The book of Revelation reveals truth and exposes error. God doesn't want us to be deceived. He longs for us to be preserved and protected by His truth. In Revelation, the Apostle John tells the tale of two women. One is dressed in pure white, revealing the purity of true faith and doctrine. This pure woman of Revelation 12 is committed to Christ. She's absolutely loyal to Him. Her heart burns with a love for Jesus. Nothing can break her loyalty to the One she loves so much. This woman represents all the faithful believers who have loved Jesus Christ, kept His commandments and been obedient to Him down through the ages.

Revelation 17 pictures another woman. Now we have the opposite picture. Who is this woman in scarlet riding on a Beast? The Bible gives many good clues—let's examine them briefly.

The Harlot & SUN Worship:
The main deity of Babylon and Egypt was the Sun god. Astrology and worship of the heavens originated in Babylon. But God calls it one of the greatest of “abominations” in Ezekiel 8:15-16! Roman Emperor Constantine was a sun worshiper who never gave it up. The Roman church disregards not only the second Commandment about image worship but also the fourth Commandment about the Creator's seventh-day Sabbath, substituting the unscriptural Sunday! 

She's a CHURCH:
In the Bible a woman symbolizes a church. See such verses as 2 Corinthians 11:2; Isaiah 54:5-6; Jeremiah 3:14; Ephesians 5:31-33, etc. Christ is represented as the Bridegroom (Matthew 9:14-15; Revelation 19:7). An unfaithful church commits spiritual adultery (Ezekiel 16:28, 32).

She's a CORRUPT church:
Just as a pure woman represents a pure church, a corrupt woman represents a corrupt church. The woman in white is Christ's bride, the true church. But Revelation 17:1, 15-16, 19:2 call this second woman a whore or harlot—a fallen church teaching false doctrines.

She's a LARGE, WORLDWIDE church:
She sits on “many waters,” explained as being many “peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.” Revelation 17:1, 15. The very word catholic means “universal,” and the Papal church has the largest, most widespread membership in Christendom.

She's a RICH church:
This symbolic wicked woman—this corrupt church—is a rich one with gorgeous display. Revelation 17:4, NKJV
says she’s “decked with gold and precious stones and pearls having a golden cup in her hand.” Which church would you say is the richest in the world? **She’s a church built on SEVEN HILLS or MOUNTAINS:**

This identification, given in Revelation 17:9, is impressive and clear, for Rome is proverbial as “the city built on seven hills”! Webster’s large unabridged dictionary says this under the entry “seven-hilled”: “as, the seven-hilled city, that is, Rome, Italy.” Furthermore, Revelation 17:18 tells John, “The woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.” John wrote this using the present tense for the word “reigns,” and he knew as well as anyone else that “that great city” was Rome.

**She’s a RELIGIOUS power dominating the CIVIL powers:**

Revelation 17:3, 7 tell us the harlot, or fallen church, is RIDING the beast. Daniel 7:17, 23 tell us a beast represents a king or kingdom. When we ride a horse, we direct it and control it, so the picture God gives here is of a church dominating the civil power. For centuries, the Papacy dictated to kings. When she wanted to punish or execute any who dared to question her teaching, she’d often call on the police power of the state. Revelation 17:2 describes this harlot: “with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication.” She has influence over the kings of the earth, great influence over heads of state. Today, unlike other churches, the Vatican exchanges ambassadors with every major nation on earth. They come to her city on seven mountains, and they bow before her, having “lived luxuriously with her.” Revelation 18:9

**Which church would you say is the richest church in the world?**

Revelation 17:5. Long before John wrote the book of Revelation, the ancient city of Babylon had been completely destroyed and never rebuilt. For centuries it lay in ruins and had faded into insignificance. The apostle Peter could not have been referring to literal Babylon when he wrote in 1 Peter 5:13 that: “She who is in Babylon . . . greets you.” For there was no church or any other human institution in the desolate ruins of ancient Babylon. He was referring to Rome, as all authorities agree. It’s easy to see why early Christians used “Babylon” as a code word or nickname for Rome, for there are many striking parallels between the twin cities of literal Babylon of ancient times and figurative “Babylon” or Rome. Consider just a few: Babylon was the dominant warring power of its day—Rome was the dominant warring power of its own era. Babylon conquered Israel—centuries later, Rome also conquered Israel. Babylon destroyed the first Jerusalem Temple—Rome destroyed the second. Each carried sacred vessels from the Jewish Temple back to Babylon in the east and Rome in the west; each completely destroyed and devastated the city of Jerusalem; each carried away surviving Jews into captivity. Rome was Babylon all over again. As Babylon’s “carbon copy,” Rome provides a perfect example of history repeating itself!

**As Babylon’s “carbon copy,” Rome provides a perfect example of history repeating itself!**

Revelation 17:9. Here in the last book of the Bible, “Babylon” is a spiritual term referring to confusion—not the confusion of languages in the Old Testament but religious confusion as the church drifted away from God’s Word.

**The Harlot & NATURAL Immortality:**

Sincere Catholics often bow down before a statue of a saint and devoutly pray, even though the saint is dead. But the Roman church doesn’t teach that they’re dead—even though the idea that man’s soul is naturally immortal is a pagan one! All the ancient pagan religions—without exception—had the idea that the soul, or man’s essential being, was immortal. That non-biblical concept, inherited from Babylon, was a common thread running through them all. In Egypt, for instance, the pyramids were great monuments, great houses for the dead to hold their im-
The book *Catholic Belief*, by Roman Catholic scholar Father Joseph Faà di Bruno, page 45, states this: “Like two sacred rivers flowing from Paradise, the Bible AND divine Tradition contain the Word of God, the precious gems of revealed truths. Though these two divine streams are in themselves, on account of their divine origin, of EQUAL sacredness, and are both full of revealed truths, still, of the two, Tradition is to us MORE clear and safe.” Do you agree that tradition—the customs and practices of man—is more safe than the Bible? Rome baptizes tradition with the word “divine” and dares to hold it above the Bible.

Henry Thomas Buckle, a world-famous historian, says in his book *The History of Civilization*, Volume 1, page 188: “The adoration of idols that is in Babylon was succeeded by the adoration of saints.”

William E. Gladstone, four-time Prime Minister of Great Britain and a theologian in his own right, wrote in *Studies Subsidiary to the Works of Bishop Butler*, pp. 195-198: “The doctrine of natural, as distinguished from Christian, immortality . . . crept into the Church, by a BACK DOOR. . . . When arguments are offered for the purely natural immortality of the soul, they are rarely, if ever, derived from Scripture. . . . The natural immortality of the soul is a doctrine wholly unknown to the Holy Scriptures, and standing on no higher plane than that of . . . PHILOSOPHICAL OPINION . . . of philosophical speculations DISGUISED as truths of Divine Revelation.”

Sir James G. Frazer, an authoritative scholar, makes this statement in his book *The Worship of Nature*, Volume 1, page 529: “In ancient Babylonia the SUN was WORSHIPPED from immemorial antiquity.”

Historian Arthur P. Stanley in his book, *The History of the Eastern Church*, page 184, says this about the Roman Emperor Constantine, “His coins bore on the one side the letters of the name of Christ; on the other, the figure of the SUN GOD, as if he could not bear to relinquish the patronage of the bright luminary.”

Lewis Brown says this in *The Believing World*, page 112: “One cannot well refer to those cults of Babylon and Egypt and the rest as DEAD religions. For the echo of their ancient thunder is still to be heard reverberating in almost every form of faith existing today.” Ancient Babylonian sun worship is in the church today. Ancient Babylonian sun worship is there. Ancient Babylonian belief in the immortality of the soul is there. Yes, the echo of that thunder is still heard in the church today!

Doctor Alexander Hislop, in his classic work, *The Two Babylons*, page 105, says this: “To conciliate the Pagans to nominal Christianity, Rome, pursuing its usual policy, took measures to get the Christian and Pagan festivals [that’s the Sabbath and Sunday] amalgamated, and . . . to get Paganism and Christianity—now far sunk in idolatry—in this as in so many other things, to shake hands.” He says further: “A glance at the main pillars of the Papal system will sufficiently prove that its doctrine and discipline in all essential respects have been derived from BABYLON.”

Catholic William Gildea, Doctor of Divinity, wrote in *The Catholic World*, March, 1894, page 809: “The Sun was a foremost god with heathendom. . . . The sun has worshippers at this hour in Persia and other lands. . . . The PAGAN Sunday dedicated to Baal, became the Christian Sunday, sacred to Jesus.”

Cardinal James Gibbons, archbishop of Baltimore and noted writer, said in *The Catholic Mirror*, December 23, 1893: “Reason and sense demand the acceptance of one or the other of these alternatives: either Protestantism and the keeping holy of Saturday, or Catholicity and the keeping holy of Sunday. Compromise is IMPOSSIBLE.”

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**Quiz 21**

Revelation’s Last Appeal

1. The Bible symbol of a woman always represents a church—as God says to His people: “I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one _______________that I may present you as a chaste _______________to Christ.” (2 CORINTHIANS 11:2; ISAIAH 54:5-6; JEREMIAH 3:14)

2. ❑ T ❑ F Since a pure woman = a pure church, and a corrupt woman = a corrupt church, we know that the woman in scarlet is a corrupt church, for John boldly calls her a whores or harlot. (REVELATION 17:1; 19:2)

3. ❑ T ❑ F Any encyclopedia, or even a good unabridged dictionary, will confirm that Rome is renowned as “the city built on seven hills” or “the seven-hilled city.” (REVELATION 17:9 AND A GOOD REFERENCE BOOK)

4. The church John describes is a rich one, for “the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with ________and precious stones and ____________, having a golden cup in her hand.” (REVELATION 17:4; 18:16, KJV)

5. ❑ T ❑ F Rome was “that great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth” at the time John was writing the book of Revelation. (REVELATION 17:18; LUKE 2:1)

6. ❑ T ❑ F Besides sun worship, a second key feature of pagan religion in ancient Babylon and Egypt was the doctrine of the “immortal soul,” despite Scripture’s consistent teaching to the contrary. (ECCLESIASTES 9:5; 1 TIMOTHY 6:15-16; EZEKIEL 18:4, 20; PSALM 6:5, 115:17)

7. The Bible warns us: “Babylon is _______________, is _______________.” and God—with inexpressible love—calls us to “Come ________ of her, ________ people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.” (REVELATION 14:8; 18:2-4)

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Your Name: ___________________________ Date ____________