

In recent years the United States' attitude towards Rome has shifted dramatically. Ronald Reagan was the first American president to station an ambassador to the Papacy. Since then every American president has done state visits to the pope. Reagan and pope John Paul II "conspired" together to hasten the demise of Communism (*Time*, 1992-02-24). In 2005 three American presidents reverently attended the funeral of pope John Paul II, a truly historic moment. In 2013 pope Francis, the first Jesuit pope, was elected and took the world by storm. He was elected person of the year in 2013 by *Time*. He became the first pope to speak before the American congress in 2015, where he was heartily received. Francis has also reached out to the Orthodox Patriarch, the Lutherans in Europe and Pentecostal Leaders in America. Many hope to end the Reformation once and for all and return to Rome. In doing this, the protestants have to give up the importance of certain Bible truths in the name of unity. This movement will, according to prophecy, seek the aid of the Government and finally bring down the separation wall of church and state in America.

Trump's Election Victory

For years, the politics of the left has irritated American Christians. They longed for a change and they saw this in Donald Trump. 81 % of white evangelicals voted for Trump (Pew RC, 2016-11-09). One of Trump's way of gaining their support lay in his promise to abolish the so called "Johnson Amendment", a law that forbids churches to engage in political advocacy. This would, according to Trump, free the churches to be political platforms. It would give churches a political power that have not been seen before. Whether or not this will lead to the events of Bible prophecy, time will tell. But never the less, the signs are increasing, the pendulum swings back, a polarization is taking place, and we are today closer to a fulfilment of Revelation 13 than we have ever been before. Are you ready for the coming crisis? Are you ready to stand for your faith even under government threat of boycott or worse? Are you willing to ask Jesus to make you ready for the final events of Earth's history?



USA in Bible Prophecy

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From the year 538 the Papacy ruled over Europe. For 1260 years she ruled with an iron fist and suppressed all freedom of religion, speech and thought to the best of their ability. But in 1798, her dominion came to an abrupt end. Napoleon's general seized the pope who later died in captivity. Everything seemed to say that the papacy had seen its last day. They suffered the divine judgment: "He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword." (Rev. 13:10). But the Bible said that this "mortal wound" would be healed (Rev. 13:3) and the Papacy would receive its power again, with the aid of another particular nation. Then "all the world" would marvel and follow the beast (Rev. 13:3). Which nation is this?

Another beast

At the same time as the Papacy, receives her mortal wounds, a new power rises on the world stage: "Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon." (Rev. 13:11). This kingdom has several peculiar characteristics:

- 1) It is a kingdom/nation (beast = kingdom – Dan 7:23)
- 2) It has no king (It is not a monarchy. In contrast with the other beasts in Revelation its horns have no crowns).
- 3) It arises around the year 1798
- 4) It has Christian characteristics (The Lamb is a symbol of Christ (John 1:29). The nation would be Christlike: freedom of religion and freedom of speech (John 18:36)

- 5) It arises on a relatively desolate area. (The waters where the Antichrist arose represent "peoples, multitudes, nations and languages" (Rev. 17:15). The Earth must, therefore, symbolize the opposite. We can't look for this nation in the densely populated Old World. We must look to the New World.
- 6) It has worldwide influence (Rev. 13:12)

Only one nation fits the description: _____.
 Through the influence of people like Roger Williams a state without a king and a church without a pope was established. In the country's Declaration of Independence Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and others wrote: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." And in the Bill of Rights, they stated: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech..." Millions of people migrated across the ocean to the United States to enjoy religious freedom and freedom of speech. This phenomenon was predicted in Rev. 12:16.

The Papacy and liberty of conscience

The Papacy had, at that time, no favorable thing to say about the liberties of the American constitution. The pope wrote in 1832: "This shameful font of indifferentism gives rise to that absurd and erroneous proposition which claims that liberty of conscience must be maintained for everyone." (Pope Gregory XVI, Encyclical Letter: *Mirari Vos*, 14, Aug. 15, 1832). Pope Leo XIII joined the chorus: "From what has been said it follows that it is quite unlawful to demand, to defend, or to grant unconditional freedom of thought, of speech, or writing, or of worship, as if these were so many rights given by nature to man." (Encyclical Letter, *Libertas*, 42, June 20, 1888). The Council of Vatican II expressed religious freedom which might seem like a change in the Vatican. But let us not forget that Rome never changes according to their own doctrines. The Jesuit Michael O'Connor,

Bishop of Pittsburgh, explained: "Religious liberty is merely endured until the opposite can be carried into effect without peril to the Catholic world." (Charles Chiniquy, *Fifty Years in the Church of Rome* (1889), p. 675). Because of this, there were great tensions between Protestant America and the Papacy during the 19th Century and the first half of the 20th Century. But a change was to take place according to the prophecy.

Religious Liberty under Threat

Protestant America would eventually make an image of the papacy (copy its laws and practices) and start speaking "like a dragon". Instead of standing up for religious freedom, they would eventually force the "earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed." (Rev. 13:12). It would start with economic sanctions against those who refuse to obey (Rev. 13:16-17), something that is not at all inconceivable in our high-tech society. But in the end it would go as far as to command "as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed" (Rev. 13:15). This might sound incredible and impossible to some. America is "the land of the free"; How could they possibly fall so low as to remove religious liberty and force people to worship the first beast? One likely factor is terrorism. Since the terrorist attacks of 2001 the people of the United States have been willing to limit their freedom in order to acquire security. A polarization towards an intolerant Christian Right in American politics in favor of the Papacy is another important factor. To the observant eye, this is the direction that the world is heading.

Healing the Wound

Though the papacy received a deadly wound in 1798, the Bible says: "his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast." (Rev. 13:3). In 1929, Mussolini gave back sovereign political power to the Papacy. An article in the *San Francisco Chronicle* of that year used the prophetic symbolism in its title: "Mussolini och Gasparri sign historic Roman pact... Heal wound of many years." (Feb 12).