In the pantheon of Babylonian deities, **Bel was the "god of the earth"**. **(Isa. 46:1; Jer. 50:2; 51:44)** He was often seen in the image of a dragon.**"Bel and the Dragon" is the Greek apocryphal addition to the Biblical book of Daniel. This spurious book was never accepted by the Jews or Protestants.** On the other hand, **the Roman catholic Church has accepted this as inspired and authoratative.** Interesting in that in **Rev. 12:3** we see that **Satan is clearly identified as a *"great red dragon"***. **Rev. 13:4** tells us that the dragon was worshipped.

The Babylonian Mysteries also included as mentioned before, the worship of the "**Mother goddess and her Son", Semiramis and Talmuz**. **She was seen as the "Queen of Heaven**". (**Jer.7:18**) **As early as the 5th Century Mary began to be worshipped as the "Queen of Heaven"**. **The "Assumption of Mary", that is, the "bodily resurrection and assension" of Mary at her death, was also introduced during this era.** **The veneration or worship of Mary was formally declared to be a doctrine of the "church" at the Council of Ephesus in 431 AD**. **The exaltation of Mary has grown over the centuries to include such cardinal doctrines as the "Immaculate Conception", that is, she never had any "original sin". The sin of Adam somehow missed her!** (**Rom. 5:12**)

I can't think of another religious institution that has been more given to idolatry than the Roman Catholic Church. From the bones and severed heads to the skin and fingernails of departed saints, these relics were bought and sold as charms during the "Dark Ages". Even today you can go to Saint Joseph's Oratory in Montreal and there see Bro. Andre Bessette's heart displayed in a glass case. (Actually, it is a pig's heart. His was stolen! In 1973 a ransom of $50,000. was demanded. The church refused to pay.) Apparently, his body lies in a tomb beneath the Oratory. It's still there!

There are cathedrals and basilicas scattered around the world, each one populated with any number of statues commemorating past saints. There are frescos and stain glass windows glorifying angels, saints and especially Mary! It is a "**religion of Idolatry**"!

It is also an institution rife with **sexual immorality**. It has been so dating back to this period of time. Fornication covers any number of sexual perversions. It is an umbrella term. Apart from the physical and literal application, the fornication of the Thyatira period is also of a "**spiritual**" nature! This church was not above "**prostituting**" itself in order to curry political favour. This church was fast becoming as much of a political entity as it was a religious one. (**Rev. 18:3**) In many respects the church of Thyatira laid the groundwork for what we see today and what will be in the future, as in **Rev. 17**. Except for the scattered remnant the "church" left the tracks; it got "derailed" during this time.