

A N S W E R S  
F O R O U R  
C A T H O L I C  
F R I E N D S



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# **LESSON 1: A QUESTION OF AUTHORITY**

## **I. The Influence of the Roman Catholic Church**

- A. There are more than a billion Catholics worldwide.
- B. Catholics believe in the virgin birth, the deity and resurrection of Christ, and the Trinity.
- C. We share many of the same moral values.
- D. Our differences, however, are too great to gloss over—praying to saints, the devotion to Mary, purgatory, means of salvation, etc.

## **II. The Purpose of “Answers for our Catholic Friends”**

- A. We will explore the various doctrines and practices of the Catholic Church (citing the 1994 “Catechism of the Catholic Church”).
- B. Our goal is to help you grow in your faith as a believer in Jesus Christ and to equip you so you can respond with knowledge to your friends and family.

## **III. How the Catholic Church Developed**

- A. The Church at Rome
  - 1. Before the end of the 2nd century the church at Rome held a distinctive role in the Christian world.
  - 2. The Roman Emperor Constantine (A.D. 324) made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire.
  - 3. In the middle of the 5th Century Leo, the Bishop of Rome, issued a command through an edict from the emperor that all should obey him because he held the “Primacy of St. Peter” — The First Pope — Pope Leo I.
  - 4. By 1054, The Eastern Church refused to accept the authority of Pope Leo IX — ultimately a split between east and west (Roman Catholic/Eastern Orthodox).

**B. Martin Luther (1483-1546) and Protestantism**

1. Luther's theology challenged the authority of the papacy by emphasizing the Bible as the sole source of religious authority, the church as the priesthood of all believers, and justification by faith.
2. Luther's reforms were rejected and the "protestors" were forced out.

C. Today the Christian Church has three main branches — (Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Protestant).

**IV. The Greatest Difference — A Question of AUTHORITY?**

- A. Protestants basis of Authority — The Old and New Testament!
- B. Catholics basis of Authority
  1. The Catholic Bible (OT + NT + Apocrypha)
  2. Sacred Tradition
  3. Papal Infallibility and Living Magisterium

**V. The Difference Between the Catholic and Protestant View of the Bible**

- A. Jesus and the Jewish people accepted only the 39 books of the Old Testament.
- B. The Early Christian Fathers added the 27 books of the New Testament — ratified by the Council of Carthage (A.D. 397).
- C. For the entire church the Bible remained with 66 books until the Catholic Church at the Council of Trent (A.D. 1546) added the Apocryphal books.
  1. New portions were added to the book of Esther
  2. A new chapter in Daniel
  3. Additional books written between the testaments (Tobit, Judith, 1 & 2 Macabees, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, The Letter of Jeremiah, The Prayer of Azariah, and The Wisdom of Solomon)

## **VI. The Truth About the Falsehood of the Apocryphal Writings**

- A. The Apocrypha disqualified itself from Scriptural status.
  - 1. No Apocryphal book claims divine inspiration.
  - 2. No Apocryphal book was written by a prophet or apostle
  - 3. The Apocrypha contains many factual errors.
- B. The Apocrypha contains teachings opposed to New Testament teaching such as:
  - 1. Good works atone for sin (Ecclesiasticus 3:30, Tobit 12:9, 4:11-12 — see Romans 6:23, Ephesians 2:8-9)
  - 2. Prayer to the saints (2 Macc. 15:24, Baruch 3:4 — see I Timothy 2:5)
  - 3. Angel Worship (Tobit 12:12,14-15 — see Galatians 1:8, Revelation 22:8-9)
  - 4. Prayers for the Dead (2 Macc. 12:44-46 — see Hebrews 9:27)

# **THE TRUE CHURCH, THE MYSTERIOUS MASS AND CONFESSION**

## **I. The True Church: Roman Catholicism (RCC) Claims that the Catholic Church is the Only TRUE Church and the Only Way to Salvation.**

- A. The Roman Catholic Interpretation of Matthew 16:15-19
  1. The Christian church is built squarely on Peter.
  2. Peter became the first Bishop of the local church at Rome.
  3. Peter passed on “the keys of the kingdom” to his successors at Rome.
  4. Therefore, the RCC is the “true church” founded by Jesus Christ.
  5. Roman Catholic teaching is expressed this way:  
“For our Lord made Simon Peter alone the rock and key bearer of the church and appointed him shepherd of the whole flock.” (Documents of Vatican II, Page 5)
- B. What do we learn from the New Testament?
  1. Peter has a prominent role in the founding of the Early Church.
  2. Peter is not given special authority in the New Testament.
  3. At the only church council mentioned in the New Testament it is James and not Peter presiding.
  4. When the foundation of the church is mentioned, Christ, not Peter, is called the rock on which it is built.
  5. Peter calls Christ the chief cornerstone (Acts 4:11, I Peter 2:6-7).
  6. Paul calls Christ the chief cornerstone (Romans 9:33, I Corinthians 10:4).
  7. Paul views Peter as a leader but openly challenges Peter and calls him a hypocrite for withdrawing from the Gentiles (Galatians 2:11-14).
  8. There is no mention of the New Testament of succession and  
There is no mention of the unique authority of any one leader  
(does not even mention popes).

## II. The Mysterious Mass: The Central Focus of the RCC Catholics Teach Four Unbiblical Doctrines Regarding the Mass.

A. Transubstantiation: the whole substances of the bread and the wine are literally changed into the body and blood of Christ.

1. Catholicism insists it is scriptural citing John 6:53-54.
2. Notice the full context John 6:31-58, especially John 6:35 where Jesus says, *I am the bread of life. He who comes*

*to me shall never*

*hunger and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.*

3. This teaching is consistent with the rest of Scriptures. Eternal life comes through believing in Jesus Christ, not eating his physical body (John 1:12; 5:24; 20:31, Romans 10:9-10, Ephesians 2:8).

B. The power of the Mass to preserve from future sins.

1. There is no scriptural evidence that the Lord's Supper will preserve anyone from future sins — see the first disciples as examples.
2. Living according to God's Word (Psalm 119:11), walking in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-25) and maintaining a relationship with Jesus (Jude 24-25) will help keep you from future sins.

C. The Eucharistic sacrifice can be offered for the dead.

1. This Catholic doctrine teaches that regular receiving of the Mass will help their departed loved ones reach heaven faster.
2. This is not only absent from the Bible, but it violates the Word of God — *So then each of us shall give account of himself to God* — Romans 14:12 (John 3:18, Hebrews 9:27).

D. Christ is re-crucified in the Mass.

1. "Every time this mystery is celebrated, 'The work of our Redemption is carried on' ('94 Catechism, p. 354 #1405).
2. The Bible clearly teaches that Christ's work of redemption on the cross was a one time act (Hebrews 7:27; 9:26-28; 10:10).

## **The Biblical Purpose of the Lord's Supper is "Remembrance"**

### **Reason #1 — Jesus taught "remembrance" to his disciples at the Last Supper**

*And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them saying, 'This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me' (Luke 22:19).*

### **Reason #2 — Paul taught "remembrance"**

*Take eat: this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.... This cup is the new covenant in My blood, This do, as often as you drink it in remembrance of Me. (I Corinthians 11:23-24).*

### **Reason #3 — "Remembrance" not Transubstantiation is understood logically at the Last Supper.**

- After Jesus stated, *This is my body*, He called it *bread* three times.
- Jesus often spoke about literal spiritual truths symbolically (especially in John's gospel) *I am the light of the world* (John 9:5), *I am the door* (John 10:9), *I am the good shepherd* (John 10:11).
- Jesus never once told His disciples to offer His body again, but he told them twice to partake *in remembrance* of Him.
- In Mark 14:25 Jesus said, *I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God*. Here Jesus calls the wine: *fruit of the vine*, not blood.

### **Communion should be a time of :**

- ◆ Celebration
- ◆ Thanksgiving
- ◆ Memorial
- ◆ Remembrance

**... a time of building up of our faith.**



### III. Confession: The Confessing of Sins to a Priest in the Sacrament of Penance.

Sacrament: church rituals that are regarded as a means of grace (RCC recognizes seven sacraments: baptism, confirmation, the Eucharist, penance, holy orders, matrimony, and anointing of the sick.)

Penance: a sacrament involving the confession of sin, repentance, and submission to the satisfaction imposed, followed by absolution by a priest.

A. Catholicism teaches that forgiveness for sin and salvation comes only through the Catholic Church.

1. All sins must be confessed to a priest: “one who desires to obtain reconciliation with God and with the church, must confess to a priest all the unconfessed grave sins...” (Catechism, P 374, #1493).

2. Priests have the power to forgive sins and be mediators: *“Indeed bishops and priests, by virtue of the sacrament of holy orders, have the power to forgive all sins ‘in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.’”* (P. 367, #1461).

B. Catholicism orders members to confess their sins to a man, but the Bible tells us that we can go straight to God through Jesus Christ.

1. *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness* (1 John 1:9).

2. *Therefore, brethren, having boldness, to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus...and having a High Priest over the house of God let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith* (Hebrews 10:19-22).

3. *For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus* (1 Timothy 2:5).

4. Catholics should follow the example of Peter: *Your heart is not right before God. Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps He will forgive you...* (Acts 8:21-22—NIV).

- C. Catholicism's motive in teaching that they only have the power to forgive sins is to keep people in bondage.
1. "According to the church's command, 'each of the faithful is bound by an obligation faithfully to confess serious sins at least once a year.'" (P. 365, #1457).
  2. The leaders of the RCC created another tradition that keeps people in bondage to the catholic church and more importantly tells someone that they cannot obtain forgiveness of sins and cannot go to heaven without the RCC.
  3. Paul admonished us to *Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage* (Galatians 5:1). See Galatians 1:6-9; 3:1-11).

## **THE SACRAMENTS: CATHOLICISM'S COMPLICATED STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN**

### **I. One of the Greatest Differences Between Protestants and Catholics is the Means of Salvation.**

- A. Protestants: Faith in Jesus + nothing else = salvation!

*If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved (Romans 10:9).*

*For by grace you have been saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).*

- B. Catholics: Jesus + The Roman Catholic Church + The Sacraments = Potential Salvation?

### **II. The Sacraments: Church Rituals that are Regarded as a Means of Grace (Salvation)**

- A. The Sacraments are nothing more than a series of good works.

1. To believe that good works are necessary for salvation is to deny God's Word (Ephesians 2:8-9, 2 Timothy 1:9; Romans 4:16).
2. *Their sins and lawless deeds I will remember no more. Now where there is remission of these, there no longer an offering for sin (Hebrews 10;17-18).*

- B. Penance: A Sacrament involving confession of sin to a priest.

1. Catholicism teaches that all sins must be confessed to a priest and that the priest has the power to forgive sins.
2. The Bible tells us we can go straight to God through Jesus Christ and that Jesus is the only mediator between God and Man (I John 1:9; Hebrews 10:19-22; I Timothy 2:5).

- C. Purgatory: Catholicism teaches that after death, some people are sent to a place called "Purgatory" for further purification before entering heaven.

1. "All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven

salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven (C. Pg. 268-269 #1031).

2. “The church gives the name purgatory to this final Purification of the elect...” (Pg. 268-269 #1031).
3. This doctrine comes from the Councils of Florence (A.D. 1439) and Trent (A.D. 1566).
4. The Bible never indicates that such a place exists.
5. *We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord* (2 Corinthians 5:8).
6. The Catholic Church has persuaded her members to give multiplied millions of dollars to have prayers and masses on behalf of dead loved ones supposedly in purgatory.
7. The price has already been paid. *You were bought with a price* (I Corinthians 16:20). See Romans 8:1 — *no condemnation*.

D. Baptism: Salvation through the sprinkling of water

1. “By baptism all sins are forgiven, original sin and all personal sins, as well as punishment for sin.” (Pg. 321 #1263).
2. The Bible teaches that *In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace* (Ephesians 1:7).
3. If baptism were a means of salvation, would Paul have said, *I thank God I baptized none of you...For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel..?* (I Corinthians 1:14,17).

E. Infant Baptism is one of the most critical doctrines of the Catholic Church.

1. “Born with a fallen human nature and tainted by original sin children also have need of the new birth in baptism...the sheer gratuitousness of the grace of salvation is particularly manifest in infant baptism. The Church and the parents would deny a child the priceless grace of becoming a child of God were they not to confer baptism shortly after birth.” (Pg. 319, #1250).

2. “The practice of infant baptism is an immemorial tradition of the church. There is explicit testimony to this practice from the second century on...” (Pg. 319 #1252)
  3. Again we note that “tradition” has become doctrine. God’s Word is not the final authority. Man has become the final authority.
  4. The Bible does not record a single instance of an infant being baptized — only believer’s baptism.
- F. Indulgences: a complicated system of good works that are another means of salvation.
1. “Through indulgences the faithful can obtain the remission of temporal punishment resulting from sin for themselves and also for the souls in purgatory.” (Pg. 374, #1498)
  2. Some examples of indulgences are: saying the rosary (series of prayers kept track of by counting beads on a string), making the Stations of the Cross (saying prayer at seven places around a church, visiting shrines — like the Shrine of Guadalupe in Mexico).
  3. Catholics try to pay for sins through indulgences but Christ already paid for every sin (I Corinthians 2:2, 15:3).

# THE POPE AND MARY: MOTHER OF GOD

## I. The Pope: Vicar of Christ

- A. Is the Pope the Vicar (Substitute) of Christ on earth, wielding universal power over the church?
  - 1. “For the Roman Pontiff, by reason of his office as Vicar of Christ, and as pastor of the entire church has full, supreme, and universal power over the whole church, a power which he can always exercise unhindered.” (Catechism, Page 234, #992).
  - 2. “The Pope enjoys, by divine institution supreme, full, immediate and universal power in the care of souls” (Pg. 246, #937).
  - 3. The Bible teaches that *Christ is the head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body* (Ephesians 5:23).
  - 4. *And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence* (Colossians 1:18).
- B. Catholics are taught to call the Pope “Holy Father.”
  - 1. *Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, he who is in heaven* (Matthew 23:9).
  - 2. *Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy* (Revelation 15:4).
- C. According to Catholic doctrine, the Pope is infallible in matters of doctrine, faith, and morals.
  - 1. “The Roman Pontiff...enjoys this infallibility in virtue of his office, when, as supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful — who confirms his brethren in the faith— He proclaims by a definitive act a doctrine pertaining to faith or morals...this infallibility extends as far as the deposit of divine revelation itself.” (Pg. 235 #891)
  - 2. When the Pope disagrees with or contradicts God’s Word, does it mean that God is wrong?

3. The Scriptures encourage us that when men speak on God's behalf (prophecy) that we are to *let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge* (I Corinthians 14:29).
4. *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God: because many false prophets have gone out into the world* (I John 4:1).

## II. Mary: Mother of God: The veneration and exaltation of Mary

- A. Perpetual Virginity: Mary's virginity continued after the birth of Jesus in that she never had any more children.
  1. Catechism: "Mary remained a virgin in conceiving her son...always a virgin." (Pg. 128 #510)
  2. Scripture: *Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His Mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon and Judas?* (Matthew 13:55)
- B. Immaculate Conception: She was conceived without sin and lived a sinless life.
  1. Catechism: "By the grace of God Mary remained free of every personal sin her whole life long." (Pg. 124, #493)
  2. The Bible only identifies one who was sinless: *For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us* (2 Corinthians 5:21).
  3. *There is none righteous, no, not one...* (Romans 3:10).
  4. *And Mary said: 'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior'* (Luke 1:46).

- C. Co-redemptrix: she suffered with Christ and nearly died with him and “may rightly be said to have redeemed the human race with with Christ.”
  - 1. Jesus: *I am the way, the truth and the life, No one comes to the Father except through me* (John 14:6).
  - 2. Peter: *Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved* (Acts 4:12).
- D. Intercessor: Mary is one who mediates between man and God.
  - 1. Mary is given these titles in the Catholic Church: Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, Mediatrix, and Intercessor.
  - 2. *And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous* (I John 2:1).
  - 3. *For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father* (Ephesians 2:18).
  - 4. *For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus* (I Timothy 2:5).
- E. Other teachings concerning Mary such as The Doctrine of the Assumption (like Elijah she was taken up body and soul to heaven) and the teaching that she has been exalted to be the “Queen of Heaven” are found nowhere in the New Testament.