in the main, by John D. Keyser.