

# Twenty-Third Decree: The Year 2025 – 7 Horns – 10 Crowns

*“And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.” Daniel 7:25*

A Past and Present Day Application

Research by Odette Boily – November 25, 2021



“And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.” Daniel 7:14.

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Section I  
The Falling  
Away

Early Christian Church

## 1A. The Falling Away: Apostasy from the Truth of the Gospel – AD 1 – 99

“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day [Coming of Christ] shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.”

2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4.

....This plainly sets forth the prophecy of a great falling away or apostasy from the truth of the gospel. “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. And also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.” Acts 20:29, 30....

....It was from those who would arise not only speaking perverse things, but "speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them. “Through error of judgment, a man might speak perverse things with no bad intention; but the ones here mentioned would speak perverse things purposely and with the intention of making disciples for themselves -- to draw away disciples after them instead of to draw disciples to Christ. These would pervert the truth and would have to pervert the truth, in order to accomplish their purpose....When one seeks to draw disciples to himself, and puts himself in the place of Christ, then he must pervert the truth, and accommodate it to the wishes of those whom he hopes to make his own disciples. This is wickedness; this is apostasy.” The Two Republics, A.T. Jones, 203, 206.

## 1B. The Falling Away: Bishops pervert their Calling

“There was another consideration which made the danger the more imminent. These words were spoken to the bishops. It was a company of bishops, to whom the apostle Paul was speaking when he said: “Of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them.” From that order of men who were chosen to guide and to care for the church of Christ, from those who were set to protect the church -- from this order of men there would be those who would pervert their calling, their office, and the purpose of it, to build up themselves, and gather disciples to themselves in the place of Christ.

To watch this spirit, to check its influence, and to guard against its workings, was constant effort of the apostle; and for the reason as stated to the Thessalonians, that the mystery of iniquity was already working. There were at that time elements abroad which the apostle could plainly see would develop into all that the Scriptures had announced. And scarcely were the last of the apostles dead when the evil appeared in its practical workings.” Ibid., 206, 207.

## 1C. The Falling Away: Christian Doctors Introduce External Rites

“No sooner were the apostles removed from the stage of action, no sooner was their watchful attention gone, and their apostolic authority removed, than this very thing appeared of which the apostle had spoken. Certain bishops, in order to make easier the conversion of the heathen; to multiply disciples, and by this increase their own influence and authority, began to adopt heathen customs and forms.

When the canon of Scripture was closed, and the last of the apostles was dead, the first century was gone; and within twenty years of that time the perversion of the truth of Christ had become widespread. In the history of this century and of this subject the record is, -- “It is certain that to religious worship, both public and private, many rites were added, without necessity, and to the offense of sober and good men.” -- Mosheim.

And the reason of this is stated to be that – “The Christians were pronounced atheists, because they were destitute of temples, altars, victims, priests, and all that pomp in which the vulgar suppose the essence of religion to consist. For unenlightened persons are prone to estimate religion by what meets their eyes. To silence this accusation, the Christian doctors thought it necessary to introduce some external rites, which would strike the senses of the people, so that they could maintain themselves really to possess all those things of which Christians were charged with being destitute, though under different forms.” -- Mosheim.” Ibid., 207.

## 1D. The Falling Away: Steps to Heathenize Christianity – Pagan Mysteries

“This was at once to accommodate the Christian worship and its forms to that of the heathen, and almost at one step to heathenize Christianity. No heathen element or form can be connected with Christianity or its worship, and Christianity remains pure.

Of all the ceremonies of the heathen, the mysteries were the most sacred and most universally practiced...But whatever was the mystery that was celebrated, there was always in it as an essential part of it, the elements of abomination that characterized sun worship everywhere, because the mysteries were simply forms of the wide-spread and multiform worship of the sun. Among the first of the perversions of the Christian worship was to give to its forms the title and air of the mysteries.

For says the record: -- Among the Greeks and the people of the East, nothing was held more sacred than what were called the mysteries. These circumstances led the Christians, in order to impart dignity to their religion, to say that they also had similar mysteries, or certain holy rites concealed from the vulgar and they not only applied the terms used in the pagan mysteries to Christian institutions, particularly baptism and the Lord's supper, but they gradually introduced also the rites which were designated by those terms." -- Mosheim.”  
Ibid, 208.



## 1E. The Falling Away: Reprove the Works of Darkness – Worship of the Sun

“The [pagan] mysteries being a form of sun worship, the "sacred" symbols cannot be described with decency....It is not necessary to describe the actions that were performed in the celebration of the mysteries, that were performed in the celebration of the mysteries after the initiation, any further than is spoken by the apostle with direct reference to this subject. "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret." Ephesians 5:11, 12.”

It was to accommodate the Christian worship to the minds of a people who practiced these things that the bishops gave to the Christian ordinances the name of mysteries. The Lord's supper was made the greater mystery, baptism the lesser....Therefore, before the second century [150 AD] was half gone, before the last of the apostles had been dead forty years, this apostasy, this working of the mystery of iniquity, had so largely spread over both the East and the West, that it is literally true that "a large part, therefore, of the Christian observances and institutions even in this century, had the aspect of the pagan mysteries. Nor is this all.... The worship of the sun [by then] had become universal. These apostates not being content with so much of the sun worship as appeared in the celebration of the mysteries, adopted the heathen custom of worshiping toward the East.... and of the Day of the Sun [Sun-day] as a festival day. To such an extent were the forms of sun worship practiced in this apostasy, that before the close of the second century the heathen themselves charged these so-called Christians with worshiping the sun." -- Mosheim." Ibid., 211, 212.

## 1F. The Falling Away: From Passover to Easter Sunday

“From Rome there came now another addition to the sun-worshiping apostasy. The first Christians being mostly Jews, continued to celebrate the Passover in remembrance of the death of Christ, the true Passover; and this was continued among those who from among the Gentiles had turned to Christ. Accordingly the celebration was always on the Passover day -- the fourteenth day of the first month [Leviticus 23:5]. Rome, however, and from her all the West, adopted the day of the sun as the day of this celebration. According to the Eastern custom, the celebration, being on the fourteenth day of the month, would of course fall on different days of the week [when compared to the Roman Julian calendar] as the years revolved. The rule of Rome was that the celebration must always be on a Sunday -- the Sunday nearest to the fourteenth day of the first month of the Jewish year. And if the fourteenth day of that month of the Jewish year should be on Sunday, then the celebration was not to be held on that day, but upon the next Sunday.

One reason of this was not only to be as like heathen as possible, but to be as unlike the Jews as possible: this, in order not only to facilitate the "conversion" of the heathen by conforming to their customs, but also by pandering to their spirit of contempt and hatred of the Jews. It was upon this point that the bishop of Rome made his first open attempt at absolutism.” Ibid, 213.

## 1G. The Falling Away: The West Excommunicated the Eastern Faithful

“We know not precisely when this began [Easter Celebration], but it was practiced in Rome as early as the time of Sixtus I, who was bishop of Rome A. D. 119-128. Victor, who was bishop of Rome A. D. 192-202, likewise proposed to oblige only those under his jurisdiction to conform to the practice of Rome; but he asserted jurisdiction over all, and therefore presumed to command all....

....Accordingly, after having taken the advice of some foreign bishops, he wrote an imperious letter to the Asiatic prelates commanding them to imitate the example of the Western Christians with respect to the time of celebrating the festival of Easter. The Asiatics answered this lordly requisition by the pen of Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, who declared in their name, with great spirit and resolution, that they would by no means depart, in this manner, from the custom handed down to them by the apostles and disciples. Upon this the thunder of excommunication began to roar. Victor, exasperated by this resolute answer of the Asiatic bishops, broke communion with them, pronounced them unworthy of the name of his brethren, and excluded them from all fellowship with the church of Rome." -- Mosheim.

In view of these things it will readily be seen that between paganism and this kind of Christianity it soon became difficult to distinguish, and the third century only went to make any distinction still more difficult to be discerned.” – Mosheim.” Ibid., 214, 215

## 2A. What happened from AD 321 to 325

“Royal edicts, general councils, and church ordinances sustained by secular power were the steps by which the pagan festival [Sun-day] attained its position of honor in the Christian world. The first public measure enforcing Sunday observance was the law enacted by Constantine. (A.D. 321; see Appendix note for page 53). This edict required townspeople to rest on “the venerable day of the sun,” but permitted countrymen to continue their agricultural pursuits. Though virtually a heathen statute, it was enforced by the emperor after his nominal acceptance of Christianity.

The royal mandate not proving a sufficient substitute for divine authority, Eusebius, a bishop who sought the favor of princes, and who was the special friend and flatterer of Constantine, advanced the claim that Christ had transferred the Sabbath to Sunday. Not a single testimony of the Scriptures was produced in proof of the new doctrine. Eusebius himself unwittingly acknowledges its falsity and points to the real authors of the change. “All things,” he says, “whatever that it was duty to do on the Sabbath, these we have transferred to the Lord’s Day.”—Robert Cox, *Sabbath Laws and Sabbath Duties*, page 538.

But the Sunday argument, groundless as it was, served to embolden men in trampling upon the Sabbath of the Lord. All who desired to be honored by the world accepted the popular festival.” *The Great Controversy*, 574, 575.

## 2B. What was the significance of the First Decree of Nicaea?

“The First Council of Nicaea, held in Nicaea in Bithynia (in present-day Turkey), convoked by the Roman Emperor Constantine I in 325, was the first ecumenical conference of bishops of the Christian Church, and most significantly resulted in the first uniform Christian doctrine. With the creation of the Nicene Creed [Credo], a precedent was established for subsequent 'general (ecumenical) councils of Bishops' ( Synods)...the intent being to define unity of beliefs for the whole of Christendom — a momentous event in the history of the Church and subsequent history of Europe.

Beside attempting to resolve disagreements over the nature of Christ, another result of the council was an agreement on the date of the Christian Passover (Pascha in Greek; Easter in modern English), the most important feast of the ecclesiastical [Roman] calendar. The council decided in favour of celebrating Jesus’s resurrection on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the vernal equinox, independently and contrary to the Bible Hebrew Calendar [Firstfruits], and authorized the Bishop of Alexandria (presumably using the Alexandrian calendar) to announce annually the exact date to his fellow bishops.

The Council of Nicaea was historically significant because it was the first effort to attain consensus in the church through an assembly representing all of Christendom. "It was the first occasion for the development of technical Christology." Further, Constantine's role in the council was, viewed in retrospect, as a clear precursor of future imperial control over the church.” [https://www.cs.mcgill.ca/~rwest/wikispeedia/wpcd/wp/f/First\\_Council\\_of\\_Nicaea.htm](https://www.cs.mcgill.ca/~rwest/wikispeedia/wpcd/wp/f/First_Council_of_Nicaea.htm)

## 2C. Fall of Adam – Fall of Israel – Fall of the Christian Church – Today

“If the race had ceased to fall when Adam was driven from Eden, we should now be in a far more elevated condition physically, mentally, and morally. But while men deplore the fall of Adam, which has resulted in such unutterable woe, they disobey the express injunctions of God, as did Adam, although they have his example to warn them from doing as he did in violating the law of Jehovah. Would that man had stopped falling with Adam. But there has been a succession of falls. Men will not take warning from Adam’s experience. They will indulge appetite and passion in direct violation of the law of God, and at the same time continue to mourn Adam’s transgression, which brought sin into the world. From Adam’s day to ours there has been a succession of falls, each greater than the last.” Confrontation, 73, 74.

“If the Christian Church, like Israel of Old, had ceased to fall when the Bishops of the primitive Church perverted their calling, we should now be in a far more elevated condition physically, mentally and spiritually as the 7<sup>th</sup> Church. But while the leaders and church members deplore the falling away, which has resulted in such unutterable woe – the Roman Catholic Church – they disobey the express injunctions of God, as did the first Christian leaders, although they have their example to warn them from doing as they did in violating the law of Jehovah and mingling with Paganism and False Education. Would that the Church had stopped falling with them. But there has been a succession of falls. Christ’s Church does not take warning from their experience. They indulge appetite and passion in direct violation of the law of God, and at the same time continue to mourn the first leaders’ transgression, which brought evil into the Church. From the first century to our century, there has been a succession of falls, each greater than the last.” Confrontation, 73, 74, E. G. White, Paraphrased.