

# A Tyrant – Claiming to be Religious!

## Introduction

The majority of scholars generously identify the “*antichrist*” as a prophetic beast, a little horn, a prostitute, a vile person, and/or the King of the North. Rarely do expositors establish who that is. This creates a void, permitting the imagination into endless assumptions.

Several clues suggest that it is centered in Rome (Revelation 17:9 – seven hills), represents a *Church and State* (Revelation 17:3 – woman on beast), and is led by a single individual (Daniel 7:8, Revelation 13:5a – eyes, mouth, speaks).

Fascinating – the Seven Last Plagues are identified as being “*filled up*” with God’s wrath (Revelation 15:1 – KJV). “They are final because in them God’s anger is completed” (NET; cf. NIV, NAS). That occurs within a brief eschatological era near or at the end of 42 months.<sup>1</sup> Those plagues are described in Revelation 16 and come mainly because of a sign or “*mark*” the antichrist “*beast*” promotes (Revelation 14:9-11). God despises it! The following fact-filled chapter notes:

- “*Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke to me. ‘Come,’ he said, ‘I will show you the condemnation and punishment of the great prostitute who sits on many waters... So he carried me away in the Spirit to a wilderness, and there I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns*” (Revelation 17:1, 3 – NET) (She is sitting also on that beast.)
- Sequentially, those plagues had just occurred, finishing in Revelation 16. What follows in Revelation 17 is a commentary of what led up to God’s plague wrath. The antichrist “*woman*,” called “*Babylon*,” was destroyed during the seventh plague (16:19).
- This new narrative amplifies the storyline of that antichrist woman.<sup>2</sup>

Babylon is described as a prostitute (evil church), suggesting that she is alluring and seductive, trying to draw people away from Christ. “*Sitting*” connotes “sovereignty over” or “control over,”<sup>3</sup> the world (vs. 15). It is the era when this church becomes a world power, just like the beast in Revelation 13:3-4 and 17:2, where even the kings of the earth fornicate with her. (They bow to her religious, idolatrous, and economic allurements.<sup>4</sup>) These predictive messages are contextually in earth’s final “days.”

As this “*vial angel*” is talking to John, which appears to be a literal experience, John quickly goes into vision (17:3).

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<sup>1</sup> Stefanovic, Ranko; *Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Andrews University Press, Berrien Springs, MI; 2002), p. 515.

<sup>2</sup> Beale, G. K.; *The New International Greek Testament Commentary; The Book of Revelation* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1999), p. 847.

<sup>3</sup> Osborne, Grant R.; *Revelation* (Baker Book House; Grand Rapids, MI), p. 609.

<sup>4</sup> Beale, *op. cit.*, p. 846, 849.

1. He sees a scarlet-colored beast – the same beast that emerged out of the sea in 13:1. The latter does not describe its color, but both have seven heads and ten horns, with another dual characteristic through its *blasphemy*.
  - John notes that on this beast is a prostitute woman named Babylon (17:5).
  - This woman is addressed simply as “*Babylon*” in the second and third angels’ messages (14:8-11).
  - The doom of Babylon will come to its worshippers.
2. Slandering the name of God permeates the atmosphere of this narrative (13:4, 8, 14-15; 17:4), indicating that she sets herself up above God as the “god of this world.”<sup>5</sup>
3. This “religious” woman is worshiped (Revelation 13:4) and holds a cup filled with the impurities of her immorality (fornication) (Revelation 17:4).
4. Fearful – she is drunk with the blood of saints (17:6). She is associated with martyrdom.

In an overview, the leader of a false church (this harlot) has ruling power over its own nation (beast), plus earth’s inhabitants and leaders (17:15). It offers the world enticing falsehoods, which they imbibe from a cup she is holding. God has identified these *beliefs* as “*abominations*” – something He hates (Daniel 11:31, 12:11). This “church” or “religious organization” detests God’s true followers, the remnant of 12:17, those who have the faith of Jesus and who obey Him (13:12). The woman and the beast represent a *Church and State* coalition!

In a major reapplication that requires wisdom (the Holy Spirit’s guidance), often stressed in apocalyptic texts (Daniel 1:4, 17; 9:22; 11:33; 12:20),<sup>6</sup> seven heads are seven mountains that the woman sits on (17:9). This wisdom is also needed to avoid deception.<sup>7</sup>

These seven “*mountains*” are often referred to as part of ancient Rome, which was built on “seven hills.” During his reign, emperor Domitian commemorated a yearly festival called *Septimontium*, celebrating that seven-hilled city. The ruling power of this false church or religious organization is in Rome. Though expositors are hesitant to define these characteristics further, the symbolism insinuates the woman (Roman Catholic Church) and the beast (Vatican City State) when it has positioned itself as a world power (following 1929 through the *Lateran Treaties*).

In another major study, not discussed here, the present time represents the period of the “eighth” (17:10) (a sequence word). This is the final phase of the Vatican’s papal rule of its empire. 1929 is when the Catholic Church regained land – the Vatican City State. That is when it became, once again, a church and state, which had been lost in 1870.

Might this Roman Church, with the Vatican and its papal leaders, be moving toward such global control as prophecy suggests?

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<sup>5</sup> Osborne, *op. cit.*, p. 611.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Beale, *op. cit.*, p. 867.

## Papal Social Thinking

Pope Francis has been urging reforms within the United Nations (UN) through its Security Council. He observed that the Covid-19 pandemic and Russia's illegal invasion in Ukraine exposed the UN's weakness and limitations. Francis wants to create a **new** global economic system that promises food, health, and economic and social rights for all the world. Interesting!

- He urged the UN to find **new** ways to resolve conflict.
- He hurled these sharp words: "The UN is no longer fit for such 'new realities.'"
- He additionally criticized its weakness on climate issues.

Hans Despain of Yahoo said: "Pope Francis has become the eminent voice of the economically destitute and the environment."<sup>8</sup> Yet the implications of this Pope's socialistic thinking borders on authoritarianism, even coercion.

Analysis of the Catholic "Social Doctrine" clearly points to a Marxist philosophy-driven agenda. This was first published in 1891 in an encyclical, *Rerum Novarum* by Pope Leo XIII. It was then embellished by several subsequent popes. All of these documents require a central "government" to ensure those idealist objectives. The papacy hints repeatedly that the Holy See should be its head.

A Catholic non-profit organization, the *Lepanto Institute*, reported in September/October 2021 that the Vatican has a direct connection with the international Communist organization called the World Social Forum (WSF). It is a member of its governing body (The International Council), overseeing the WSF.

Pope Francis has applauded the work of this populist movement, complimenting: "You are a veritable invisible army" for world good.<sup>9</sup>

Commensurate with this posturing is the Vatican's international influence over "donor agencies," international politics, and finance, while professing a "moral" approach to reforms. Its affirming influence comes from its stunning alliances with ecclesiastical leaders, elites in civil and political societies.

On the basis of its charisma and position at the UN with many nations, this Church obtains certain privileges from the state, like tax exemptions, special subsidies, protection from disrespect, and even economic help with its myriad of secular jurisdictions. "Conservative Church officials act in concert, often with left-leaning businessmen and politicians, knowing their own interests coincide with those of that preeminent class.

This "Church controls the masses, using techniques that took centuries to develop. These have been classified by Vaillancourt as: (1) ecological power; (2) remunerative power; (3) coercive power; (4) social power; (5) legal power; (6) traditional power; (7) expert power; and (8) charismatic power....

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<sup>8</sup> <https://dailyheadlines.com/wait-what-did-the-pope-just-call-for-every-nation-to-turn-communist/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/pope-francis-celebrates-five-openly-marxist-organizations-you-area-veritable-invisible-army/>

**“... the Church is eminently qualified to overcome the resistance of any government on any issue, given sufficient time.**

“The Church is accurately described as a totalitarian international government.”<sup>10</sup>

Timothy Byrnes, Professor of Political Science at Colgate University, NY, notes: “The pope is an utterly unique actor in international relations. Acting in some ways like a state...” He enjoys formal diplomatic relations with over 180 countries across the globe. At the same time, he is the spiritual leader of the Catholic Church, containing over a billion members.

- He engages in international diplomacy through the *Holy See* (a legal entity made up of the Catholic Church plus the Vatican City State).
- The *Holy See* is recognized under international law as an entity unlike any other government.<sup>11</sup>

The pope is monarch of the Vatican City State, the world’s smallest country. As “head of state,” His voice joins other national leaders’ voices. Most global countries have ambassadors to the Holy See, and they, in turn, to the respected nations. Their representatives are called “apostolic nuncios.”

- The Holy See is seen as having “non-territorial sovereignty!” (Ponder that concept.)
- Any international leader does not ask to see a “king of the Vatican” but the head of the Catholic Church via the Holy See.

The Holy See uses its *moral authority* as an international diplomatic bridge.<sup>12</sup>

### **Sympathetic to a New World Order Agenda**

A coalition of powers has been central to the numerous ideals of *globalism*. From the League of Nations (1920) to the “Great Reset” (2020), established by The World Economic Forum, it has been assumed that “togetherness” can bring peace. However, many leaders have perceived the evolution of these entities as a sinister scheme to gain power and control over the world.

The papacy has chosen to often address individual global issues, suggesting its authority and dominance in each. Paramount is the issue of *climate change*.

Pope Francis noted in 2022: “Mother earth groans and begs us to stop our abuse” of creation. This referenced the September 1 “World Day of Prayer” for the “care of creation.” That culminated a month later with the feast of St. Francis of Assisi.

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<sup>10</sup> Mumford, Stephen D., DrPH; *Church and State*  
<https://churchandstate.org.uk/2015/11/vatican-power-over-governments/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/responses/the-enduring-power-of-the-papacy-pope-francis-and-international-relations>

<sup>12</sup> <https://theconversation.com/explainer-what-diplomatic-power-does-a-pope-really-have-47680>

Anticipating a UN “Climate Summit,” the pope said, “Let us pray that [this] may unite the human family in decisively addressing the twin crises of climate and biodiversity.”<sup>13</sup>

The Vatican’s *L’Osservatore Romano* newspaper gave a “fawning review” of John Kerry at the COP26 Climate Change Conference (2021) in Glasgow. He pled with attendees to establish rules to verify the commitments of individual countries “to resolve this emergency.”<sup>14</sup>

Identifying with this “manipulative” issue, the Vatican also promotes it as “an emergency”!

It has assumed a central place, reshaping not only industrial and agricultural systems but also adversely affecting the global human family, especially the poor and those living on the economic peripheries of our world.

Pope Francis’ targeted influence is toward poverty, climate change, migration, and peace – a political catchall.

He has emphasized: “Battling climate change is an imperative for Christians.”<sup>15</sup>

Bound to this is the non-existent issue of “carbon emissions.” He called for zero carbon emissions “as soon as possible”! Carbon neutrality means a “radical change in lifestyles.” He indicates that humanity is faced with a crisis in values, ethics, and spiritual failures contributed to by increased carbon emissions. Amazingly inaccurate and political!

Governments must facilitate a transition to clean energy. The world needs an “ecological conversion.”<sup>16</sup> From a religious persona to a cultural and social mentor, the papacy strengthens its international image and authority.

Jesuit Cardinal Michel Czerny said, “All new exploration and production of coal, oil, and gas must immediately end, and existing production of fossil fuels must be urgently phased out.” Resisting, Frans Timmermans, European Commission’s executive vice president, retorted: “Millions of Europeans may not be able to heat their homes this winter. It could lead to civil unrest.”<sup>17</sup> There was no Holy See reaction.

May 25, 2023, Francis re-emphasized: “The world must rapidly ditch fossil fuels and end ‘its senseless war on creation.’” The planet is “beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth.”<sup>18</sup>

Most everything of emergent concern regarding climate change and its devastating effects has never been substantiated!

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.breitbart.com/faith/2022/08/31/pope-francis-prays-u-n-climate-summit-will-unite-the-human-family/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/world/news/2021-05/pope-francis-meets-with-us-envoy-for-climate-john-kerry.html>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.breitbart.com/environment/2022/07/14/pope-francis-climate-change-become-emergency/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://cruxnow.com/vatican/2021/10/pope-francis-and-faith-leaders-call-for-net-zero-carbon-emissions-ahead-of-un-summit>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.wnd.com/2022/07/vatican-cardinal-calls-immediate-end-new-fossil-fuels/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/business/environment/enough-with-fossil-fuels-pope-says-latest-climate-appeal-2023-05-25/>

## **Drive: “Reset the World”**

Mid-2022 Francis warned of growing dangers to world peace, linking the cause to “nationalism” and “unbridled greed.” “This increases the risk” toward “contempt for human dignity and rights.”

- What? Pride in one’s country undermines human dignity?

He then linked (without any confirmation) a frequent “go to” argument to promote greater “fraternity”: helping “the lonely, the poor, the sick,” since persons in need “have a right to receive help and solidarity of the larger community.”

His logic was fragmented as to why world peace is threatened in this address to a Jewish group.<sup>19</sup>

Commensurate with this is his frequent appeal, “Let there be no more borders or walls to ‘hide behind’.” We must not “retreat into ‘isolationism’.”<sup>20</sup>

Highly critical of Pope Francis’ geopolitics has been Archbishop Vigano. He perceives that the pope is presiding over the “demolition” of the Catholic Church and even world stability! Why? Because he is a “zealous cooperater” of the globalists’ “Great Reset” agenda.

- This agenda, Vigano understands, ultimately replaces the global economics with a “totalitarian global state.”
- Interesting! That would be consistent with the earth and sea beast’s intention and purpose within Revelation 13.

Vigano perceives that this is a calculated strategy toward destruction of economies to usher in a world government that subdues all of humanity and limits individual freedom. Little does this archbishop realize that this will be successful and become a pathway to ultimately divide the world into two camps and be supportive of God’s redemptive design and the antichrist’s alluring schemes.<sup>21</sup>

A clarifying agenda of international papal power is coming into focus commensurate with predictive prophecy! The world is becoming enamored with its geopolitical leadership under a moral garb.

## **Flexing its Authoritarian Muscle**

In a message delivered to the global-linked *Paris Peace Forum*, attended by pro-abortion and pro-LGBT leaders, Pope Francis emphatically said that there was no return to normality. He indicated “normality” was marked by “injustice.”

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.breitbart.com/faith/2022/05/30/pope-francis-world-peace-is-threatened-nationalism-unbridled-greed/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.breitbart.com/environment/2021/10/29/pope-francis-let-there-be-no-more-borders-or-walls-to-hide-behind/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://nationalfile.com/video-archbishop-vigano-says-pope-francis-is-zealous-cooperater-in-great-reset-will-preside-over-demolition-of-catholic-church/>

- What injustice?
- When the world's elite leaders are not in central control because of "nationalism."

He went on: Humanity is facing a "historic moment" and a "choice." Francis added that "normality" meant that wealth and economic growth were isolated to a few (the resolution ploy to *tax the rich*). The earth was "trashed by myopic exploitation of resources, by pollution, and by throwaway consumerism."

- He called for an economic movement, especially among the Christian traditions, to change the world's leadership focus. Claiming the idealism of the Catholic social teaching with *other* religious traditions, an ecumenical coalition "would show that 'injustice and violence are not inevitable nor our destiny.'"
- Among many objectives, the *Paris Peace Forum* is devoted to "fighting fake news," "achieving equality between men and women," and reforming "capitalism."<sup>22</sup> Alarming!

The *Paris Peace Forum* was launched in 2018 in France. It "completes" the multilateral gathering for global governance issues. Economic and financial issues are dealt with at the *World Economic Forum* in Davos, Switzerland, and security issues at the *Munich Security Conference*. These three "global solution" agencies represent a coalition of thinkers sympathetic to a central world government.

Pope Francis has focused interest in these because all three are attended by world leaders, executives of international organizations, industry, and civil society leaders.<sup>23</sup> He is a contributor to each!

### Religious Geopolitics

For decades the Roman Church has worked with the concept of "religious diplomacy." The international activities of the Holy See have, therefore, brought the papacy international "moral" respect.

- The means of peace and recovering it has been a *public concern* it seeks to resolve.
- Unavoidable because of its "personality," included with these goals is always a parallel drive to preserve and advance its own Holy See interests.<sup>24</sup>

Analyzing a major Catholic site (EWTN) on church and state, PRI noticed that it recently resurrected the ever-present ideals of Rome by republishing a *past publication* that describes the contemporary thinking of Vatican leaders.<sup>25</sup> Its author is Mr. Eugene V. Rostow, U.S. Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs. It was given when addressing a conference on "The Vatican and Peace" at Boston College, March 27, 1968. What follows are selected segments of its coveted ideals recently republished:

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/no-return-to-normality-pope-francis-tells-pro-abortion-global-governance-conference/>

<sup>23</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paris\\_Peace\\_Forum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paris_Peace_Forum)

<sup>24</sup> <https://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/responses/vatican-peace-diplomacy-in-our-present-age-of-religious-diplomatic-competition>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/role-of-the-vatican-in-the-modern-world-4155>

“My subject today is fascinating because the activities of the Church touch almost every country and nearly every aspect of human life. The Vatican is not only the focal point of a vast spiritual and cultural community, and the visible symbol of a living system of ideas and values; it is a coordinating secretariat for a far-flung multinational bureaucracy. Any discussion of the Church’s international role needs to consider both its spiritual and temporal dimensions. In both the Vatican plays an important role in international political life.

“The Pope is likewise a temporal leader – the head of a government – whose officials are spread throughout almost every country of the globe. The Pope’s government is sovereign only in its tiny Vatican enclave.

“At any rate, although the ‘sovereign’ jurisdiction of the Papal government is minuscule, its direct political influence everywhere is considerable. It has unrivaled sources of information through church universities, schools, monasteries, convents, and other institutions. It deals directly with the most fundamental elements in the life of many communities.

“As the oldest continuing international organization in the world today, the Vatican has a well-deserved reputation for diplomatic expertise. It derives its additional diplomatic force from its attitude of benevolent neutrality, which neutrality is an important aspect in the Vatican’s diplomatic position and effectiveness. Although such a course sometimes arouses criticism, it does often allow the Vatican to play an important role in conciliation.

“The Papacy, in short, has made itself a major spokesman of the universal yearning for peace. It has used its moral prestige to mobilize public opinion in behalf of peace and its diplomatic apparatus to encourage conciliation.

“The Church, although it is a highly skilled international bureaucracy with impressive resources, derives its great influence, above all, from the great ideas which it embodies, shapes, and expresses – ideas which affect public opinion throughout the world.

“And so it is not surprising that the head of an institution with the immense spiritual vitality of the Catholic Church should exert his greatest influence as a teacher of the public conscience, as a mediator of the essential ideas which inform his Church. Thus the Pope, in today’s world, has become a powerful voice in the conscience of the West, reminding us all of the humane aspirations which dominate our civilization and determine its direction....

“Great as is the role of the Pope in the matters [sic] mentioned above, it is only a fraction of the real influence of the Roman Catholic Church in shaping the modern world. The Church is a living community, lay and ecclesiastical, dedicated to the moral and spiritual education of Catholics and indeed of modern Western society in general.”<sup>26</sup>

The Vatican media, via *AP News*, reported mid-2022 that the Vatican has a “very positive relationship” with the Biden administration.

Speaking with the Jesuit-run *America* magazine, Archbishop Paul Gallagher said that “our exchanges with the Biden administration are frequent, particularly through the U.S. embassy to the Holy See.”

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*



Gallagher also urged greater support for a revitalized United Nations in line with Pope Francis' well-known advocacy for multilateralism and reform.<sup>27</sup>

### **International Recognition**

Not long after Pope Francis was appointed to head the Roman Catholic Church and head the Vatican City State, *Time Magazine* named him "Person of the Year" (December of 2013). Nancy Gibbs, *Time* managing editor, said she has pulled the papacy out of the palace and into the streets.<sup>28</sup> That imagery expands among everyday citizens.

With quiet authority and diplomacy, the favorable leaning of global leaders toward Rome is increasing. A warning from its past administrative arrogance, however, echoes as a reminder to eye this authoritarian imagery with caution.

Within its secret goals is this spirit and drive: "The Pope's authority is unlimited, incalculable; ... it allows no appeal and is itself Sovereign ... No right can stand against him, no personal or corporate liberty; or as the [*Roman Catholic*] Canonists put it – 'The tribunal of God and of the pope is one and the same.'"<sup>29</sup>

A wise Bible expositor warned:

"Romanism as a system is no more in harmony with the gospel of Christ now than at any former period in her history. The Protestant churches are in great darkness, or they would discern the signs of the times. The Roman Church is far-reaching in her plans and modes of operation. She is employing every device to extend her influence and increase her power ***in preparation for a fierce and determined conflict to regain control of the world***, to re-establish persecution, and to undo all that Protestantism has done. Catholicism is gaining ground upon every side. See the increasing number of her churches and chapels in Protestant countries. Look at the popularity of her colleges and seminaries in America, so widely patronized by Protestants. Look at the growth of ritualism in England and the frequent defections to the ranks of the Catholics. These things should awaken the anxiety of all who prize the pure principles of the gospel."<sup>30</sup>

The antichrist, with his global power, is centered in Rome, operating under the sovereignty of the Holy See.

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<sup>27</sup> <https://www.breitbart.com/faith/2022/07/21/vatican-has-very-positive-relationship-with-biden-administration-top-official-says/>

<sup>28</sup> <https://poy.time.com/2013/12/11/person-of-the-year-pope-francis-the-peoples-pope/>

<sup>29</sup> von Dollinger, Ignaz; "A Letter Addressed to the Archbishop of Munich" 1871; as quoted in MacDougall, The Acton Newman Relations (Fordham University Press) pp. 119,120."

<sup>30</sup> White, Ellen G.; *The Great Controversy*, pp. 565-566) (emphasis added).