

of influence and authority. These professing “Christians” brought their pagan rites, gods and goddesses into the church. Votive candles, holy water, images, relics, vestments and purgatory were never part of the apostolic church.

In the following centuries, the church ignored Christ’s rebuke of “tradition” when he said, “For the sake of your tradition you have nullified the Word of God” (*Mark 7:8, 9, 13*).^{*} Church councils began to exalt tradition above Scripture and condemn their opponents. Many devout men were labeled heretics and persecuted for defending scriptural authority. Christianity continued to grow numerically but declined spiritually.

By the 12th century the Roman Catholic Church had become the world’s most powerful institution. It used its unlimited religious and political power to set up and depose kings and queens. It taxed people mercilessly and confiscated property to become the richest institution on earth. The pope offered crusading armies riches and eternal bliss to kill Muslims, heretics, and anyone who rejected papal supremacy.

After the Reformation in the 16th century, the Catholic Church lost its status as the official state church in most parts of the world and could no longer put her opponents to death. The new strategy is to unite all religions of the world through common moral values.

GLOSSARY OF CATHOLIC TERMS

Apocrypha – Fifteen writings recorded during the 400 years between the Old and New Testaments. Twelve of them were declared inspired and added to the Catholic Canon in 1546.

Apparition – The perception of a disembodied person often associated with an urgent message. The Vatican has authenticated many visual and audible encounters with the Virgin Mary throughout the world.

Eucharist – A wafer claimed to contain the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus Christ our Lord (*1374*)^{**} that is to be worshipped, consumed, and sacrificed (*1378*).

Indulgence – The means of remission of the temporal punishment for sins. It is gained by good works and can be applied to the sins of the living and the dead (*1471-79*).

Infallible teachings – The pope and bishops are incapable of error when proclaiming a definitive doctrine pertaining to faith and morals (*891*).

Mass – The continuation of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ at Calvary (*1367*) which carries on the work of redemption (*1405*), appeases the wrath of God, and atones for the sins of the living and the dead (*1371, 1414*).

^{*} Bible quotes are from the New American Bible for Catholics.

^{**} All reference numbers are taken from the Roman Catholic Catechism (1994).

Mortal sin – A grave sin committed with full knowledge and consent (*1857*). Those who die in this state descend into hell (*1035*).

Penance – The sacrament of confessing sins committed after baptism to a priest for forgiveness and reconciliation to God and the church (*1456*).

Purgatory – A place where those who die in God’s grace are punished and purified by fire for sins that have already been forgiven (*1030-32, 1471*).

Rosary – An expression of devotion to Mary, developed in the 11th century by Peter the Hermit, using beads to count 53 repetitious prayers to Mary, six to the Father, and six to the Trinity.

Sacraments – Seven efficacious signs of grace that are necessary for salvation and by which divine life is dispensed (*1129*).

Venial sin – A sin that merits only temporal punishment and does not deprive the sinner of grace, friendship with God, or eternal happiness.

SOME ROMAN CATHOLIC TRADITIONS & THE YEAR THEY WERE DECREED

AD 431 – Proclamation that infant baptism regenerates the soul.

AD 500 – The Mass instituted as a re-enactment of the sacrifice of Jesus.

AD 1000 – Attendance at Mass made mandatory under the penalty of mortal sin.

AD 1079 – Celibacy of priesthood decreed by Pope Gregory VII.

AD 1090 – Rosary, repetitious praying with beads, invented by Peter the Hermit.

AD 1190 – The granting of indulgences established to reduce time in purgatory.

AD 1215 – Pope Innocent III proclaimed the doctrine of Transubstantiation *and* instituted Confession of sins to priests.

AD 1438 – Purgatory elevated from doctrine to dogma by the Council of Florence.

AD 1545 – Tradition claimed equal in authority with the Bible by the Council of Trent.

AD 1854 – Immaculate Conception of Mary proclaimed by Pope Pius IX.

AD 1870 – Infallibility of the pope proclaimed by Vatican Council.

AD 1922 – Virgin Mary proclaimed co-Redeemer with Jesus by Pope Benedict XV.

AD 1950 – Assumption of the Virgin Mary into heaven proclaimed by Pope Pius XII.

ROMAN CATHOLIC CONTRADICTIONS

Contrast how Catholic teaching quoted from *their own Catechism* opposes and contradicts *their own Bible*.

JESUS OUR ADVOCATE AND ONLY MEDIATOR

Bible: “God is one, one also is the mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (*1 Tim 2:5; 1 John 2:1*).

Roman Catholic Church (RCC) teaches that Mary “did not lay aside [her] saving office but by her manifold intercession continues to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation.” She is “Advocate...and Mediatrix” (*969*).

JESUS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH

Bible: “He has put all things under Christ’s feet and made him, thus exalted, head of the church” (*Eph 1:22,23*).

RCC teaches that the pope, “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” (*882*). He exercises infallibility when “he proclaims by a definitive act a doctrine pertaining to faith or morals” (*891*).

JESUS EXPIATES OUR SIN AND CLEANSSES US FROM SIN

Bible: “Through his blood, God made him the means of expiation for all who believe” (*Rom 3:25*). “When he [Jesus] had cleansed us from our sins, he took his seat at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven” (*Heb 1:3*). “Christ...presents you to God holy, free of reproach and blame” (*Col 1:22*).

RCC teaches that sin is expiated in purgatory through “a cleansing fire” and that we “must strive to accept this temporal punishment of sin as a grace” (*1030-31, 1472-75*). “All who die in God’s grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified...undergo purification [in purgatory], so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter...heaven” (*1030*).

JESUS FINISHED THE WORK OF REDEMPTION

Bible: “Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer daily sacrifices...By one offering he has forever perfected those who are being sanctified” (*Heb 7:27,28; 10:14*).

RCC denies the work of redemption is finished: “The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice...the same Christ who offered himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross is contained and offered in an unbloody manner” (*1367*). The sacrifice is “offered in reparation for the sins of the living and the dead” (*1414*).

HIS LIFE, DEATH, AND RESURRECTION PROVIDED THE ONLY WAY TO BE SAVED

Bible: “There is no salvation in anyone else, for there is no other name in the whole world given to men by which we are to be saved” (*Acts 4:12*).

RCC denies this by teaching that the Catholic Church “is necessary for salvation” (*846*) and claiming “the plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator, in the first place amongst whom are the Muslims” (*841*).

JESUS THE SINLESS REDEEMER

Bible: “You know it was not with perishable things... that you are redeemed...but with the precious blood of Christ” (*1 Peter 1:18-19*).

RCC teaches that Mary is the sinless co-Redeemer. “Without a single sin to restrain her, she gave herself entirely to the person and work of her son; she did so in order to serve the mystery of redemption with him...being obedient she became the cause of salvation of herself and for the whole human race” (*494*).

HIS SHED BLOOD IS THE ONLY REMISSION FOR SINS

Bible: “Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness...Since these [sins] have been forgiven, there is no further offering for sin” (*Heb 9:22; 10:18*).

RCC teaches “an indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven, which...may be applied to the living or the dead” (*1471*).

JESUS THE SOON-COMING KING

Bible: “This same Jesus, who has been taken away from you into heaven will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven” (*Acts 1:11*).

RCC teaches that Jesus returns *daily* to Catholic altars to be worshipped: “The body and blood...soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ...is truly, really, and substantially contained” in the Eucharist (*1374-78*).

SALVATION IS PROCLAIMED IN THE GOSPEL

Bible: “It is the power of God leading everyone who believes in it to salvation” (*Rom 1:16*). “It is the good news of Jesus Christ, his life, death, and resurrection according to the Scriptures” (*1 Cor 15:1-4*). “If anyone preaches a gospel to you other than the one you received, let a curse be upon him” (*Gal 1:9*).

RCC preaches a different gospel by demanding additional requirements for salvation including: the sacraments (*1129*), meritorious masses (*1405*), church membership (*846*), purgatory (*1030*), indulgences (*1498*), and baptism (*1256*).

SALVATION IS OF GOD, NOT OF MAN

Bible: “When you heard the glad tidings of salvation, the word of truth, and believed in it, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit” (*Eph 1:13*). Those “who believe in his name were begotten not by...man’s willing it, but by God” (*John 1:13*).

RCC teaches that “baptism is the sacrament of regeneration...without which no one can enter the kingdom of God” (*1213, 1215*).

SALVATION IS THROUGH FAITH, NOT WORKS

Bible: “Salvation is yours through faith. This is not of your own doing, it is God’s gift, neither is it a reward for anything you have accomplished, so let no one pride himself on it” (*Eph 2:8-9*). “Yet in no way can a man redeem himself, or pay his own ransom to God. Too high is the price to redeem one’s life; he would never have enough” (*Psalms 49:7-8*).

RCC teaches salvation through faith *plus* works. People can obtain their own salvation and at the same time cooperate in saving their brothers through good works and indulgences (1477, 1479).

SALVATION IS BY GRACE, NOT MERIT

Bible: "All men are now undeservedly justified by the gift of God...It is not because of their works, otherwise grace would not be grace" (Rom 3:24; 11:6). "He saved us, not because of any righteous deeds we had done, but because of his mercy" (Titus 3:5).

RCC denies justifying grace is undeserved: "By his death and resurrection, Jesus Christ has 'opened' heaven to us" (1026). "A treasury of prayers and good works makes it possible for Catholics to attain their own salvation" (1477). "We can merit for ourselves and for others all the graces needed to attain eternal life" (2027).

SALVATION REJECTED IS HELL

Bible: "Those who do not acknowledge God nor heed the good news of our Lord Jesus...will suffer the penalty of eternal ruin" (2 Thess 1:8-9).

RCC teaches that "immediately after death the souls of those who die in a state of mortal sin descend into hell, where they suffer...eternal fire" (1035).

THE STORY OF MARTIN BOOS

Martin Boos, a man of unspotted character, was ordained a Roman Catholic priest in 1781. He tells what "immense pains" he took to become a really good and righteous man. "For years, even in winter, I lay upon the cold floor; I scourged myself till I bled again; I fasted and gave my bread to the poor; I spent every hour I could spare in the church; I confessed and took the sacrament almost every week; in short, I gained such a character for piety that I was appointed prefect of the congregation of the ex-Jesuits. But what a life I led!

"The prefect, with all his sanctity, became more and more absorbed in self, melancholy and formal. The 'saint' was evermore exclaiming in his heart, 'Oh, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me?' And no one replied, 'The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord' (Rom 7:24-25). No one gave the sick man that spiritual directive: 'The just shall live by faith' (Gal 3:11)."

In 1788, God was pleased to open the eyes of Martin Boos in a most unexpected manner. He visited a sick person who was respected for her godliness and deep humility. He said to her, "You will die very peacefully and happily." "Why so?" she asked. "Because you have led such a pious and holy life," he responded.

The good woman smiled at his words, and said, "If I leave this world relying on my own piety, I am surely lost; but relying on Jesus my Savior, I can die in comfort. What a clergyman you are! If I listened to you, what would become of me? How could I stand before the divine tribunal, where every one must give an account even of their idle words? Which of our actions and virtues would not be found wanting if laid in the divine balances? No; if Christ had not died and made satisfaction for me, I'd be lost forever, regardless of all my good works and pious conduct. He is my hope, my salvation, and my eternal happiness."

The young priest was astonished. He had gone to the bedside of this dying woman to console her, if possible, while he himself knew not the true consolation found only in Christ, and not in religious rites and ceremonies. With all his learning, he was ignorant of that which this simple-hearted woman knew so well.

Fortunately for him, he did not refuse to be taught by so weak an instrument. The dying woman's testimony made a lasting impression upon his soul, and in the course of time, he was led to reject the whole system of teaching that we are saved "by works of righteousness that we have done" (Titus 3:5), and rested his soul entirely on the merits of "Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1).

How perfectly vain are our efforts in the matter of our soul's salvation (Rom 3:10-12)—all of our fancied "righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6). Martin Boos learned at last to count all his learning and acquirements as dross and dung as a means of securing a fitness to stand before the judgment-bar of God.

Nothing we can do will avail anything towards settling the great account between our soul and God. To enter into his rest you must "cease from your own works" (Heb 4:9-10), and rely alone upon the finished work that Christ accomplished at Calvary (Rom 4:4-5). God accepts that work; and he accepts us only upon the ground of what his Son has done, and not because of anything we could ever do. Cast yourself upon Christ alone, and his merits, and you shall be forever "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph 1:6). □

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

The gospel of Christ is good news of pardon to the guilty, addressing all as equally guilty before God. It reveals an atonement sufficient for all; and every sinner is commanded to receive it as a faithful saying, that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim 1:15). The gospel is addressed to those who are "far from righteousness" (Isa 46:12); who are poor, and blind, and naked; who have no money to purchase salvation, no merit to recommend them to the favor of God (Isa 55:1; Luka 7:42).

Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance (Matt 9:13). If we are not sinners, we have nothing to do with the gospel; and if we are sinners, let us not reject the counsel of God against ourselves, by vainly supposing that anything about us gives us a peculiar claim to his favor, or by imagining that our sins are too great to be forgiven. The thief upon the cross was saved by faith in Jesus, and none shall enter heaven in any other way. Our only plea is this—"God be merciful to me a sinner."

Although the Scriptures are so clear on this subject, it is a stumbling-block and foolishness to the great body of those who hear the gospel. It offends their pride to be put upon a level with the outcasts of society; surely, they think, some difference will be made; but they err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor understanding the malignity of sin or the grace of God.

They view salvation as a kind of bargain which God proposes to make with his creatures, that on certain conditions he will accept them; while in fact it is the message of reconciliation, equally addressed to all mankind, declaring that a full atonement for sin has been made upon the cross, and inviting every sinner of Adam's race instantly to approach God through Christ.

When Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, it was a remedy equally adapted for all who had been bitten (Num 21:8; John 3:14-15). By looking to the serpent the patient was healed; and in reference to this emblem, Christ, indiscriminately addressing all mankind, says, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else" (Isa 45:21-22).

While the gospel is preached freely to all, it is "the power of God unto salvation" only to those who believe (Rom 1:16). But it is vain to talk of being justified by Christ's righteousness, unless our hearts are "purified by faith" (Acts 15:9). We may profess faith in Jesus while we are slaves to sin; we may deceive ourselves, and affirm that we are trusting in Christ while we are living after the flesh; but every branch in the vine that beareth not fruit shall be cast into the fire (Matt 3:10; John 15:2).

If we believe Christ's gospel, it will effectually work in our hearts (1 Thess 2:13), and teach us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world (Titus 2:11-12); and if what we believe does not produce this effect, it is not the true grace of God in which we stand. We are deceived. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal 5:24). □

Roman Catholicism Scripture vs. Tradition

The Roman Catholic Church has always been identified with Christianity because it upholds four fundamentals of the Christian faith: the deity of Christ, the Triune God, the virgin birth, and the bodily resurrection and return of Christ to earth. However, Catholic teaching opposes the doctrine that is *most essential* to the Christian faith—the doctrine of **justification by faith alone**. The Vatican not only denies this doctrine, but also condemns anyone who believes it. Other Catholic doctrines deny that Christ's work of redemption is *finished* and that his atonement is *sufficient*. For this reason Roman Catholicism must be identified as an apostate church and Catholics need to be evangelized.

In spite of this there are some Catholics who do not adhere to all the teachings of their church and have had a genuine born-again experience. Still, with over one billion Catholics in the world and a growing ecumenical movement to unite all religions under the power and influence of the pope, the truth about Catholicism must be told.

It is important to realize that most of the clergy and lay people that teach Roman Catholic doctrine are not deceiving people with malicious intent. They are simply passing on what they have been taught, believing it to be the truth. Many Catholics have a zeal for God, but it's not based on biblical knowledge. Prayer, love, compassion, and understanding are needed along with the power of the Spirit of God using the Word of God to penetrate their hearts. Patience is needed to untangle Roman Catholics from the dogmatic web in which they are held captive (Col 2:8).

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CATHOLICISM

The Roman Catholic Church claims to be the church founded by Christ (Matt 16:18). Peter professed Christ as the Rock and Chief Cornerstone of the church (1 Peter 2:6-8), which consist of all those who are holy and blameless and who submit to Christ (Eph 5:24,27). After the death of the apostles the church ignored their warnings that men would rise up from among them and distort the truth to lead many astray. From out of the original apostolic church of sanctified, humble, persecuted believers evolved a worldly institution of awesome wealth, power, and political influence.

In the fourth century Constantine unified the Roman Empire by merging paganism with Christianity. Declaring himself Vicar of Christ, he elevated "converts" to positions

THE GOSPEL OF GOD'S GRACE REVEALS:

(1) **The Lord Jesus Christ, his sinless life, victorious death, and resurrection** (1 Cor 15:1-4)

(2) **Sins are expiated by Christ's blood** (Rom 3:25)

(3) **Salvation glorifies God alone** (Eph 1)

(4) **The work of salvation is finished** (John 19:30; Heb 10:14)

(5) **Salvation is ...**

- **Only through Christ** (Acts 4:12)

- **A gift of God's grace** (Rom 3:24; Eph 2:8-9)

- **By faith alone apart from works** (Rom 4:5-8; 11:6; Gal 2:21; Eph 2:8-9)

- **Attained by Christ** (Rom 5:9)

- **At the moment a sinner believes the gospel** (Eph 1:13-14)

- **Secured by God** (John 10:27-30)

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC GOSPEL REVEALS:

(1) **A religious system of sacraments, indulgences, purgatory, and prayers for the dead** (1032, 1471-79, 1498)

(2) **Sins are expiated by suffering in purgatory** (1030-31)

(3) **Mary and all the saints are also glorified** (1476-77)

(4) **The work of salvation continues with daily sacrifices** (611, 1405)

(5) **Salvation is ...**

- **Through the Roman Catholic Church** (846)

- **Merited by doing good works** (1815, 1821, 2010, 2027)

- **By faith plus the law, sacraments, and good works** (1129, 1131)

- **Attained by man** (2010, 2027)

- **A process from baptism through purgatory** (161-62, 1254-55)

- **Never assured in this life** (1036, 2005)