

## Who Is The False Prophet Of Revelation? (#2)

Ezra 7:11-12

Revelation 19:19-20

Revelation 13:11

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Rev. Greg L. Price

The correct or incorrect interpretation of one verse in the Bible can make the difference between a faithful Church and a harlot Church. Such is the case as we shall see this Lord's Day. The apostle Peter (in 2 Peter 3:16) speaks of unlearned and unstable teachers within the professing Church, who twist the Scripture into shapes and forms to suit their own views and personal tastes. And Peter says they will do so to their own destruction. Let us, therefore, be ever vigilant and watchful over our own hearts that we earnestly and sincerely seek to discover the meaning of Scripture in prayerful dependence upon the Holy Spirit of God as He speaks throughout Scripture (comparing Scripture with Scripture). The question we should each one ask ourselves is this: Do I want to know, what God is saying in Scripture; or rather, do I want to know, what I want God to be saying in Scripture?

This Lord's Day we continue in our study to examine from the Book of Revelation, Who is the False Prophet? We continue our focus upon the main point begun in the previous sermon from Revelation 13:11: (1) A Consideration of the Description of the Second Beast ("and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon" Revelation 13:11); and (2) The Response of the False Prophet (i.e. the Papal Church of Rome) to the Truth of Scripture.

### **I. Let Us Consider The Description Of The Second Beast ("and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon" Revelation 13:11).**

A. Having considered in the previous sermon that the Holy Spirit

clearly distinguishes the first Beast as a civil Beast from the second Beast as a religious Beast (in Revelation 13), and that the second religious Beast is a Hypocrite Church that deceives the world with its two horns like a lamb (i.e. the Papal Church of Rome), we now turn today to another characteristic of this second religious Beast (or False Prophet according to Revelation 19:20).

B. We note concerning this second religious Beast with two horns like a lamb this next characteristic: “and he spake as a dragon” (Revelation 13:11).

1. This second religious Beast is both a **Deceiver** in John’s vision, who pretends to be a lamb like Christ, but is really a Beast that destroys the faithful witnesses of Christ; but this second religious Beast is also a **Liar** in John’s vision who speaks like a dragon. The Dragon in the Book of Revelation is the symbol used for Satan himself (Revelation 12:9; Revelation 20:2). And one of the chief characteristics that we learn from the lips of Christ concerning Satan (i.e. the Devil) is mentioned in John 8:44. Satan is a liar. He claims to speak the truth, but he actually lies concerning the truth. Whereas it is impossible for Christ to lie (because He is God in the flesh) according to Titus 1:2, one of the chief characteristics of Satan is that he is a liar. Nothing could be more antithetical: Christ the True Prophet vs. Satan the False Prophet.

a. God has a lot to say about false prophets. In fact, a constant warning throughout Scripture is to be watchful for false prophets, and to test the claims of those who say they are Christ’s teachers, ministers, and prophets (Deuteronomy 13:1-3; Ezekiel 13:9; Matthew 7:15-16,21-23; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15; 1 John 4:1). It is doctrine and life of teachers, ministers, and prophets that are the two primary tests to hold up to the light of Scripture (Isaiah 8:20; Acts 17:11; 2 Timothy 3:1-5,16-17).

b. The Papal Church of Rome declares itself to be a true

Prophet, but as the Book of Revelation makes clear, it is really the False Prophet. For this lamb-like Beast/False Prophet declares that it alone has the authority from Christ to speak infallibly on behalf of Christ. And from where does the Papal Church of Rome claim that this authority to speak infallibly on behalf of Christ comes? As the False Prophet, the Papal Church of Rome claims that authority to teach infallibly for Christ comes from Christ Himself (just as one would expect a False Prophet to claim—what false prophet is going to declare that he speaks on behalf of Satan?). This False Prophet (the Papal Church of Rome) even appeals to Scripture (in Matthew 16:18), but as we shall see, such an appeal is a lie.

C. I would submit that the most foundational lie of this False Prophet (that appears in vision as a lamb-like Beast and yet speaks as a lying dragon) is the lie that Christ made Peter (and all Peter's alleged Papal successors) the rock upon which the true Church is built. For from this lie has come all of the alleged authority of the Papal Antichrist to usurp the place of Christ, by seating himself in the Church of Christ and declaring himself to be the head of the Visible Church on earth (2 Thessalonians 2:4). From this blasphemous teaching has proceeded corrupt doctrine, unfaithful worship, tyranny in church government, and bloody persecution of the faithful witnesses of Christ. Why? Because this False Prophet claims it cannot err from the truth, for it has Christ's infallible authority to teach and lead Christ's Church upon earth. Listen to the perverse teaching of Rome from one of her own catechisms (*A New Catechism Of The Catholic Faith*, which has the imprimatur of the Romish Church): Read Questions 19-25 (pp. 26-27). Dear ones, it is a lie that Christ made Peter the head of the Church upon whom the Church would be built, as a faithful and true interpretation of Matthew 16:18 will demonstrate.

D. Turn with me to Matthew 16:18 at this time as we seek to

understand upon whom the Church is built. Let's consider the context.

1. In Matthew 16:13, Christ "asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am." The disciples collectively respond to Christ's question put to them in Matthew 16:14: "And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets." But the Lord then narrows the question in the next verse, and asks the disciples collectively, "But whom say ye that I am" (Matthew 16:15)? To which Peter responds on behalf of the whole group, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). The Lord then explains that such a true testimony of faith concerning His eternal Sonship and His Divine work as the anointed Prophet, Priest, and King is certainly the work of God's free grace in Peter's life and not the work of mere human wisdom and knowledge (Matthew 16:17). Now we come to the words of Christ which the Papal Church of Rome (as the False Prophet) perverts to its own destruction.

2. Christ now directs His words to Peter in the hearing of all the disciples, "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18). Peter had taken the lead in making this faithful testimony on behalf of the disciples. Now the Lord speaks directly to Peter: "Thou art Peter." The Lord had previously given to Peter this name (Peter) as a second name, Simon being his birth name (John 1:42). From comparing John 1:42 with Matthew 16:18, we see that *Petros* is the Greek equivalent of the Aramaic *Cephas*, and means "a stone".

a. I submit to you that the Lord does not refer here to Peter as a stone in order to identify him with the Rock upon which the Church will be built (for the rock upon which the Church of Christ will be built is *Petra* in the feminine gender, not *Petros* in the masculine gender—these are two distinct Greek words and in different genders). Now no one builds a house (let alone a worldwide Church) upon a stone

(i.e. a *petros*) as a foundation, but as we shall see one does build a house upon a rock (i.e. a *petra* as we see in Matthew 7:24-25).

b. You see, rather than identifying Peter with the Rock upon which the Church will be built, there is a contrast between Peter (*petros*, the stone) and Christ (*petra*, the bedrock). For Christ does NOT say, “Thou art *Petros*, and upon this *Petros* I will build my church.” No, to the contrary, the Lord Jesus contrasts Peter (*Petros*) with the Rock (*Petra*), when He declares, “Thou art *Petros*, and upon this *Petra* I will build my church” (perhaps Christ was even pointing in some way to Himself as He spoke these words). But it is clear that Christ moves from speaking to Peter in the second person to speaking of the *Petra* as a distinct and separate person.

3. After having identified Peter (*Petros*) as the stone, the Lord promises, “and upon this rock I will build my church.”

a. Upon what rock? I submit it is upon Christ that Christ will build His church. For the Lord intentionally moves from Peter (or *Petros* in the masculine gender), as a stone, to *Petra* (in the feminine gender), the bedrock (and it is no objection that *petra* is in the feminine gender and yet refers to Christ, for likewise in John 15:1 Christ calls Himself the “vine”, and yet the Greek word for vine [*ampelos*] is in the feminine gender). If Christ had intended Peter to be the one upon whom the church was to be built, He would naturally have said (as indicated above, “Thou are *Petros* (in the masculine gender), and upon this *Petros* (in the masculine gender) I will build my church.” But Christ deliberately doesn’t say that. The Lord alters both the word itself and the gender of the word, so as to remove any confusion that should arise (anticipating that the False Prophet or Papal Church of Rome would deceive billions of spiritually deaf people into believing that the Church was to be built upon Peter and his alleged Papal successors). I submit that Christ is the *Petra* (the bedrock) upon which the Church is built, and not Peter. Consider the following passages in which the Greek word *petra* is used of God/Christ:

**2 Samuel 22:2** in the Greek Septuagint (“The Lord is my rock [*petra*]”); **Romans 9:33** (Christ is called “a rock [*petra*] of offence”); **1 Corinthians 10:4** (“For they drank of that spiritual Rock [*petra*] that followed them: and that Rock [*petra*] was Christ”); **1 Peter 2:8** (Even Peter himself calls Christ “a rock [*petra*] of offence”).

b. Thus, as we consider Matthew 16:18, the Lord distinguishes Himself from Peter, and identifies Himself as the Rock upon which the Church is built. Just as He said, “Destroy **this** temple, and in three days I will raise it up” (John 2:19), meaning the temple of His own body, so likewise He says here, “and upon **this** rock I will build my Church” meaning Himself.

c. Dear ones, with that one truth established (i.e. that Christ is the Rock upon which the Church would be built, and not Peter), the Roman system crumbles; for the basis of the authority claimed by Rome depends upon the alleged apostolic succession from Peter (as head of the Visible Church upon earth) to his alleged successor and so forth. Without Peter as the rock upon which the Church is built, the False Prophet and Papal Church of Rome is shown to be the arch usurper of Christ’s authority and rights—he is unmasked to be the Antichrist of Scripture. Dear ones, only Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, is a firm and secure foundation upon which the Church is built. Only His person, work, and righteousness is sufficient to save sinful frail men, women, and children from the fires of hell. All other ground is sinking sand (Matthew 7:24-27).

## **II. Objections From the False Prophet (i.e. the Papal Church of Rome) to the Truth of Scripture.**

A. The False Prophet will certainly not remain silent (even in the face of the truth of Christ presented above). The chief objections raised by the False Prophet (i.e. the Papal Church of Rome which appears in

vision as the second Beast that has two horns like a lamb and speaks as a lying dragon) are the following.

1. Christ spoke in Aramaic (which was the *lingua franca* or common second language spoken among the diverse peoples of Palestine in the first century). Moreover, the Gospel of Matthew was likely written in its original form in Aramaic and then translated into Greek. This is alleged to be important because in Aramaic it is claimed that there was only one word available that might be used to translate the two different Greek words (*petros* and *petra*): *kepha* (or *cephas*, which is the Aramaic equivalent of *petros* in Greek according to John 1:42). Thus, as Jesus allegedly spoke to Peter in Aramaic in Matthew 16:18 (or as Matthew 16:18 was allegedly written in Aramaic before being translated into Greek), the words Christ used would have been indistinguishable from one another: “Thou art Kepha (Cephas), and upon this Kepha (Cephas) I will build my church.” This being the case, the Greek translation using two different words (*petros* and *petra*) must mean that these two Greek words mean the same thing and are used interchangeably (they are a mere stylistic change carrying no difference in meaning). In fact, the False Prophet of Rome also indicates that early Church Fathers indicate that Matthew’s Gospel was originally written in the dialect of the Hebrew people. Now to my response to these objections.

a. It is far from a settled fact that Aramaic was the *lingua franca* used throughout Palestine in the first century. Recent archeological discoveries among ossuaries in Palestine from the first century (ossuaries were receptacles in which the bones of the dead were buried), as well as among papyrus documents found in the caves around the Dead Sea (containing ordinary items of the common people like receipts and contracts) reveal that Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic were all used among the common people in Palestine. Thus, recent archeological discoveries reveal that the *lingua franca* of first century Palestine was not Aramaic, but rather that all three languages (Greek, Hebrew, and

Aramaic) were used and spoken by the common people of Palestine of the first century (Robert L. Thomas and Stanley N. Gundry, *A Harmony of the Gospels*, pp. 309-312). Also remember that even Latin was apparently spoken in Palestine as we see from the languages in which Christ's inscription upon the cross was written: Greek, Hebrew, and Latin (Luke 23:38; John 19:20).

b. Evidence for the use of Greek as a common spoken and written language among the ordinary people of Palestine in the first century is found in the Gospel accounts themselves. The Gospel writers (including Matthew) quote liberally from the Old Testament using the Greek Septuagint over the Hebrew text. The New Testament writers (under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit) used the Greek Septuagint over the Hebrew text in 90% of the cases where the Old Testament is quoted. In one study it is noted that Matthew (which is usually cited to be that Gospel that was primarily intended for Palestinian Jews) cites the Greek Septuagint over the Hebrew text (when quoting an Old Testament passage) 45 out of 54 times (or 83.3%), <http://mysite.verizon.net/rgjones3/Septuagint/spexecsum.htm>. This demonstrates the prevalent use of the Greek language even within Palestine.

c. Even apologists for the Papal Church of Rome (*Catholic Answers Online*) recognize this to be the case. For they say,

Of the places where the New Testament quotes the Old, the great majority is from the Septuagint version. Protestant authors Archer and Chirichigno list 340 places where the New Testament cites the Septuagint but only 33 places where it cites from the Masoretic Text rather than the Septuagint (G. Archer and G. C. Chirichigno, *Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament: A Complete Survey*, 25-32).

But, while the New Testament authors quoted the LXX frequently, it does not necessarily follow that Christ did. We know for certain that Jesus quoted the Hebrew Old Testament at times, since he read from the scrolls in the synagogue. But Jesus could have only quoted from the Hebrew, and the New Testament authors later used the Greek translation to record the fact.

**Either way, it doesn't matter, because the Greek New Testament is inspired, and the Holy Spirit chose to have the sacred authors repeatedly cite the LXX. It doesn't really matter if**



Jesus was quoting Scripture in Hebrew or Aramaic if the Holy Spirit chooses to use the Septuagint when translating his words into Greek. The importance of the Septuagint is demonstrated no matter which of these is the case.

<http://www.catholic.com/quickquestions/in-which-passages-does-jesus-quote-the-septuagint-and-where-does-the-new-testament-al>.

d. As to the early Church Fathers who mention that Matthew originally penned his Gospel in Aramaic, it is altogether unclear what it means that “Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect” (Irenaeus, Against Heresies, 3.1.1), for as just noted above from recent archeological discoveries, the dialect of the Hebrews living in first century Palestine may have been Greek, Hebrew, or Aramaic. Most importantly, there is no transcriptional evidence at all of an original Gospel of Matthew written in Aramaic or Hebrew; and because the Holy Spirit has promised to preserve every jot and tittle of God’s Word (Matthew 5:18), we can be assured that if the Gospel of Matthew was originally written in Aramaic or Hebrew (and especially if it differed from the Greek text) that the Holy Spirit would have preserved a record of such for His people. An original Aramaic Gospel of Matthew is, therefore, speculative theory without any existing manuscript testimony. However, dear ones, what we do have is the clear testimony of the Holy Spirit as found in the Greek text of Matthew 16:18, where two different Greek words are used for Peter (*petros*) and for Christ (*petra*), upon whom the Church is to be built.

e. For if Christ uttered Matthew 16:18 in Aramaic, and if He meant to say that Peter was the rock upon which the Church would be built, why didn’t Matthew simply use the same Aramaic words at that point instead of two different Greek words? “Thou art Cephias (*kepha* in Aramaic), and upon this Cephias (*kepha* in Aramaic), I will build my church.” For we find “Cephias” used a number of times in the New Testament (John 1:42; 1 Corinthians 1:12; 3:22; 9:5; 15:5; Galatians 2:9). Moreover, the Aramaic language is directly used in the Gospels (Matthew 27:46). Obviously, had the Holy Spirit wanted to make clear that the Greek words, *petros* and *petra*, meant the same thing and came from the

exact same Aramaic word (*kepha* or Cephas), that could have been easily done.

f. In fact, contrary to the claim of the apologists of the False Prophet of Rome, there is a separate and distinct Aramaic word for rock (it is *shua*), which is used in the ancient translation of the Syriac Peshitta in Matthew 7:24-25 (and elsewhere in Matthew 13:5,20; Mark 4:5,16; Luke 6:48 [2x]; Luke 8:6,13; Acts 27:29). Thus, contrary to the False Prophet, if Christ had hypothetically spoken in Aramaic to Peter rather than in Greek, He still might have used two different Aramaic words to distinguish Peter (*kepha* a stone) from Christ (*shua*, a rock sufficient to be a foundation for a house). “Thou are *kepha* (Cephas) and upon this *shua* (bedrock), I will build my church.”

g. The bottom line is this: the fact that the Holy Spirit chose to use two different Greek words that have two different genders to represent Peter (*petros*) and Christ (*petra*) in Matthew 16:18, and the fact that *petros* is never used to refer to God or to Christ in the Old or New Testaments (whereas *petra* is used of both God and Christ in the Old and New Testaments) makes it very clear that the Holy Spirit did not say or intend to say that upon Peter (*petros*, a stone) the Church would be built, but rather upon Christ (*petra*, the bedrock) the Church would be built.

2. Finally, the False Prophet of Rome also seeks to establish the headship of Peter (and his alleged successors) over the Church of Christ from the words of Christ in Matthew 16:19, where it is claimed that Christ gave the keys of the kingdom (to teach and to discipline) only to Peter and his alleged successors. But this is not true, for though Christ’s words here in Matthew 16:19 were particularly addressed to Peter (as Christ was speaking to Peter as representing the twelve apostles), clearly the keys are not given only to Peter but equally to all of the apostles, as is evident from Matthew 18:18 (John 20:22-23). Moreover, it would appear that James (the brother of Christ) was the

moderator/presiding officer at the Synod that met in Jerusalem, even though both Peter and Paul addressed the Synod (Acts 15:19). Also, when divisions occurred in Corinth in following different leaders in the Church (some following Paul, some Apollos, and others Cephas [Peter]), Paul does not say that Peter has supremacy and is the universal head of the Visible Church upon earth (that is never stated anywhere in Scripture), but rather says that they are not to be implicit followers of men, but of Christ (1 Corinthians 3:21-23). In fact, Peter was not considered by Paul to be the universal head of the Visible Church upon earth, for Paul says that to himself (Paul) was committed by Christ the Gospel to the uncircumcised Gentiles and to Peter was committed by Christ the Gospel to the circumcised Jews (Galatians 2:6-8). And finally Peter (Cephas) is not the supreme pillar of the Universal Church, but he rather shares a place of leadership in the Jewish Church along with James (the brother of Christ) and with John (Galatians 2:9—note that it is “pillars” in the plural and not “pillar in the singular).

3. The conclusion then is that the False Prophet (i.e. the Papal Church of Rome) has blasphemously introduced Peter’s headship over the Universal Church and upon whom Christ would build His Church as a diabolical means in which this False Prophet speaks as the dragon (Satan) in arrogating to itself the infallibility of Christ and in usurping the headship of Christ over His Church (whether upon the earth or in heaven, Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Colossians 1:18; 2:10,19). By this first blasphemous lie of the False Prophet (who speaks as the dragon) is introduced all heresy, idolatry, and blasphemy—for who can question the infallibility of the Papal Church of Rome when it claims the sole possession of Christ’s authority given by Christ to Peter (and his alleged successors)?

In conclusion, dear ones, Christ intentionally and deliberately reminds Peter (and everyone who has ears to hear since that time) that Peter is

yet only a stone and not the Rock upon which the Church is built. Peter is a *petros* (or stone) hewn and cut out of the *petra* (or bedrock) upon which the Church is built. Peter is to remember this, for shortly hereafter he foolishly rebukes the Lord for speaking about His death and resurrection (Matthew 16:22), and the Lord severely rebukes Peter for standing in the way of His death and resurrection (Matthew 16:23). And because Peter had proudly deceived himself and proclaimed that he would never deny the Lord (and told the Lord so), he fell into that very sin and denied knowing the Lord three times. Peter is indeed a part of Christ, but he too (like every other child of God) is only a living stone that is built upon the foundation of Christ. Not only must Peter realize this, but we must realize it about Peter and about all ministers, so that we do not elevate any man to the place of Christ, and thereby play the role of Antichrist, the usurper of Christ's rights and authority within His Church.

Dear ones, although the deception of the False Prophet has deceived and deluded so much of the world (with approximately 1.2 billion members and many more admirers), we must realize that there is a false prophet in all of us by nature, who craves its own will, its own way, its own knowledge, its own supremacy over Christ. We must not only test the spirits of teachers, ministers, and prophets out there, but also within by the alone infallible standard of God's Word (in doctrine and life), lest we deceive ourselves and wrest the Scriptures to our own destruction. Christ alone (and the Gospel found in His inspired Scripture) is alone the Rock of our salvation—all other ground is sinking sand.

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