

The Church-part one

The Origin of the Church and its Hierarchy

It has been assumed that the “Christian Church” and its hierarchical authority originated with Jesus Christ, but that assumption is false. The originator of the church and its hierarchical system is none other than “...that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceives [4105, *to lead astray, cause to wander*] the whole world...” (Revelation 12:9).

The religion that the world recognizes as “Christianity” is the old Babylonian Mystery Religion. Just because a religion calls itself Christian does not mean that it is. You can call a wolf a lamb, but that does not change the fact that it is still a wolf. Jesus warned, “Beware of false prophets [5578, *one who falsely claims to speak by divine inspiration*], which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening [727, *an extortionist, robber, plunderer*] wolves” (Matthew 7:15).

The hierarchical church system was not established to worship God, but rather to bypass Him, and to put the people under the authority of the ecclesiastical government. The Babylonian Church has been used to pervert, and suppress the truth. The church with its hierarchical system is not the form of government that God wants His people to be ruled by.

What is a Church?

Words are how we communicate from one person to another, so it is vital that we understand the original intent of words. The origin of the word church, from *Webster’s New World Dictionary* (1968 edition), is “n. [ME, *chireche, chirche, kirke*; AS, *cirice, cyrice*; Late Gr. *kyriakon*, house of the Lord < *kyriake (doma)*, Lord’s (house) < *kyriakos*, belong to the Lord < *kyrios*, a master, ruler < *kyros*, supreme power].”

The definition of church is: “1. **a building set apart or consecrated for public worship.** 2. public worship, 3. all worshipers, 4. a particular sect. 5. **the ecclesiastical government, or its power as opposed to secular government.** 6. the profession of the clergy. 7. a group of worshipers.” The primary definition of church is a building that is set apart for religious worship. It is an institution that is operated by its ecclesiastical government.

The Greeks were worshipers of pagan gods; therefore the “house of the lord” is not a reference to the house of the Eternal God, but to pagan gods. A riot broke out in the city of Ephesus, “And when the town clerk had appeased the people, he said...the city of the Ephesians **is a worshiper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image that fell down from Jupiter**....you ought to be quiet, and do nothing rashly. For you have brought here these men, which are neither **robbers of churches** [2417, *robbers of temples*], nor yet blasphemers of your goddess” (Acts 19:35-37). The word “churches,” as used here, is referring to a pagan temple. The first church/pagan temple was the Tower of Babel.

The First Church

Sometime after Noah’s flood the people traveled to the land of Shinar (Babylon). The people said, “...let us build us a city and a **tower**, whose top may reach to heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered upon the face of the whole earth” (Genesis 11:4).

The people were not trying to build a tower that would literally reach into heaven. They used it to worship “...the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven...” (Deuteronomy 4:19). The tower was used to worship pagan gods.



Figure 1

The tower was a ziggurat, which is a terraced **pyramid** with a temple on top (fig. 1). The ziggurats were built specifically as places for the religious services. A pyramid, or triangle, is also the symbol of a hierarchy.

The primary definition of a church is “*a building set apart or consecrated for public worship.*” A church is also defined as “*the ecclesiastical government, or its power as opposed to secular government.*” Webster’s defines a hierarchy as: *1. a system of church government by priests or other clergy in graded ranks. 2. the group of officials in such a system. 3. a group of persons or things arranged in order of rank, grade, class, etc.* The Tower of Babel perfectly fits the definition of a church and its hierarchical ecclesiastical government perfectly.

The purpose for building the Church of Babel was to bypass God. The people had rejected God’s rule, and they had created their own gods to worship in **their church** in the place

of the true God. They had “...changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things....Who **changed the truth of God into a lie**, and worshiped and served the creature [2937, *creation*] more [3844, *rather*] than the Creator...” (Romans 1:25).

The church and its hierarchical ecclesiastical government originated in Babylon for the express purpose of bypassing the true God.

The Babylonian Religion is scattered throughout the Earth

When the Eternal God saw what the people were doing, He said, “...[L]et us confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech. So the LORD scattered them from there upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel [894, i.e. *Babylon, confusion*]...” (Genesis 11:7-9).

When the people were scattered throughout the earth, they took their Babylonian religion and its hierarchical system with them. The photos in figure 2 are of pyramids from various periods and locations around the world, which is proof that the Babylonian hierarchical religion was spread all around the earth.¹



Figure 2

All of the various religions of this world have their roots in Babylon. On the surface they may appear to be different from one another, but by having the same origin they have many similarities among them. A study of the world’s religions will reveal that all of them originated from the same location—the Fertile Crescent, aka Babylon.

The Babylonian symbol of the pyramid is found on so-called “Christian” churches in their church steeples, as shown in figure 3. The Catholic cathedrals were decorated with these obelisks, and her Protestant daughters followed their mother’s example. The pyramid is also visible inside of the churches through their hierarchical government



Figure 3

¹ Photo display from www.anewnaki.com

system. This marks these “Christian” churches as having a Babylonian origin.

Uniformity is the Strength of the Hierarchy

The strength of a hierarchy is dependent upon the people **it controls**. In order to control the people hierarchies, attempt, through various means, to create uniformity among the people. Hierarchies love yellow pencils, but they hate individuality because it is deemed a threat and it must be suppressed.

When the people built the Church of Babel, “...they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar” (Genesis 11:3). The stone that they bypassed to make brick symbolizes Jesus Christ. “**The stone which the builders refused** is become the head stone of the corner” (Psalm 118:22). “And a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense [4625, *stumbling, impediment*], even to them which stumble [4350, *to take offense at*] at the word, being disobedient [544, *to refuse belief, disbelieve*]...” (1 Peter 2:8).

The churches have rejected the Word of God, which is to reject God. “[T]his is a rebellious people, **lying** children, children that will not hear the **law of the LORD**” (Isaiah 3:9). The so-called “Christian” churches teach that Jesus did away with His Father’s moral law, “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for **it is not subject to the law of God**, neither indeed can be” (Romans 8:7). Therefore they say, “...speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits...cause the Holy One of Israel to cease [7673, *to remove, to take away*] from before us” (Isaiah 30:10, 11).

The word for brick is *Strong’s* 3843 from 3835, “*to be white*.” The bricks symbolize man, who was created from clay. White symbolizes righteousness, but the whiteness of the clay represents man-made righteousness, which is not acceptable to God. In God’s sight, “...man’s righteousnesses are as filthy rags...” (Isaiah 64:6). Man cannot create righteousness. True righteousness can only come from God, “...for all Your **commandments are righteousness**” (Psalm 119:172).

The bricks were held together by “slime” (2564), which means “*to swell up*”. Mortar is 2563 from 2560, which means: “*to ferment, leaven*.” Leaven often symbolizes sin (see 1 Corinthians 5:1-8). The **church doctrines are the slime that holds the bricks in place**. Church doctrine is not necessarily based on Biblical truth, but rather on “...the commandments and doctrines of men” (Colossians 2:22). Therefore the truth can actually be considered anathema by

the church hierarchy, because it goes against the grain of their church doctrines. “And many shall follow their pernicious ways [684, *destructive*]; by reason of whom **the truth shall be evil spoken of**” (2 Peter 2:2).

To speak against the truth is to deny the Messiah. “...There shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in [3919, *to introduce stealthily*] damnable heresies, even denying [720, *to contradict*] the Lord that bought them...” (v. 1). The churches that teach the doctrines of men, which are in conflict with the truth, are calling the Messiah a liar, while at the same time using His name by calling themselves “Christians.”

The bricks were formed in molds so that each brick would be uniform. The people are formed into uniform bricks through the indoctrination of the hierarchy. The people are taught that they must give up their individuality, and cooperate, and sacrifice for the whole, i.e. for the elitists. This is known as collectivism, or in theology as collective salvation. The people are told that salvation can be obtained only through the “one true church.” It is very important to keep the people focused on the church and its hierarchy as their source of salvation, instead of God.

The bricks were burned to harden them. This represents the educational process through which the church doctrines are burned into the minds of the people. The more deeply ingrained the doctrines become, the less likely the people are to be swayed by so-called “heretical teachings.”

A heretic is “*a church member who holds beliefs opposed to the official church doctrines.*” Therefore a heretic is a threat to the church, and must be re-educated or excommunicated in order to keep the other church members from becoming “infected.” Thus we are to assume that the church fathers are always correct, and that no mere church member could ever be correct. The church hierarchical class system must always be maintained. The elitists in the hierarchy despise the peasants, but they also know that without the peasants their hierarchy will cease to exist.

The four basic parts of a kingdom are: 1) the governing authority, 2) its territory, 3) the subjects, and 4) the laws that govern the kingdom. The four parts of a church are: 1) the governing authority (the church fathers). 2) the church property (territory), 3) the people, and 4) the church doctrines. A church is a kingdom unto itself, and it must defend itself against the enemy.

The greatest enemy of the Babylonian church hierarchical system is the truth. Jesus said,

“...If you abide in My word, then are you My disciples indeed; you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31, 32). If the people were freed from the bondage of the church, their freedom would be its death knell. Therefore....

Jesus had to be Replaced as the Head of the Flock

The diagram of *The Hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church* shows the several layers of the Church hierarchy, from the Pope at the top to the common people at the bottom. Theoretically, the Church puts God at the top of the hierarchy, and the church leaders are underneath according to their rank. At the bottom are the members of the church. This is put forth as God’s system of government. However, in practice the Church leaders are at the top and God has been removed.

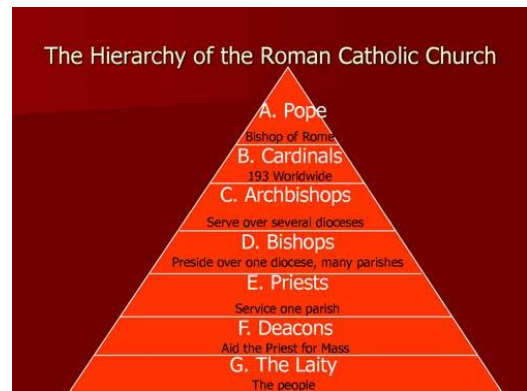


Figure 4

The Pope is called “The Vicar of Christ.” A vicar is “*a person who acts **in place of another**, a substitute, a person who is authorized to perform the functions of another, a deputy.*” By taking the title Vicar of Christ, the Pope is claiming that he has been given the authority to perform the functions of Christ, i.e. he has usurped Christ as the head of His own flock on the earth. The church hierarchy then claims the authority to set doctrine.

The word “pope” means “father.” A father is the head of the family and the master of the house. Catholic priests are also called “Father.” However, Jesus said, “But be **not you** called Rabbi [4461, *my master, my great one*]: for one is your Master [2519, *a guide, leader, instructor*], even Christ; and **you are all brethren**. And call **no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father**, which is in heaven. Neither be you called masters [2519]: for one is your Master [2519], even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall **exalt himself shall be abased**; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted” (Matthew 23:8-12).

There are many titles used by various churches to exalt their leaders. The title of Reverend means to be worthy of reverence, hallowed, or venerable. This is a title that belongs only to God. “He sent redemption to His people: He has commanded His covenant forever: holy and **reverend** [3372, *to fear, to revere, wonderful, illustrious*] **is His name**” (Psalm 111:9). No

man is worthy of that title.

Herbert W. Armstrong (July 31, 1892 – January 16, 1986), who was the head of the Worldwide Church of God, took the title of Pastor General, which literally means the head or chief shepherd. It is a title that belongs to Jesus Christ. “And when the **Chief Shepherd** shall appear...” (1 Peter 5:4). Mr. Armstrong also said, “...All official teaching, doctrine, and practice in God’s Church today has been put in the Church by Jesus Christ THROUGH HIS CHOSEN APOSTLE!”² Of course the “chosen apostle” was Mr. Armstrong, and only he could set church doctrine. The Worldwide Church of God used the same hierarchical pattern of church government as did the Catholic Church, which in turn followed the Babylonian pattern.

Men love titles because of their own vanity and the supposed power that it gives them. Jesus said of the “church leaders” of His day, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites [5273, *an actor, a counterfeit*]! For you are like whited [2867, *whitewashed*] sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful **outward**, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness [167, *lewdness, impurity of motive*]. Even so you also outwardly **appear** righteous to men, but within you are full of hypocrisy [5272, *acting*] and iniquity [458, *lawlessness*]” (Matthew 23:27, 28).

The reason the “church leaders” had Jesus murdered was because they were afraid of losing their authority over the people. “Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? For this Man does many miracles. If we let Him thus alone, **all men will believe on Him**: and the Romans shall come and take away both our [*holy*] place and nation” (John 11:47, 48).

It would be no different today. Jesus Christ would not be welcome in any of these churches, because His teaching and His way of life would show them up for the hypocrites that they are. The church leaders must defend their territory by keeping Christ out of their churches in order to maintain their control over their subjects.

The Authority of the Church

During the Medieval period, the Catholic Church exercised tremendous power through its hierarchy. “The Pope, or head of the Church, assumed command or authority over all the princes and kingdoms of Christendom. He regarded the Empire of Germany and all other Christian

² Herbert W. Armstrong, Official Teaching on Passover, *Pastor General’s Report*, vol. 2, no. 12, March 21, 1980.

kingdoms as papal fiefs. From the eleventh to the sixteenth century the papal power was at its height. During that period, the power of the Pope was so great that the most powerful monarch of Europe could be subjected to the greatest humiliation by His Holiness...”³

One of the methods of intimidation used by the Catholic Church was the inquisition. “Inquisition, the ecclesiastical institution organized to detect and punish heretics and others guilty of any offense against Roman Catholic orthodoxy...” Even torture was allowed, “If the judges failed to obtain a voluntary confession from a person about whose guilt they were certain...” Penalties for conviction could range from relatively minor punishments to major punishments. “Major penalties involved excommunication, exile, permanent imprisonment, confiscation of property or death...”⁴

Did the authority for the Church to imprison people, confiscate their property, or commit murder come from Jesus Christ? Of course it didn’t. The church hierarchy took it upon itself to do those things in order to maintain its power over the people. No man has been given the authority to go outside of the boundaries of the law of the Eternal God. “You shall not add to the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish aught from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God...” (Deuteronomy 4:2).

Jesus said, “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind (declare to be improper and unlawful) on earth must be what is already bound in heaven; and whatever you loose (declare lawful) on earth must be what is already loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:19).⁵ The William’s translation has it: “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you forbid on earth must be what is already forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth must be what is already permitted in heaven.”⁶

What Does God Say About a Hierarchy?

Does God want His people ruled by a hierarchy? If so, then we can assume that He would speak favorably of a hierarchy? The children of Israel said to Samuel, “...make us a king to

³ Israel Smith Clare, The Standard History of the World, vol. 5, Copyright, 1928 By H.F. McGee and I Schulman, p. 2049.

⁴ Hilmar C. Krueger, Inquisition, Collier’s Encyclopedia, Cromwell Collier and MacMillan Inc., 1967, pp. 28-33.

⁵ Scripture taken from The Amplified Bible, Old Testament copyright © 1965, 1987 by the Zondervan Corporation. The Amplified New Testament copyright © 1958, 1987 by the Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

⁶ Scripture taken from The New Testament in the Language of the People, Charles B. Williams, Copyright © 1937, by Bruce Humphreys, Inc. Copyright Renewed 1965 by Edith S. Williams.

judge us like **all** [3605, *the whole, totality*] **the nations**” (1 Samuel 8:5). All of the other peoples had a hierarchical form of government. The children of Israel were the lone exception, but they wanted to be like the people around them. God said to Samuel, “...**they have rejected Me, that I should reign over them**” (v. 7).

God warned His people Israel about the evils of having a system like the nations around them. “...This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horseman; and some shall run before his chariots. And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and he will set them to ear [2790, *plow*] **his ground**, and to reap **his harvest**, and to make **his instruments of war**...And he will **take your daughters** to be confectionaries [7543, *make ointments*], and to be cooks. **And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your olive groves, even the best of them, and give them to his servants.** And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, **and give it to his officers, and to his servants.** And he will take your [*servants*], and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to **his work**. He will take the tenth of your sheep: **and you shall be his servants**” (vv. 11-17).

God makes it clear that a hierarchy is not for the benefit of the people. Under a government “like all the nations,” the people would become slaves of the state, which is what hierarchies do. Jesus said, “No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other...” (Luke 16:13). The prophet Elijah asked the people of Israel, “How long halt you between two opinions? If the LORD be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him...” (1 Kings 18:21).

The Nicolaitanes

The Nicolaitanes are mentioned in two letters written to “...the seven [*congregations*] which are in Asia...” (Revelation 1:11). Jesus said to the congregation at Ephesus, “...you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate” (Revelation 2:6). To the congregation at Pergamos, He said, “...you have them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate” (v. 15). What was it that Jesus hated about the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes?

Nicolaitanes is *Strong's* 3531 from 3532, Nikolaos. Niko is from 3534, nikos, “a conquest, triumph.” The second part is 2992, laos, “a people.” The Nicolaitanes were “victorious over the people.” The Nikolaitanes represent the hierarchy that had assumed power over the

people, and by doing so they had replaced Jesus Christ as the head of His congregation.

The leaders in the congregations are to lead the people to Christ—not to themselves—
“For there is one God and **one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ**” (1 Timothy 2:5). To allow a man or a church to come between you and God is idolatry.

A hierarchy is a rejection of the rule of God. It comes down to who is going to rule over the people. **Will it be God or man?**

Next: The Counterfeit Christ.

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