

Is The
Roman
Catholic
Church
A Christian Church?

Comparing and contrasting biblical doctrines with Catholic doctrines regarding the gospel.



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Is The Roman Catholic Church A Christian Church?

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All Scripture quotations are from the
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Contents

What Is Apologetics?	1
Introduction	1
CHAPTER ONE	3
"Christ Died"	
CHAPTER TWO	13
"For Our Sins"	
CHAPTER THREE	22
"According To The Scriptures"	
CHAPTER FOUR	25
"He Was Buried And That He Rose Again The Third Day"	
CHAPTER FIVE	35
Those That Deny The Biblical Gospel Proclaim A False Gospel	
A Word With My Catholic Friends	43
A Word With My Bible Believing Friends	45
Endnotes	47

What Is Apologetics?

The study of biblical apologetics rests in defending the Gospel and doctrines of Scripture. It endeavors to refute and expose unbiblical teachings which have their origins in men rather than the Bible. Biblical apologetics therefore is the theological discipline concerned with the defense of biblical Christianity as it relates to salvation, doctrines and Christian practice (Galatians 1:6-9; II John 9-11; II Timothy 2:15). The basic function of apologetics is to develop a biblical defense against aberrant, heretical and counterfeit teachings which challenge the absolute truths of Scripture. Therefore, studying the Bible from an apologetic perspective will equip believers to understand and refute these deceptions. Also, the practice of biblical apologetics strives to expose philosophical and historical speculations that also challenge the Word of God.

The ultimate objective in apologetics is to persuade those potential converts to biblical Christianity through the written Word and convicting power of the Holy Spirit. Bible-believing Christians must be discipled and equipped with the knowledge to effectively defend the faith (Jude 3) and to always be ready to give every person an answer for the hope that is within them (I Peter 3:15).

Introduction -

Is the Roman Catholic Church a Christian Church in the true biblical sense? Does Rome embrace and teach what the Bible proclaims about the Gospel? The purpose of this book is to compare and contrast the biblical Gospel with what the Catholic Church teaches regarding Rome's interpretation of the Gospel. When we do this objectively, a clear and distinct difference emerges for anyone willing to submit themselves humbly to the authority of God's inspired Scriptures. We will be able to determine with clarity whether the Church of Rome is a true biblical Church or an apostate Church that has departed from the biblical faith of the apostles. This important question had a very clear-cut answer 450 years ago when the Reformers departed from the traditional teachings of the popes. Today, however, there are many evangelicals and fundamentalists on each side of the debate.

There are numerous warnings in Scripture about false teachers and deceivers who would attempt to lead people away from biblical truth. For example, Jude warned the Church to contend for the faith against apostates who attempt to steal away disciples. In verse 4 of his epistle, he wrote, "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." Jude warns there would be certain men whose condemnation was written about long

ago who would secretly slip in among true believers. He said they are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny the Lord Jesus Christ. Jude further identifies the apostates by certain characteristics. They are ungodly because they supplant God's authority with an authority of their own. Apostates turn the grace of God into a commodity that can be bought, bartered or merited. They pervert the Gospel of grace into a Gospel of works. They deny the supremacy of Christ and give His divine attributes and titles to others. They deny the sufficiency of the Word of God and Work of Christ. It is these impostors who lead people away from "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). Are these perversions prevalent or descriptive of the Roman Catholic Church? Let us compare and contrast the teachings of the Bible with the teachings of Catholicism regarding the Gospel to see if the Church of Rome is a Christian Church as defined by the Word of God. And as we venture into this study, it needs to be understood, biblical Christianity is a plumb line for comparing faiths, even belief systems which purport to be Christian.

What is a plumb line? A plumb line is a string with a pointed weight on the end and it is still used today by masons to make sure they lay a brick wall straight and true. In the book of Amos in the Old Testament, God said to Amos, look, I am setting a plumb line among my people (Amos 7:8). The Lord referred to this familiar tool to tell the Jewish people what He wanted them to know, that He would measure their faithfulness to Him, by His standards, by His Word and not man's.

In the same way God's inspired Word in the New Testament in First Corinthians 15:3-4 is a plumb line for defining the Gospel and for measuring all other faiths as it relates to what they believe about the Gospel. The apostle Paul stated in Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." The Gospel Paul is referring to is the Gospel that saves completely and unto the uttermost (Hebrews 7:25). And in First Corinthians 15:3-4, the apostle defines what the Good News of the biblical Gospel is. "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." The apostle makes it very clear anyone or any religious system that deviates from this Gospel was guilty of embracing a false Gospel. "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him (are so quickly deserting Him) that called you into the grace of Christ unto another Gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert (twist or distort) the Gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other Gospel unto you than that ye have received let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:6-9).

No religion, cult, sect or apostate belief system in the world agrees with biblical Christianity on all these points in First Corinthians 15:3-4. So the aim of this book is to

explain how Catholicism's perspective on the Gospel differs from biblical Christianity and what these differences actually mean.

We trust this study will help the convinced follower of Catholicism better understand biblical Christianity and, at the same time, more clearly understand the faith on which he is staking his destiny in this life and eternity. Likewise, it is hoped that this book will help the Bible-believing Christian better understand Catholicism and at the same time better understand what he professes to believe himself. Let us now turn our attention to this important study.

Chapter 1 **"Christ Died" -**

In First Corinthians 15:3-4, we find the central passage of Scripture that will be used in this study to help us fully understand the biblical Gospel and demonstrate how we can compare and contrast any belief or religious system to it.

The first major component of the biblical Gospel found in verse 3 is the Person and Work of Jesus Christ. The historical and biblical fact is that Christ died on the cross of Calvary. The two key issues in the phrase "Christ Died" begs the question of who He is and what He did for mankind. Let us look first at what the Bible teaches about the Person of Christ.

The Person of Christ -

The biblical record clearly and frequently states that Jesus Christ is God in the flesh. For example, in the Gospel of John in chapter 1:1, it refers to the Lord Jesus as the Word (Logos) and tells us that "In the beginning was the Word... and the Word was God "John 1:14 testifies that "The Word (God) was made (became) flesh and dwelt among us."

Of primary importance is what Christ said about Himself. On several occasions He claimed to be equal with God. For example, in John 10:30 we find His revealing statement: "I and my Father are one. " On another occasion the Lord Jesus told Philip and some of the other disciples that because they had seen Him they had seen the Father as well (John 14:9).

Old Testament Prophecy Confirms Christ Deity -

The New Testament word, Christ, is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word, Messiah, and speaks of the promised deliverer anointed by God. Because of the many Old Testament prophecies of Christ (Messiah), the Christ of the New Testament had to fulfill all of these.

Included in these prophecies were facts about His descent - the seed of a woman (Genesis 3:15) through Abraham (Genesis 12:3), Judah (Genesis 49:10) and David (Second Samuel 7:13). The place of His birth was foretold (Micah 5:2), as well as facts about His earthly mother and siblings (Psalm 79:8). All of these had to be and were literally fulfilled.

The most important prophecies had to do with His eternal Deity (Isaiah 9:7) and substitutionary death for sin (Isaiah 53). Without the fulfillment of these prophecies His Messiahship, or being the Christ, would be impossible.

All Roman Catholics profess belief in Christ, but they do not know the Christ of the Bible. They would say they believe in the Deity of Christ, yet they do not credit Him with an infinite role in their salvation.

For example, pastor Despars, a Roman Catholic priest, captures the very essence of what Rome believes and teaches about the Person and Work of Christ in his sermon at St. Brigid's Catholic Church in Las Vegas, Nevada. He stated, "Christ did almost all the work for our salvation, I would say about 90%." ¹ This denies both His eternal Deity and substitutionary death. The St. Peter's Catholic Catechism states, "It is the sin of presumption to believe we can be saved by God alone ... without our own efforts. " The Roman Catholic concept of Christ is not of an infinite substitute, but of one who didn't do quite enough, so they have to do the rest. Remember what Romans 10:3-4 says? "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

Rome's View Of The Trinity -

Because your Catholic friend recites a creed mentioning the Trinity, does that mean he truly knows the Triune Godhead? In reality, Catholic doctrine denies essential biblical doctrines by what it affixes to biblical truths regarding the Godhead. Virtually every Catholic would say he believes in God the Father, but can have no real understanding or fellowship with Him until he is saved (John 17:3). The Catholic Church demands that the worship that is due to God alone is to be given also to their communion Eucharist.

Virtually every Catholic would say they believe in God the Son, but for most, Jesus is either a dead Christ on the cross or a communion host at Mass or an infant or child subject to His mother and protected in her arms.

The Holy Spirit's reality is an article of faith in Catholicism, but the only emphasis on the Spirit today is in a Catholic charismatic setting.

The Lord Jesus has been replaced by Mary in the devotion of multitudes of Catholics. Rome adds divine adoration for Mary by addressing her in prayer as "The All Holy One." Further, all who believe what the Catholic Church teaches about the pope have him in the very office Christ gave to the Holy Spirit: The Vicar of Christ (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7-11). Catholics insist they believe in the Trinity yet their belief about the Trinity is aberrant and heretical from what inspired Scripture proclaims about the Godhead. As a missionary in Catholic evangelism for many years, I have read many statements from Catholic theologians regarding the Trinity which were totally unbiblical and heretical. But perhaps the most bizarre statement I read about the Trinity was during the 1932 International Eucharistic Congress in Dublin, Ireland, where Rome had a huge banner affixed to the GPO building on O'Connell Street. It boldly proclaimed, GOD BLESS THE TRINITY. ²

Full theistic attributes of God, in a creedal sense, is accepted by Catholics, in a theological sense, it certainly is not. It is very easy to parrot a creed that states God's essential Godhead, but unless that truth becomes part of our theology, it is just recitation of a creed.

Finally, what about in practice? How is the Trinity viewed by most Catholics? God the Father is often portrayed as some grandfather type Who's powerless and often in the background of Mary. God the Son is portrayed, more often than not, as stated earlier, as a helpless infant in the arms of His earthly mother. God the Holy Spirit is portrayed as the spiritual spouse of Mary. According to Rome, Mary has been elevated to hyper-static union with the Trinity. What's the result? They have an aberrant belief system regarding the Trinity; the Godhead is portrayed in an unbiblical way.

As we shall see in chapter 5, a great deal more heresy is involved in Catholic Christology, with regard to the Person of Christ, such as denying Christ's exclusive role as mediator between God and man. Moreover, making Mary "co-mediatrix"; Rome denies the exclusivity of His redemptive Work, making Mary "co-redemptrix" (The Second Vatican Council credits Mary with a perpetual "salvific role; she continues to obtain by her constant intercession the graces we need for eternal salvation ") and Rome denies the sufficiency of His redemptive Work, declaring that the redeemed must, in addition to Christ's suffering for them upon the cross, suffer for their own sins here on earth and eventually in purgatory.

If you are one that purports to believe the biblical teaching about the Trinity, yet that belief has not led you to faith in Christ alone for your salvation and to embrace other biblical doctrines regarding the Person and Work of Christ on the cross, then your faith is unbiblical.

The Work Of Christ -

The second aspect of the term "Christ Died" from First Corinthians 15:3 has to do with His death on Calvary. What does the Bible teach concerning the Work of Christ? It teaches numerous things but we shall look at four crucial doctrines regarding the Work of Christ and compare and contrast them with what Rome teaches about each one.

The Bible Teaches Christ's Death Was Sacrificial -

The Scriptures teach, "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission (forgiveness) of sin (Hebrews 9:22). And in John 3:16 we are told "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. " As a result of Christ's sacrificial death, those which come to Him by faith alone and receive Him as Saviour are cleansed and forgiven of their sins. "When He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high" (Hebrews 1:3).

The Bible clearly tells us that "by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified (Hebrews 10:14). God also clearly witnesses to the extent and cost of that Work of redemption. The extent is measureless, and God assures us of this when He speaks of the forgiveness of sins. He proclaims, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:12). Such an infinite removal of sins (for who can measure how far the east is from the west?) requires an infinite Work of salvation, and because of this we can be assured our salvation is not the do-it-yourself method of religious man, but the completed Work of the infinite Saviour, accomplished once for all.

Beloved, when the Lord Jesus died and rose again, all sins (from Adam and Eve till the last sin that will ever be committed) were paid for by Christ: "And He is the propitiation (atoning sacrifice or satisfaction) for our sins" and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world (I John 2:2). This was an infinite sacrifice given for an infinite number of sinners, who had, or will commit an infinite number of sins.

What Does Rome Teach About The Sacrificial Work Of Jesus Christ? -

This one perfect sacrificial Work of redemption by Jesus Christ on the cross has been supplanted, in Catholic theology, by Rome's "Sacrifice of the Mass" even before Christ's Work on the cross was accomplished. According to their theology, Catholicism teaches that Christ instituted the "Sacrifice of the Mass" at the Last Supper. They teach that when the Lord Jesus pronounced over the bread and wine, "This is My body" and "This is My blood, " He literally changed them. They say the bread became His body. The wine became His blood. They contend Christ then offered them as a sacrifice to the

Father, and gave them to His disciples to eat and drink. This, says the Catholic Church, was the first Eucharist.

At the Last Supper, Christ also told His disciples, "this do in remembrance of Me" (Luke 22:19). Rome teaches that by those words the Lord ordained His disciples as priests and commissioned them to offer the Mass as a sacrifice continuously until He returns.

Once the bread and wine are transformed into the body and blood of Christ at the prayer of consecration, according to Rome, Jesus is now upon the altar as a sacrificial victim. He is then offered up as a living sacrifice. After consecrating the bread and wine, the priest prays: "We offer to you, God of glory and majesty, this holy and perfect sacrifice, the bread of life and the cup of eternal salvation. " Beloved, keep in mind, as incredible as it is, this takes place before the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

The absurdity of this line of reasoning is proven by one point. The Lord Jesus was literally still among the apostles before, during and after they had partaken of the bread and the wine. He wasn't changed into some liquid and bread. His flesh was still on His bones and His blood still in His veins. He had not disappeared to reappear in the form of a piece of bread or a cup of wine. You can begin to see the contradictions that arise as a result of their faulty method of interpretation.

When Catholic theologians interpret Matthew 26 and John chapter 6 as proof-texts for establishing the "Sacrifice of the Mass, " they are guilty of the err of eisegesis (reading a meaning into the text of Scripture) rather than practicing proper exegesis (drawing the meaning from the text of Scripture). This is why Rome can make a verse of Scripture mean virtually anything. The practice of eisegesis is never an appropriate way to read and study the Bible. And to conclude from these passages of Scripture all that Rome purports to be true, is to read something into the text that is not there.

This teaching raises an important question. Since Rome teaches the Mass is a re-presenting of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. How could it have been a representation of something that had not yet occurred (Christ had not yet been sacrificed). The Last Supper would then have to be seen as a "sacrifice before the sacrifice" instead of a re-presenting of the sacrifice on the cross. But if the Last Supper is not a re-presenting of a sacrifice, or a sacrifice in itself, then (since the Last Supper is the institution of the Eucharist according to Rome) on what grounds does the Catholic Church insist that the Mass is a sacrifice or a representation of one?

The Bible Teaches Christ's Death Was A One-Time Never To Be Repeated Sacrifice -

When the Lord Jesus cried out on the cross, "It is Finished" He had completed the Work of redemption for our salvation. The apostle Paul states in Romans 6:9-10, "Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion

over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God."

But Rome's Gospel denies the one-time never to be repeated sacrifice of Christ. From the Second Vatican Council: "The Mass is a sacrifice in which the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated. In it (the Mass) Christ perpetuates in an unbloody manner the sacrifice offered on the cross, offering Himself to the Father for the world's salvation through the ministry of the priests."

For Bible-believing Christians the idea that the Mass is in any sense a repetition of the death of Christ is reminiscent of the repeated sacrifices of the Law of Moses, which was a reminder of sins year after year (Hebrews 10:3). The Mass gives a constant reminder of sins and remaining guilt to be atoned for week after week. To be sure, one of the detracting things about the Old Testament sacrificial system was that people were reminded year after year of their sins. We see the Roman Catholic Mass resembles the Old Testament system in that it constantly serves to remind us of our sins instead of the biblical truth that our sins have once-for-all been forgiven by Christ. In Hebrews 10:14 one of the great things about the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ is that people have full assurance of complete forgiveness of sins.

According to the writer of Hebrews, Christ's sacrifice is one in number, once in time, and completed. This truth is confirmed in Hebrews 10:12 where it says that, after His sacrifice, Christ "sat down on the right hand of God, " again, denoting completion. The purpose of this phrase is to show absolute completion of Christ's sacrifice - it cannot be repeated, nor can it be continued. Contrary to Catholic belief, Christ is not continuing this one sacrifice, but (in regard to sacrificial work) is now seated, waiting for "His enemies to be made His footstool" (Hebrews 10:13).

The Lord completes this series of verses by making it perfectly clear the end result of this one perfect sacrifice of Himself results in forgiveness of sin - past, present and future in verses 17 and 18: "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission (forgiveness) of these (sins) is, there is no more offering for sin."

How do our Catholic friends reconcile verses 17 and 18 with the continual re-presentings of Christ's sacrifice in the Mass? Beloved, any honest evaluation must admit one cannot!

The Bible Teaches His Death Was A Substitutionary Sacrifice -

Substitutionary or vicarious atonement simply means that Jesus Christ suffered as a substitute for us, that is, instead of us. Rome's Gospel denies the substitutionary death of Christ. The concept of substitution is hated by Catholic theologians. Paulist Priest Bertrand Conway, from The Question Box, a former Catholic apologetics ministry

wrote: "The guilt of actual sin cannot be transferred from one soul to another. To assert that the guilt of men's sins was transferred to our Lord dying on the cross is absurd and blasphemous. Such a view is utterly alien to Catholic teaching. "

But that is exactly what inspired Scripture proclaims about the Work of Christ - that it is substitutionary. The apostle Paul clearly states this in Second Corinthians 5:21: "For He (God the Father) hath made Him (God the Son) to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. "

The apostle Paul's intended meaning in Second Corinthians 5:21 is that Christ was always without sin actually, but at the cross He was made to be sin for us judicially. While the Lord Jesus never committed a sin personally, He was made to be sin for us substitutionally. Just as the righteousness that is imputed to Christians in justification is extrinsic to them, so the sin that was imputed to Christ on the cross was extrinsic to Him and never in any sense contaminated His nature. As one Bible teacher put it, "The innocent was punished voluntarily as if guilty, that the guilty might be gratuitously rewarded as if innocent."

The whole redemptive plan, contrary to what the Catholic Church teaches, is one of substitution - and without such substitution there can be no salvation. It was by His utterly selfless sacrificial death on the cross that our sinless Saviour - the unblemished Lamb of God - paid the penalty for our sins and thereby canceled the debt of sin against us; wondrously making possible our reconciliation with God.

The Apostle Peter was in perfect harmony with Paul regarding the Work of Christ being substitutionary. In First Peter 2:24 and 3:18, he states the same truth about the Lord Jesus in different words. "Who His (Christ) own self bare our sins in His (Christ) own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed (spiritually). "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust (that's substitutionary), that He might bring us to God."

The prophet Isaiah also wrote of the suffering Saviour and that His Work on Calvary would be substitutionary: "But He (Christ) was wounded for our transgressions, He (Christ) was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him (Christ); and with His (Christ) stripes we are healed (spiritually). All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord (God the Father) hath laid on Him (Christ) the iniquity of us all" (that's substitutionary).

Bible Believing Christians And Catholics Do Not Agree About The Substitutionary Work Of Christ-

The salvation by God's grace a Bible-Believing Christian rejoices in is without respect to works, but Catholic's believe God's grace gives them the ability to do the works

necessary for salvation. The Bible-believer says "Jesus died for me, " and believes in Christ's completed Work of substitution. Although a Catholic might use the same words, the concept of substitution is totally foreign to most Catholics. For the Catholic, the Lord Jesus' death on the cross merely opened the previously locked gates of Heaven.

The Bible teaches that Heaven is a free gift of God (Romans 5:15; 6:23 and Ephesians 2:8), purchased by the Lord Jesus' death on the cross. The Roman Catholic Catechism, The Teaching of Christ, says, "God's gift was not to be only the blessed life of heaven, but the further gift of letting men gain blessedness as a merited reward" (p.35).

When we talk of trusting Christ alone, do we mean we rely on His sacrifice as the payment for our sins, or are we trusting Him to help us to do whatever is necessary for us to get to Heaven?

Throughout this chapter, we can plainly see that the Scriptural truths which are revealed to us in the New Testament concerning our Lord Jesus Christ are not known by our Roman Catholic friends because they have missed the foundational truths of the Person and Work of Christ. He is the fulfillment of all Old Testament Messianic prophecy - our true God and Saviour.

Fourthly, The Bible Teaches His Death Was A Propitiatory Sacrifice -

Finally, the last core doctrine regarding the Work of Christ we want to survey is that it is a propitiatory sacrifice of infinite value which forgives sins.

However, the Catholic Church teaches that Christ instituted the Eucharist in order to perpetuate His sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins. According to Rome, every time a priest offers the Mass, the wrath of God against sin is soothed. They teach the Mass, even as the cross itself, is a propitiatory or appeasing sacrifice for both the living and the dead.

What does the new Catholic Catechism say in support of this teaching? From the Catechism we read regarding the Mass being a propitiatory sacrifice.

The Mass is an unbloody sacrifice which atones for the sins of the living and the dead.

Each Sacrifice of the Mass appeases God's wrath against sin.

The faithful receive the benefits of the cross in fullest measure through the Sacrifice of the Mass.³

Beloved, the propitiation supposedly received through the Mass is finite in its effects which are why the faithful Catholic, according to their theology, can attend literally

thousands of Masses and still need to spend time in purgatory to "finish" the process of purification and sanctification.

What do, we have here? What are they really saying? They are saying that Christ's sacrifice on the cross of Calvary, in and of itself, was incomplete. That there is a way of propitiation, of satisfaction for sins, apart from the Work of Christ. The Catholic position makes the Work of Christ dependent upon man's works and actions and not on His completed and finished Work of redemption. As we have already seen, the Bible proclaims complete and total forgiveness for those that are in Christ. The complete forgiveness that is promised by God in Christ refutes any possibility of the continuing punishment of sin. If the sin is forgiven, God has no basis upon which to punish. The Scriptures state that He bore all our sins in His body on the cross. Remember First Peter 2:24 and Isaiah 53:5? Further, the Lord states in Jeremiah 31:34 that He will not only forgive our sins, but will not even remember our sins anymore. Beloved, this also means He will not demand the penalty for them either.

The real problem here is Catholicism, as a religious system, has never fully understood what the intention of Christ was when He came to this world. Why did Christ enter into human flesh and dwell among the very people He created? In Luke 19:10, we see the answer from His own lips. "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. " He came to seek and to save the spiritually lost. And we see in First Timothy 1:15 the apostle Paul was in full agreement with the Lord Jesus. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief " Paul believed the same as the Lord. That His intention in coming into the world was to save sinners, those who are spiritually lost. Beloved, this is the most important question any searching person can ask. Once you determine the answer, you must ask a further question. Did He accomplish the Work for which He came? That is why the Scriptures state the Lord Jesus is the propitiation for sin. This profound truth is found in Romans 3:25. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission (forgiveness) of sins that are past; through the forbearance of God " Notice here, the blood of Christ is set forth as the basis for the propitiation. Paul does not give three or four different ways your sins may be forgiven. He makes it clear there is no other means of propitiation for sin. Jesus Christ, beloved, is the only way in which sin can be forgiven, remitted and satisfied.

In Hebrews 2:17, the writer of Hebrews, states that the Lord's role as high priest was so that He might make propitiation for the sins of the people. "Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." There can be no other propitiation if Christ has already atoned for sin. Sin is either propitiated or it isn't. Sin is not partially propitiated. It is either forgiven,

removed or it isn't. If Christ functions as the high priest and is the propitiation for a person's sins, then those sins are completely and fully removed.

We see this truth reiterated in First John 2:1-2 and 4:9-10. *"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."*

Jesus Christ, my friend, is the only propitiation for sins. There is no other. Here is an infinite Saviour making an infinite propitiation for sin.

We have completed studying two opposing teachings on the very important subject of propitiation; one from a biblical perspective, the other from Rome's perspective. One is profoundly true, the other untrue. Belief in one will secure Heaven. Belief in the other results in eternal separation from God. Which will it be for you? Faith in Jesus Christ alone for propitiation of your sins and assurance of salvation, or the unbiblical teaching of forgiveness taught by Rome with no assurance of salvation? I trust you will embrace the inspired and inerrant Word of God to lead you to biblical faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone, for your salvation.

Chapter 2

"For Our Sins" -

The second core component of the biblical Gospel found in verse three of First Corinthians Chapter 15, is the phrase, "For our sins." Everyone, apart from Jesus Christ born into the world since Adam and Eve possesses a sin nature (Romans 3:10, 23). This is reiterated throughout the Bible.

What the Roman Catholic Church teaches about sin is clearly contrary from what inspired Scripture reveals about the subject. Rome has an aberrant view of sin in terms of what it is. They classify it. They also have an aberrant teaching regarding the forgiveness of sin. They believe lesser sins in terms of their severity, are confessed directly to God. Moreover, they believe serious sins are forgiven only through the sacrament of penance (confessing sins to a priest). However, Rome teaches even after minor and serious sins are forgiven, there still is temporal punishment due for sins committed. They maintain this temporal punishment is purged through acts of penance, charity, almsgiving, indulgences, novenas or paying a priest to offer the sacrifice of the Mass and eventually purgatory.

As we shall see, Catholicism divides all sins into two categories making an important and elaborate distinction between so-called venial and mortal sins. First, let's look at the meaning of venial sins and how they are forgiven.

Rome's Venial Sins -

The Dogmatic Theology for the Laity defines venial sins this way:

We commit a venial sin (one which can be forgiven outside confession) whenever we transgress a commandment of God either in a matter which is not so serious, or without full knowledge, or without full consent of the will .. for example, deliberate distraction at prayer, petty thievery, idleness, white lies, lack of love and generosity in small things, etc.

According to Roman Catholic theology, venial sins are those lesser sins in terms of severity that can be forgiven without one confessing to a Catholic priest, in the sacrament of penance. Rome assures Catholics God will forgive them of these minor sins if they confess them to God in prayer with sincere repentance.

The word venial comes from the Latin term *venia*, which means "pardon" or "easily forgiven." However, sins classified as venial still are considered a violation of God's law, but they do not determine whether one goes to Heaven or not. Unlike mortal sins,

they do not kill the life of the soul or incur eternal punishment. They do believe, however, venial sins can weaken one's spiritual vitality and make one more susceptible to mortal sins (conscious, deliberate, serious sin).

As we stated earlier, Catholics are taught they will have to suffer some temporal punishment for venial sins, whether on earth or in purgatory, but they are not serious enough to excommunicate Catholics from the Catholic Church or send them to Hell.

Additionally, we see from this quote that a Catholic can commit a venial sin not only by engaging in a lesser form of sin, but also if that individual engages in a more serious sin but is not sufficiently aware of the evil involved or does not fully consent to the sin.

Now let us turn our attention to the Catholic teaching regarding mortal sins.

Rome's Mortal Sins -

Unlike venial sins, mortal sins are deadly or mortal in the sense that they deplete the soul of God's sanctifying grace, according to Catholic theology. That is why the Catholic Church calls this kind of sin mortal, from the Latin word for death. They say if a Catholic dies with a mortal sin on their soul they go directly to Hell, without any chance of going to purgatory for final cleansing before entering Heaven.

Mortal sins are described as any great offense against the law of God, and are so called because they kill the soul and subject it to eternal punishment. According to Rome, even after a Catholic has received pardon from the sacrament of penance, like venial sins, a large but unknown amount of temporal punishment remains to be expiated during their lifetime and in purgatory.

The Catholic Concise Encyclopedia affirms: *"The result of mortal sin is the loss of sanctifying grace, the loss of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, remorse, and the punitive effect of eternal separation from God."* 1 Again, we see according to Rome, mortal sins are deadly sins. And should a Roman Catholic die in a state of having committed (and not dealt with) a mortal sin, that person will end up in Hell. 2

Rome Likens Sin To Physical Illness -

Catholic theologians liken this understanding of sin and how venial and mortal sins affect the soul to the way in which illnesses affect the body. They reason, most ailments are minor. The body's immune system fights them off and eventually restores health. They say a venial sin is like a minor sickness of the soul. It hinders spirituality and lowers resistance to temptation, but the vitality of the soul survives. Mortal sin, however, is a deathblow. It kills the soul as surely as a fatal disease kills the body. When a Catholic who has supposedly received sanctifying grace through baptism, commits a

mortal sin, he loses that grace. Though by baptism he had been justified, because of mortal sin he forfeits the grace of justification, or, it might be said, is dejustified. He becomes a child of wrath and destined for Hell. And just as a dead body has no capacity to restore life to itself, the Catholic Church teaches that a soul struck dead by mortal sin cannot revive itself. The Catholic must turn to the Church of Rome and to the sacrament of penance. 3

The Sacrament Of Penance -

We have already learned, the Roman Catholic Church teaches that the sacrament of penance reestablishes a right relationship between God and a wayward Catholic. The Catholic Church also refers to this sacrament as the sacrament of reconciliation.

One of the most stressful things Catholics must experience at least once a year, but encouraged to do more often, is having their confession of sins heard by an authorized priest. This Church law is required under pain of mortal sin if Catholics fail to do so. The fourth Lateran Council in A.D. 1215, decreed that every adult man or woman, should confess all their sins to a priest at least once a year. This decree was ratified by the Council of Trent in A.D. 1546, and remains in force today.

Confession (sacrament of penance) is the telling of one's sins to an authorized priest for the purpose of obtaining forgiveness. Catholics are required to confess all their mortal sins to a priest who sits as a judge and who claims to have the power to forgive sins in the name of God. Canon Law 888 states: "The priest has to remember that in hearing confession he is a judge. " According to Catholic theology, the priest has the power to forgive a Catholic of the guilt and the eternal punishment of the sin, but he is unable to remove the temporal punishment for that sin. The confession supposedly saves the Catholic from going to Hell; but the priest cannot forgive the penalty due for those sins and so the Catholic must atone for them by the performance of good works (penance) which the priest prescribes. Also, priests, too, including the bishops, cardinals and even the pope, receive forgiveness in this same manner, confessing their sins to other priests.

The above is an overview of what the Roman Catholic Church teaches about sin and how sin is forgiven. Let's explore further the Catholic dogmas mentioned from a biblical perspective.

A Biblical Response To Rome's Venial And Mortal Sins -

Where is the logic that God will forgive minor sins (venial) that are directly confessed to Him and other grave serious sins (mortal) must be confessed directly to a Catholic priest in the sacrament of penance?

Beloved, the Bible makes no such distinction between venial and mortal sins. There is in fact no such thing as venial sins. All sin is mortal. It is true that some sins are more severe than others (Proverbs 6:16-19). But it is also true that all sins, if not forgiven, bring death to the soul, with greater or lesser punishment as they may deserve. But never does Scripture say that only certain kinds of sin lead to spiritual death. All sin leads to spiritual death, not just one category of sin (Romans 3:23). The Bible simply says: "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23), and the apostle Paul was not speaking of any specific kind of sin, but of all sin. The prophet Ezekiel in 18:4 stated: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." So we see the Bible teaches that all sins are mortal and are deserving of Hell. What is one guilty of for committing the smallest offense? "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10). Notice in this verse James makes no distinction among sins. He simply says, in terms of being guilty before God, if you have transgressed the law in any way, it is as if you have transgressed the entire law of God (First John 3:4). And we are reminded too that in the Garden of Eden eating the forbidden fruit appeared to be but a minor offense; yet the consequences were fatal, not only for Adam and Eve but for the entire human race.

The Lord never distinguished between sins in terms of their ultimate penalty. The Lord only taught that every sin warrants eternal punishment in Hell. Moreover, He taught that the sin of anger brings the same punishment as the sin of murder (Matthew 5 :21-22), and the sin of lust the same penalty as the sin of adultery (Matthew 5:27-30).

However, the "Good News" is that all of our sins may be fully forgiven for the person who comes to the Lord Jesus for salvation. One does not have to continually go to a priest throughout life to obtain forgiveness, but rather the person who has trusted in Christ alone for their salvation is simply in a state of forgiveness. The Lord Jesus Christ has paid the sin debt for that individual (Second Corinthians 5:21; First Peter 2:24; 3:18).

A biblical example of this profound truth is found in First Corinthians 6:9-11: "*Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God*"? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves *with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*"

Notice the apostle Paul reveals these Corinthians had been guilty of committing all kinds of "mortal sins" for many years, and yet their guilt and penalty for sins committed had been wiped clean as a result of their new-found faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. They were "washed, " "sanctified, " and "justified, " in the name of the Saviour.

As we bring this section to a close concerning Rome's dogma of venial and mortal sin, we have certainly observed one of the greatest of all deceptions in Catholicism

regarding its fallacious teaching on the nature and consequence of sin. We have seen Rome perpetuates the appealing lie of Satan by declaring 'ye shall not surely die' when you commit venial sins (Genesis 3:4). The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that venial sins do not kill the life of the soul or destroy friendship with God or eternal happiness (paragraph 1855, 1863, pages 454, 456). Instead, they incur temporal punishment, which can be reduced by works of penance, charity, almsgiving, indulgences, novenas or paying a priest to offer the sacrifice of the Mass. As a result of this fatal fallacy, baptized Catholics go through life believing they are on their way to Heaven because they have not committed adultery, murder or any other sins they classify as mortal. This deadly deception leaves them with no desire to seek the only hope of forgiveness - the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Using this seductive lie of venial sin, the devil has blinded them from the light of the Gospel: "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (Second Corinthians 4:4). Beloved, the Lord Jesus is the only way from condemnation to justification and from eternal death to eternal life.

A Biblical Response To Rome's Sacrament Of Penance -

Earlier we surveyed Rome's sacrament of penance and discovered Roman Catholics are required to confess all their mortal sins to a priest who sits as a judge and who claims to have the power to forgive sins in the name of God. According to Catholic theology, the priest forgives the guilt of mortal sins and the eternal punishment, which saves the Catholic from going to Hell; but the priest cannot forgive the penalty and temporal punishment due for those sins and so the Catholic must atone for them by the performance of good works (penance) which the priest prescribes.

The real question at the very heart of this issue is to whom are we to confess our sins and receive forgiveness? What does both the Old and New Testament teach regarding confession of sin? We know what Catholics are taught. But what are Bible-believing Christians required to do when they sin after being saved? When Christians sin, the Holy Spirit convicts us and we experience a genuine sense of conviction that Scripture calls a "godly sorrow" (Second Corinthians 7:8-11). This leads to a sense of guilt, a sense of estrangement from God. So, what do saved people do when the Holy Spirit convicts them of a sin? Scripture teaches they need to confess that sin not to a priest but to God: "If we confess our sins, He (God) is faithful and just (righteous) to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (First John 1 :9). The Greek word for confess literally means "to say the same thing. " When biblical Christians confess their sin to God, that means they are saying the same thing about their sin that God says about it. They are agreeing with God that they sinned. And following their confession, they can thank God they're forgiven and cleansed as First John 1:9 promises, because the Lord Jesus Christ paid for all their sins on the cross; past, present and future sins (Second Corinthians 5:21; Colossians 2:14). Instantly their fellowship with the Lord is

restored. Their objective from that point forward is to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit so that they will have the power to resist such sins in the future (Galatians 5:22-23).

What happens if the Bible-believing Christian refuses to respond to the Holy Spirit's conviction and chooses to continue practicing sin? That is not a wise or mature thing to do. God loves us too much to let us continually remain in sin. Inspired Scripture reveals that if a born-again child of God sins and refuses to turn from it and confess it, God - with a motive of love - brings discipline into that believer's life to bring them to a point of confession (Hebrews 12:4-13; also Psalm 51). God's desire is to restore fellowship with His children.

So we see from First John 1 :9, our confession is to be to God and Him alone. Bible-believing Christians are not required to make confession to a supposed human mediator like a priest. However, Catholics are quick to reference James 5:16 as a proof-text for the sacrament of penance (confessing one's sins to a priest). This verse in James does admonish us to confess our sins to one another, not because such confession has anything to do with our forgiveness before God (it does not), but because it brings reconciliation among Christians. Confessing our sins to other people also makes it possible for Christians to pray more effectively for one another. This verse, however, offers no support for the idea of making confession to a priest.

All of us recall that after committing adultery with Bathsheba, King David made confession directly to God: "*I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin*" (Psalm 32:5). Notice king David's confession was directly to God; no priest, no ritual and no sacrament. Just a broken man owning up to his sin before his God. There are other similar instances in the Old Testament where men of God confessed their sins and the sins of Israel to God directly (Nehemiah 1 :4- 11; Daniel 9:3-19 and Ezra 9:5-10). Ezra, though a Levitical priest himself, taught God's people to "make confession to the Lord God of your fathers" (Ezra 10:11). This same pattern of confession to God is seen in the New Testament. Christians can also go directly to God with their sins. They go not to a judge, but to their Father with the Lord Jesus at their side: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (First John 2: 1-2). They go with confidence that God will hear them: "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16). And they go with the promise of God that He will forgive them: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (First John 1 :9). Beloved, we do not need a priest as a mediator between God and us. To be sure, all of these texts reassure us that you and I can approach the very throne of God without having to go through a priest. The Scriptural reality is that there is not a single verse in the New Testament that explicitly instructs us to confess our sins to some priest. Nor do we see a single example

in the book of Acts (history of first century Church) or any other biblical book of anyone making confession to a priest (or disciple). Again, confession is to be made to God alone (First John 1:9; 2:1; Hebrews 4:16; Psalm 32:5; Nehemiah 1:4-11; Daniel 9:3-19; and Ezra 9:5-15). Beloved, the truth of the matter is the Word of God teaches that all born-again Christians are priests (First Peter 2:5, 9), and since all priests confess directly to God (Hebrews 4:16), what does this tell us about the privilege of every single believer? That we can confess directly to God instead of having to go through another priest.

As we come to a close of this section of Chapter 2, we have surveyed the Catholic sacrament of penance and have found the biblical response to Rome's teaching is contrary to their dogma.

The Bible teaches that:

- Confession of sins is to God alone, not to a priest.
- Satisfaction for sin is in the Person and Work of Jesus Christ, not in acts of penance.
- All sin is mortal; no sin is venial.

A Biblical Response To Rome's Dogma Of Temporal And Eternal Punishment -

Rome teaches that the Jesus of Catholicism can save Catholics from eternal punishment (Hell) but not from temporal punishment (Purgatory). Where is the logic in teaching that an eternal debt has been cancelled but a temporal debt is still owed and must be paid?

Beloved, the Scriptures teach that Christ, and Him alone, washed us completely from our sins in His own blood. "In whom (Christ) we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Ephesians 1 :7). And in Hebrews 1:3, it speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ purging our sins: "When He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. " The Bible is totally silent and makes no mention of a place such as purgatory through which the penalty of sin can be satisfied. Biblical salvation does not rely on the works and sufferings of sinners, but solely upon Christ. Remember Hebrews 1 :3, the Lord Jesus "purged our sins" on the cross. His blood can cleanse the vilest sinner (Hebrews 9:14). There is no temporal punishment remaining for which the believer must atone; Christ paid it all: "He is the propitiation for our sins" (First John 2:2).

Biblical salvation has no need for a place such as purgatory. Rather, it is rooted in God's imputation of His own perfect righteousness (Second Corinthians 5 :21). Salvation, according to the Word of God, brings a righteousness that is by faith. "For therein is the

righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1: 17). The lost sinner places their trust in Christ for justification. He walks by faith, and through the enablement of the Holy Spirit, they live righteously. They have no hope of ever being personally good enough in and of themselves to stand in the presence of God. Instead, they trust in Christ alone for salvation (Philippians 3:7-9). Rather than focusing on the good works and suffering of the individual, biblical salvation emphasizes the perfect Work of Christ. God no longer looks at the person as a vile sinner, but sees them only in Christ (Ephesians 1:1-14), "holy and without blame before Him" (Ephesians 1 :4). A Bible-believing Christian wants to obey God, by being obedient to the Word of God. He is motivated by the love of Christ, not the fear of painful retribution (Second Corinthians 5:14; Romans 8:15).

The Bible Teaches Only God Can Forgive Sin -

The Bible is very explicit in teaching that only God can forgive sins: "Who can forgive sins but God only?" (Mark 2:7). We see too, in Matthew 9:6 this truth spoken by the Lord Jesus to a man in need: "The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins. " It is because God is our Creator and because it is His law that we have broken, that He can forgive sins. The Lord Jesus Christ has this power because He is God (John 1:1, 14).

The Word of God teaches that it is the privilege of everyone to confess their sins directly to God as we have already read in First John 1:9. What did the Lord Jesus say when He spoke of the Pharisee and the publican? The publican had no priest; and he did not go to a confessional. All he did was to cry out with a bowed head, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." He went directly to God to confess his sins! And the Lord Jesus said that he went down to his house justified (Luke 18:9-14). Indeed, why should anyone confess their sins to a priest when inspired Scripture declares so explicitly: "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (First Timothy 2:5). And yet the Catholic priest presumes to say, "I absolve you, /forgive your sins." But it raises a question. How is it possible for a Catholic priest to judge an anonymous individual (whom he cannot even see clearly) based on a few minutes discussion. How can one man look into the heart of another and measure the seriousness of his sin, the degree of his guilt and the depth of his contrition, and then assign the divine satisfaction for that sin? "Who can forgive sins but God only?" (Mark 2:7).⁴

As we have seen, confession of sins is commanded throughout the Bible, but always it is confession to God directly, never to man. It is a striking fact that although Paul, Peter and John dealt frequently with men and women in sin, both in their teaching and in their practice, they never permitted a sinner or a saint of God to confess to them. Paul wrote thirteen of the New Testament epistles and in them he often speaks of the duties and practices of Christians. But never once does he mention auricular confession (Rome's confession to a priest in the sacrament of penance). Peter, John and Jude wrote six epistles in which they have much to say about the matter of salvation. But not one of

them ever mentions auricular confession. And certainly Christ never told anyone to go to a priest for forgiveness. Nowhere do the Scriptures tell us that God appointed a special class of men to hear confessions and to forgive sins.

As we bring this chapter to a close, let us reiterate the important biblical truths taught regarding only God can forgive sin:

- The Bible teaches only God can forgive sin -
- The Bible teaches that when God forgives, He totally forgives all the guilt and penalty for sin - not a spot remains -
- There is no biblical example of sacramental confession to a priest in the entire New Testament -
- There is no explicit command from Christ to establish a priesthood to hear confessions from sinners or to establish a sacrament of penance -

In conclusion, the death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross made it possible for God to forgive sins because Christ provided expiation for the sins of the world. The forgiveness of sin is an act of God's justice that cancels the complete debt owed for sin. According to the Bible, as we have just read, only God can forgive sins. The Lord Jesus is the perfect and final sacrifice through which God's forgiveness is mediated to every believer. The Lord Jesus saw His own death as the fulfillment of the Old Testament sacrifices for sin. At the Last Supper He spoke of His death as "The New Testament (Covenant) in My blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:20). It is Christ shed blood which makes atonement for mankind and for the forgiveness of sin. The Lord Jesus is the unblemished sacrifice offered once, for all our sins, for all time. He saves and completely forgives those who come to God through Him: "Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7 :25). That means there is no remaining sin to purge away in purgatory or temporal punishment to be forgiven by indulgences. Complete forgiveness of sin is available to those who trust Jesus Christ and His finished Work on the cross.

The sacrament of penance; venial and mortal sin, temporal and eternal punishment, coupled with the teaching of purgatory is a travesty on the justice of God and a disgraceful fabrication that robs the Lord Jesus of His glory and honor. He alone satisfied divine justice, once and for all, by the perfect and finished sacrifice of Himself. The fatal deception of these doctrines blinds our Catholic friends from the glorious Gospel of Grace. It is one of Satan's many lies which keep his captives from knowing and trusting the sufficiency of Christ. It is Christ alone that will present us "faultless before the presence of His glory (Jude 24).

Chapter 3 **"According To The Scriptures" -**

In First Corinthians 15 :3 we find the third core component of the biblical Gospel in the phrase "according to the Scriptures." This phrase is synonymous with the Bible describing the Word of God as inspired (God breathed), authoritative and inerrant. The truth and reliability of the Scriptures is reiterated over and over again in the New Testament by the Lord Jesus, the apostle Paul, Peter, John and others.

In Matthew 21, the chief priests and elders of the Jews questioned the Lord Jesus' authority as it related to His teaching in the temple. Christ was quick to teach that all responses to spiritual questions are either "from Heaven" (the inspired eternal Scriptures) or "of men;" (man's traditions) (Matthew 21 :25). Likewise, the basis for all spiritual truth for Christians must be the inspired Bible! The absolute standard established by the Lord Jesus Christ is the fact that "the Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). The Lord also declared the truth and reliability of God's Word by stating, "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth (John 17:17). From this statement we understand that God's Word not only contains the truth, but rather, it is truth itself. The Bible is the sole source of the believer's standard of truth. Since Scripture alone is inspired, it alone is the ultimate authority, and it alone is the final judge of all human tradition and reasoning. Moreover, the Word of the Lord states, "Add thou not unto His words lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar" (Proverbs 30:6). In His written Word, the absolute authority of the Lord is totally sufficient for all Bible-believer's needs, as outlined by the apostle Paul when he wrote, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works " (Second Timothy 3: 16-17). The Lord rebuked the Pharisees because they placed their human traditions on the same level as the written Word of God. The Pharisees corrupted the people's understanding by confusing them in regards to God's Word as the very basis of truth. The Lord Jesus declared to them, "[You are] Making the Word of God of none effect through your *tradition, which ye have delivered*" (Mark 7:13).

In spite of this clear standard of truth, the Catholic Church declares her own standard of truth. Rome begins her reasoning with the following words: "Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, then, are bound closely together and communicate one with the other. And Holy Tradition transmits in its entirety the Word of God, which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. "1 The fact is that no tradition transmits in its entirety the Word of God. This task is solely that of the Holy Spirit. In an exclusive sense, the Scriptures are the composition of the Holy Spirit, as stated by the apostle Peter: "holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (Second Peter 1:20-21). The Holy Spirit is fully fitted for this work because He is "the Spirit of truth" (John 16:13). He has perfect knowledge of the truth because He is

God, One with the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit reveals truth of the written Word to believers. For this reason the Lord Jesus said, "He shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you" (John 16: 15). So we see, the Holy Spirit perfectly transmits the Word of God in its proper fullness.

Having equated her "Sacred Tradition" with Sacred Scripture and stating that her tradition transmits the Word of God in its entirety, the Catholic Church reaches its conclusion with the following words:

As a result the Catholic Church, to whom the transmission and interpretation of Revelation is entrusted, does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the holy Scriptures alone. Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence. 2

This statement is a formal denial of the sufficiency of Scripture and a repudiation of its unique authority. For a Church, claiming to be Christian, to affirm her equal love for tradition as she does Scripture is to make Scripture of no unique value. It is like a husband who declares his love for his wife and at the same time states that he also loves equally the woman across the street. Such love would be adulterous; so also are Papal Rome's "equal sentiments of devotion and reverence. " Such a declaration is tantamount to a rejection of Scripture and unfaithfulness to the God of Scripture. 3

The Church of Rome, however, does have a standard for truth that is taken to be absolute. It is not the authority of God in His written Word; rather, it is the authority of a man, the pope of Rome. For Catholics, the ultimate authority lies in the decisions and decrees of the reigning pope. This is seen in their official teaching which states:

The Roman Pontiff .. enjoys this infallibility in virtue of his office, when, as supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful ... he proclaims by a definitive act a doctrine pertaining to faith or morals ... the Church through its supreme Magisterium proposes a doctrine for belief as being divinely revealed, and as the teaching of Christ, the definitions must be adhered to with the obedience of faith. 4

So in practice, the Catholic Church's basis for doctrine is Rome's pope and what he states to be truth. In other words, this is claimed truth by decree. How ludicrous the claim is when we realize that some popes were declared to be heretics and as a result, were condemned by Church councils. For example, pope Honorius was condemned as a heretic by the Sixth Ecumenical Council (680-681 A.D.). He was also condemned as a heretic by pope Leo II, as well as by every other pope until the eleventh century. It was not until 1870 at the First Vatican Council that the Catholic Church for the first time declared that the pope is infallible.

Man's Traditions Versus God's Inspired Scriptures -

Perhaps Charles Spurgeon's warning to those attempting to elevate their unbiblical teachings to the same divine level with inspired Scripture enlightens us all of such a futile deed:

The Word of God is quite sufficient to interest and bless the souls of men throughout all time; but novelties soon fail. "Surely", cries one, "we must add our own thoughts thereto "My brother, think by all means; but the thoughts of God are better than yours. You may shed fine thoughts as trees in the autumn cast their leaves; but there is One who knows more about your thoughts than you do, and He thinks little of them. "The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity." To liken our thoughts to the great thoughts of God would be a gross absurdity. Would you bring your candle to show the sun? Your nothingness to replenish the eternal all? It is better to be silent before the Lord, than to dream of supplementing what He has written.

Chapter 4

"He Was Buried And That He Rose Again The Third Day" -

We come to the fourth core teaching of the biblical Gospel from First Corinthians 15:3-4. The Good News of the resurrection of Jesus Christ according to the Scriptures. The truth of the resurrection of Christ is the foundation upon which Christianity rests. As the apostle Paul wrote, "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain (First Corinthians 15:14). But we know Christ rose bodily from the grave, conquering death and proving He is God, because the Word of God teaches this profound truth!

But the truths in the Bible regarding the death and resurrection of Christ have been misinterpreted over the centuries by Rome, which in turn has led most of Protestantism to embrace what they teach about the resurrection of Christ. They teach Christ died on "Good Friday" and rose from the dead early on "Easter Sunday" morning, a period of time, less than 48 hours. So according to their tradition, the body of Christ was in the tomb only one full day (Saturday) and two full nights (Friday and Saturday).

However, the Lord Jesus gave us one type, setting forth the length of time that He would be in the heart of the earth; that being the sign of Jonah (Matthew 12:40). And the Lord Jesus fulfilled the type of Jonah (Jonah 1 :17). Here we have Christ own prophecy pertaining to His death, burial and resurrection. The most significant prophecy in the Bible concerning the resurrection of Christ is a symbolic prophecy represented by the three days and three nights that Jonah spent in the stomach of the great whale (Jonah 1: 17). The Lord Jesus explained the prophetic symbolism of the unique event on an occasion when He rebuked the Pharisees for seeking a "sign" from Him. By a "sign " they meant a miracle that would validate His claim to be the Messiah.

The Sign Of Jonah -

The Lord responded in a very specific way by communicating that the only sign they would be given would be "the sign of the prophet Jonah. " He then proceeded to explain what He meant: "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Matthew 12:40).

The Lord Jesus clearly and distinctly prophesies here, using the example of Jonah, that He will spend three days and three nights in the tomb before His resurrection will occur. Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights, but the fish could not hold him ... and the Lord Jesus was in the grave three days and three nights, but the grave could not hold Him!

Someone may ask, "Didn't the Jews count part of a day as a whole day or part of a night as a whole *night*? It is true that sometimes an expression like "*the third day*" can include only parts of days, a part of a day being counted as a whole. The Jewish Encyclopedia says that the day of a funeral, even though the funeral might take place late in the afternoon, is counted as the first of the seven days of mourning. 1 Other examples of part of a day being counted for a whole day, as it were, are found within the Bible also, as in the following statement by the Lord Jesus: "Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected. Nevertheless I must walk to day, and to morrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem" (Luke 13:32-33). In this case, "the third day" would mean the same as "*the day following*" (tomorrow) - three days, even though only parts of those days are involved. Many feel this explains the time element between the burial and resurrection of Christ.

However, whenever you have the expression "day and night" mentioned together in the Scriptures, it always means a full day and a full night. For instance, in Esther 4:16 and 5:1; also in First Samuel 30: 12-13 and, of course, Jonah 1: 17, you will find the expression "three days and three nights. " And in every instance it means full days and full nights - not part of a day and part of a night.

Also the expression "the third day" can, Scripturally, include three days and three nights as can be seen in Genesis 1:4-13. "God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And the evening (darkness) and the morning (light) were the first day and the evening (darkness) and the morning (light) were the second day ... and the evening (now three periods of night) and the morning (now three periods of light) were the third day. " This provides an example of how the term "the third day" can be counted and shown to include three days and three nights.

Moreover, the Lord Jesus defined what a day is in John 11 :9, when He said, "are there not twelve hours in a day?" If there are 12 hours in a day, then there are 12 hours in a night. And so three days and three nights would have to be 72 hours. Anything short of 72 hours would not fulfill the type of Jonah or the words of the Saviour.

This prophecy, like all Messianic prophecies, had to be fulfilled in the life of Christ if He truly was the promised Messiah of God. The Lord emphasized this point Himself after His resurrection when He told His disciples, "all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me" (Luke 24:44).

After all, God is the God of exactness. He does everything right on schedule. Nothing is accidental with Him. It was "when the fullness of time was come, " not one year too early or one year too late - "God sent forth His Son" (Galatians 4:4). The time for His

anointing was foreordained and spoken of by the prophet Daniel, as was also the time when He would be "cut off" for the sins of the people. Those who tried to kill Him before this time failed, for His "time" was not yet come (John 7:8). And not only the year and time of His death, but the very hour was a part of the divine plan. "Father, Jesus prayed, the hour is come" (John 17:1).

Since there was an exact time for Him to be born, an exact time for His anointing, an exact time for His death, then Bible-believing Christians should have no problem believing there was also an exact time period of 72 hours between His burial and resurrection.

Bible Prophecy Versus Catholic Tradition -

But was the prophecy of Jonah actually fulfilled in the burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ? According to Rome and even some Protestant denominations traditionally accepted chronology of events, it was not! As stated earlier, Rome's traditional chronology places the crucifixion on Friday morning and the burial on late Friday afternoon. It fixes the resurrection on Sunday morning. So according to Rome's teaching, the body of Christ was in the tomb only one full day (Saturday) and two full nights (Friday and Saturday). However, the Lord Jesus taught His body would be in the tomb three days and three nights.

There have been many attempts by Rome to reconcile the problem that is raised here by the differences between the biblical prophecy and Rome's traditional view of its fulfillment but all the attempts have fallen short of producing a true fulfillment of the prophecy. The Lord Jesus stated emphatically all Messianic prophecy had to be fulfilled in Him and He meant every detail of every Messianic prophecy. Otherwise, it could be argued that He was not the Messiah.

One of the proof-text Rome uses to justify the teaching of a Friday crucifixion and early Sunday morning resurrection is Mark 15 :42 where it says that the crucifixion took place on "*the preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath.*"

It is this verse primarily, that has led the Catholic Church and others to assume that the crucifixion took place on a Friday since the Jewish Sabbath is Saturday. And that assumption has in turn led to the conclusion that the crucifixion had to take place in either A.D. 30 or 33 because those are the only two years in the general time period of Jesus' death when the day of preparation (Nisan 14th on the Jewish calendar) fell on a Friday.

However, a careful study of Jewish calendar practices will show that the assumption that the day of preparation in the year of Christ's death had to fall on a Friday is

incorrect! Such an assumption is based upon Catholic and Gentile ignorance about Jewish feast days.

What the Catholic and Gentile Church has failed to recognize over the centuries is that the first day after Passover (Nisan 15th) is a feast day, or "high day Sabbath " because it is the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It is therefore considered to be a Sabbath, regardless of which day of the week on which it falls. We find this in Numbers 28:16-18. Verse 18 clearly indicates that the first day after Passover, Nisan 15th , is to be observed as a Sabbath - and so it has been throughout Jewish history to this day.

Now, the Gospel of John makes it clear that the Sabbath after the crucifixion was not a regular Saturday Sabbath. Rather, it was a feast day or high day Sabbath, marking the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Look at the words found in John 19:31-33 - "The Jews therefore, because it was the (day of) preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day, (for that Sabbath day was an high day) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away ... but when they came to Jesus ... He was dead already. " By this time, "the even (evening) was come" (Mark 15:42), it was late afternoon. The law said: "His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day" (Deuteronomy 21:23). In the time remaining on that day before sundown, before the high day Sabbath began, Joseph of Arimathaea obtained permission to remove the body. He and Nicodemus prepared the body for burial with linen clothes and spices, and placed it in a nearby tomb (John19:38-42) - all of this being completed by sundown (approximately 6:00 P.M.).

So we see exactly when Christ was crucified. According to John 19:31, the Lord Jesus was crucified on the day of preparation, that is, the preparation of the Jewish Passover. As stated earlier, the Passover always began on the 14th day of the Jewish month of Nisan (Leviticus 23:5) and the day following or the 15th, was always a high day Sabbath. This was not the weekly 7th day Sabbath, but the annual Passover Sabbath {Leviticus 23 :5-7). So it is fixed that this 15th day was always a Sabbath regardless of the day of the week. This is the high day Sabbath mentioned in John 19:31.

Again, the point of all this is that the Lord Jesus did not have to be killed on a Friday in order for His crucifixion to precede the Saturday Sabbath because there could have been two Sabbaths during the week of His crucifixion, depending on what day of the week the high feast day fell on. If it fell on Saturday, then there was only one Sabbath. But if it fell on another day of the week, as it usually does, there would be two Sabbaths.

The Resurrection Of Christ Not On Sunday Morning -

Take the year 31 AD for example. In that year the 14th of Nisan, the day of preparation on which the Lord Jesus would have been crucified, fell on Wednesday. The next day,

Thursday, would have been the high feast day and therefore it would have been a Sabbath.

If the Lord Jesus was crucified in the year 31, He would have been crucified on Wednesday and buried that evening before the high day Sabbath began. Then His body remained in the tomb through Thursday (night and day), Friday (night and day), and Saturday (night and day) and was raised from the dead 72 hours after His crucifixion, just as He predicted.

In Matthew 28: 1-6, we find another passage of Scripture confirming the Lord Jesus was crucified on Wednesday and arose from the dead late on Saturday afternoon. "In the end of the Sabbath, (late on the Sabbath) as it began to dawn TOWARD the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from Heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it ... And the angel ... said unto the women ... ! know that ye seek Jesus, Who was crucified. He is NOT here: for He is RISEN. "

Now please take note of two important things. First, the tomb was already empty when the women came to it. Second, the women visited the tomb very late on Saturday just as Sunday was approaching. If we carefully consider each of the four Gospel records, one fact stands out beyond any question. When Mary of Magdala and the others came to the sepulchre to anoint the body of Jesus, that is, when they came to the grave, the Lord Jesus was already gone. Please understand, the time of the visits to the sepulchre does not determine the time of the resurrection of Christ.

Now if the Lord Jesus rose from the dead just as Sunday was approaching, and the prophecy of Matthew 12:40 said that Christ had to be entombed three days and three nights, then it is very obvious that the Lord was crucified on Wednesday and His body had to be placed in the tomb before 6 P.M. on that day. Then His body remained in the tomb and was raised from the dead just before Sunday was beginning (Matthew 28:1), or what we now would call Saturday evening approximately 6 P.M. This fulfilled the prophecy of Matthew 12:40. Remember, the Jewish day always began at sundown, approximately 6 P.M. Our day begins at midnight, but the Jewish day began at sunset. In Leviticus 23:32 the Lord said, "From even (evening) unto even (evening) shall ye celebrate your Sabbath."

When the women came to the sepulchre for the first time, it was not on Sunday morning, the first day of the week, but late on Saturday afternoon. Remember what the Scripture says: "In the end of the Sabbath (Saturday), as it began to dawn (draw on) toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre" (Matthew 28:1).

The word "dawn" here is translated from the Greek word "epiphosko." Parkhurst's Greek and English Lexicon of the New Testament defines this word as follows: "To draw on" or "to approach. " When the women came to the sepulchre, it was late on the Sabbath (Saturday evening) drawing on toward the first day of the week.

In Berry's Greek Interlinear translation, we have this rendition of Matthew 28: 1: "Now late on the Sabbath as it was getting dusk toward the first of the week. " Beloved, the resurrection of Christ was not on Sunday morning as Rome teaches, but at dusk (Saturday evening) - as the Jewish day was coming to an end.

Other Proof Texts -

There are other proof-texts in the Scriptures that strongly supports the crucifixion week had two Sabbaths. In Mark 15:47 we are told that Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses remained at the tomb after the Lord had been buried. In Mark 16: 1 it says that the two of them bought spices to anoint the body of Christ after the Sabbath was over. But in Luke 23 :56 it says they bought the spices before the Sabbath and then rested on the Sabbath before proceeding to the tomb on Sunday morning. Please keep in mind that the women made two visits to the sepulchre. Matthew records the first visit of the women on Saturday evening, at the close of the Sabbath. Mark, Luke and John all record the second visit of the women the next morning.

There seems to be only one explanation of the apparent contradiction in these verses. After resting on the high day Sabbath on Thursday, the ladies bought the spices on Friday and then rested again on the regular weekly Sabbath on Saturday before proceeding to the tomb. This explains how they could have bought the spices both before and after the Sabbath. They bought them after the high day Sabbath on Thursday but before the regular Sabbath on Saturday.

Is Mark 16:9 A Proof Text For Sunday Morning Resurrection?

The only verse which seems to teach a Sunday morning resurrection is Mark 16:9. "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene. " But this verse does not say that early on the first day Jesus was "rising" or that He "did rise" at that time. It says that when the first day of the week came, He "was risen " - past perfect tense.

Since there were no punctuation marks in the Greek manuscripts from which our New Testament was translated, the phrase "early the first day of the week" could just as correctly be linked with the time Jesus appeared to Mary. By simply placing the comma after the word "risen, " this verse would read: "Now when Jesus was risen, early the first day of the week He appeared first to Mary Magdalene. " This appears to be the meaning originally intended, because the verses that follow show that Mark was recording the

various appearances that the Lord Jesus made, not explaining on which day the resurrection took place.

When Sunday morning came, the Lord Jesus had already risen, the resurrection having taken place just before sundown of the day before. The resurrection took place at the same time of day that the Lord Jesus was buried- only three days later.

As it relates to the disciples and Sunday morning, the Gospel writers tell of several different visits made by the disciples to the tomb on that first day of the week, in every instance, they found the tomb empty. The first day of the week (Sunday) was when the disciples discovered that Jesus was risen (Luke 24:1-2), but nowhere does the Bible actually say this was the time of the resurrection.

Is Luke 24:21 A Proof Text For Friday Crucifixion?

This is a passage of Scripture regarding the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. In Luke 24:21, some say, offers support for a Friday crucifixion. Luke 24:21 states: "But we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel:" they said, "and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done. " Because the Lord Jesus appeared to these disciples on the first day of the week (verse 13) and this was "the third day since these things were done," some say would this not indicate that Jesus died on Friday? This would depend on how we count. If parts of a day are counted as a whole, Friday could be meant. On the other hand, one day "since" Friday would have been Saturday, the second day "since" Friday would have been Sunday, and the third day "since" Friday would have been Monday! This method of counting would not indicate Friday.

They had talked about "all these things which had happened" (verse 14) - more than just one event. If "these things" included the arrest, the crucifixion, the burial and the setting of the seal and watch over the tomb, all of these things were not done until Thursday. The Lord Jesus, as we have learned, was crucified on the "preparation" (Wednesday). "The next day (Thursday), that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while He was yet alive, after three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night, and steal Him away" (Matthew 27:62-66). For this reason, the tomb was sealed and guarded. "These things" were not fully completed - were not "done" - until the tomb was sealed and guarded. This happened, as we have already seen, on Thursday of that week, the high day Sabbath. Sunday, then, would have been "the third day since these things were done, " but not the third day since the crucifixion.

An Amazing Corroboration -

A fascinating fact that also substantiates that the resurrection of Christ occurred in 31 AD is to be found in the writings of Josephus, the first century Jewish historian. He states the last Jubilee that was celebrated in the land before the Roman conquest in 70 AD, began in the fall of 27 AD.

That date most likely marks the beginning of Jesus' ministry, for His ministry was a symbolic fulfillment of the Jubilee promises. This is indicated by the Scripture that the Lord Jesus read in the synagogue in Nazareth when He launched His public ministry (Luke 4:16-24 and Isaiah 61:1-2). It is commonly agreed that the ministry of Christ lasted 36 years. A starting date in the fall of 27 AD to coincide with the beginning of the Jubilee would place His death in the spring of 31 AD - the year in which the Passover week had two Sabbaths.

The Roman Catholic Church framed the time sequence of the resurrection of Christ many centuries ago and most of Protestantism eagerly followed their lead. According to their tradition, Rome concludes the crucifixion occurred in the year of 30 AD because the Bible says the Lord Jesus was crucified on the day before the Sabbath, and in 30 AD the day of preparation for the Passover (the day of the crucifixion) fell on a Friday, placing it on the day before the Sabbath.

But a careful study of the biblical record, as we have seen, reveals that the crucifixion week had two Sabbaths, not one. How can a week have two Sabbaths? The answer, as we have discovered in our study, is that when Passover falls on a day other than Saturday, as it usually does, the day following the Passover is considered to be a "high day Sabbath" and is observed as a day of rest, just like a regular Sabbath.

And the Gospel accounts state that Mary Magdalene and her associates purchased burial spices "after the Sabbath" and then rested until another Sabbath was over before going to the tomb. This clearly indicates that the week contained a day between two Sabbaths - which was the case in 31 AD.

The Lord Jesus said He would fulfill the prophecy of Jonah by staying three days and three nights in the grave (Matthew 12:40). This scenario fulfills that prophecy. If the crucifixion had been on Friday, there is no way the Lord Jesus could have spent three days and three nights in the grave.

Beloved, think about it, the most important event in all of history is the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Every other significant event in history pales in comparison. This is precisely why much is written in the pages of Holy Writ regarding this profound event. As Bible-believing Christians we must embrace what the inspired Scriptures alone reveal about this gargantuan event. Unfortunately, Catholic

tradition has devised and perpetuated over the centuries what most people believe today regarding the time sequence of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. They have fashioned terms like Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday to explain Christ's Work of redemption. As we have seen, they teach the Lord was crucified on Friday and was raised from the dead on early Sunday morning. The question every Bible-believing Christian must ask, is their teaching reflective and compatible with what the Scriptures proclaim?

Another reason why it is vitally important for Bible-believing Christians to understand Christ's own prophecy and fulfillment concerning His death, burial and resurrection is because it validates the Lord Jesus as Who He said He was - namely, God in the flesh. Prophecy and its fulfillment also validates the Bible as the inspired (God breathed) Word of God. Prophecy must be fulfilled precisely, not approximately.

The precise fulfillment of prophecy regarding the First Coming of Christ is our assurance that all the prophecies regarding His Second Coming will also be fulfilled completely to the last detail. God will not forget or overlook anything. He is true to His Word. God keeps His promises. 2

Beloved, if Satan is allowed to hinder us from achieving full biblical understanding regarding the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, then he will have won a victory in our lives.

There are many Bible-believing Christians in America and around the world, including many in the ministry, that rejects what Catholicism and others teach about the time sequence regarding the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. For example, in his book, *Bible Questions Answered*, W. L. Pettingill, gives this question and answer: "On what day of the week was our Lord crucified? To us it is perfectly obvious that the crucifixion was on Wednesday." The *Companion Bible*, published by Oxford University Press, in its appendix 156 explains that Christ was crucified on Wednesday. R.A. Torrey, noted evangelist and Bible institute dean, whose words (written in 1907) well sum up the basic position presented in this chapter. "According to the commonly accepted tradition of the Church, Jesus was crucified on Friday ... and was raised from the dead very early in the morning of the following Sunday. Many readers of the Bible are puzzled to know how the interval between late Friday afternoon and early Sunday morning can be figured out to be three days and three nights. It seems rather to be two nights, one day and a very small portion of another day. "

"The solution of this apparent difficulty proposed by many commentators is that 'a day and night' is simply another way of saying 'a day', and that the ancient Jews reckoned a fraction of a day as a whole day ... There are many persons whom this solution does not altogether satisfy, and the writer is free to confess it does not satisfy him at all. It seems to me to be a makeshift ... "

"The Bible nowhere says or implies that Jesus was crucified and died on Friday. It is said that Jesus was crucified on 'the day before the Sabbath'... Now the Bible does not leave us to speculate in regard to which Sabbath is meant in this instance ... it was not the day before the weekly Sabbath (that is, Friday), but it was the day before the Passover Sabbath which came this year on Thursday - that is to say, the day on which Jesus Christ was crucified was Wednesday. John makes this as clear as day. "

"Jesus was buried just about sunset on Wednesday. Seventy-two hours later ... he arose from the grave. "

"There is absolutely nothing in favor of Friday crucifixion, but everything in the Scriptures is perfectly harmonized by Wednesday crucifixion. It is remarkable how many prophetic and typical passages of the Old Testament are fulfilled and how many seeming discrepancies in the gospel narratives are straightened out when we once come to understand that Jesus died on Wednesday and not on Friday. "

The quotations given here from various ministers are especially significant since this belief was not the generally accepted position of the various Church organizations with which they were affiliated. In such cases, men speak from conviction, not merely convenience. 3

Some may ask, does it matter Rome teaches this err about the death and resurrection of Christ? Isn't the important thing that they believe in the resurrection? Beloved, the apostle Paul makes it very clear, we should believe what the Scriptures alone teach about the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Remember what he said in First Corinthians 15 :4, "And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." If it wasn't important to believe the biblical record regarding the death and the resurrection of the Saviour, the apostle would not have reiterated, by stating for the second time, "*according to the Scriptures.*"

Chapter 5

Those That Deny The Biblical Gospel Proclaim A False Gospel -

In our study thus far we have compared and contrasted the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church with the teachings of the Bible regarding what both proclaim about the Gospel. We have studied what both teach about the Person and Work of Christ; the sinful nature of man; the truth and reliability of Scripture and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

We have discovered there is a vast difference between biblical Christianity and Roman Catholicism. The contrasts between the two highlight the monumental and irreconcilable differences between Bible-believing Christians and Roman Catholics. The glaring differences Rome embraces regarding authority, salvation and doctrine are clearly deviations from God's inspired Scripture.

When individuals or religious systems move away from the four main doctrinal tenets of the biblical Gospel, this tends to be a spring-board to other major deviations from God's Word. For example, the teaching of the primacy of Peter, the Roman priesthood, the Mass as a resacrifice of Christ, a sacramental system of salvation; Catholic tradition on equal par with Scripture and Mary as the queen of Heaven and co-redemptress with Christ, to name just a few, all are without solid biblical support and all are a result of deviating from the biblical Gospel.

Proclaiming Another Gospel -

The Catholic Church has nullified the Gospel of grace by adding additional requirements for salvation. It teaches baptism is essential for salvation. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states the following about baptism.

The Lord himself affirms that Baptism is necessary for salvation. He also commands his disciples to proclaim the Gospel to all nations and to baptize them. Baptism is necessary for salvation for those to whom the Gospel has been proclaimed and who have had the possibility of asking for this sacrament. The Church does not know of any means other than Baptism that assures entry into eternal beatitude; this is why she takes care not to neglect the mission she has received from the Lord to see that all who can be baptized are "reborn of water and the Spirit." God has bound salvation to the sacrament of Baptism, but he himself is not bound by his sacraments. 1

Secondly, Rome has added church membership as a condition for salvation.

To reunite all his children, scattered and led astray by sin, the Father willed to call the whole of humanity together into his Son 's Church. The Church is the place where humanity must rediscover its unity and salvation. The Church is "the world reconciled.

" She is that bark which "in the full sail of the Lord's cross, by the breath of the Holy Spirit, navigates safely in this world. " According to another image dear to the Church Fathers, she is prefigured by Noah's ark, which alone saves from the flood.

"Outside The Church There is No Salvation - "

How are we to understand this affirmation, often repeated by the Church Fathers? Reformulated positively, it means that all salvation comes from Christ the Head through the Church which is his Body:

Basing itself on Scripture and Tradition, the Council teaches that the Church, a pilgrim now on earth, is necessary for salvation: the one Christ is the mediator and the way of salvation; he is present to us in his body which is the Church. He himself explicitly asserted the necessity of faith and Baptism, and thereby affirmed at the same time the necessity of the Church which men enter through Baptism as through a door. Hence they could not be saved who, knowing that the Catholic Church was founded as necessary by God through Christ, would refuse either to enter it or to remain in it. 2

Thirdly, the Catholic sacraments are necessary for salvation.

The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are necessary for salvation. 3

Fourthly, obeying the commandments are essential to salvation.

The Council of Trent teaches that the Ten Commandments are obligatory for Christians and that the justified man is still bound to keep them; the Second Vatican Council confirms: "The bishops, successors of the apostles, receive from the Lord ... the mission of teaching all peoples, and of preaching the Gospel to every creature, so that all men may attain salvation through faith, Baptism and the observance of the Commandments. "4

Fifthly, good works are paramount to meriting salvation according to the Church of Rome.

We can therefore hope in the glory of heaven promised by God to those who love him and do his will. In every circumstance, each one of us should hope, with the grace of God, to persevere "to the end" and to obtain the joy of heaven, as God's eternal reward for the good works accomplished with the grace of Christ. 5

Sixthly, attending and participating in the weekly sacrifice of the Mass is mandatory for salvation.

There is no surer pledge or clearer sign of this great hope in the new heavens and new earth "in which righteousness dwells," than the Eucharist (consecrated bread). Every time this mystery is celebrated, "the work of our redemption is carried on" and we "break the one bread that provides the medicine of immortality, the antidote for death, and the food that makes us live for ever in Jesus Christ. "6

All six elements of Rome's Gospel are necessary for salvation. This is another Gospel and those who embrace and teach it are condemned as severely as the apostle Paul condemned the Judaizers for teaching a false Gospel (Galatians 1 :6-9). They teach Catholic priests are needed to dispense salvation through seven sacraments. From baptism through purgatory, Catholics are taught they can gain a right standing before God by what they do instead of believing what God has done for them through Christ. The precious Catholic soul is taught they "*can merit for ourselves and for others all the graces needed to attain eternal life.*" 7

These beliefs Catholics must embrace in conjunction with faith in God, are necessary, they say, for eventually securing salvation, could not be more opposed to God's plan of salvation revealed in the Bible. "*For by grace (God's unmerited favor toward man) are ye saved through faith (in Jesus Christ); and that not of yourselves: it (salvation) is the gift of God: Not of works (good deeds, church membership, etc.), lest any man should boast*" (Ephesians 2:8-9). Notice also what is stated in Romans 4:4-5: "*Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace (God's unmerited favor toward man), but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him (Christ) that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.*" The apostle Paul further states, "*Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law*" (Romans 3 :24; 28). These are but a few of the many passages of Scripture throughout the epistles of the New Testament confirming personal salvation is by faith in Christ alone; apart from anything we can do to merit favor with God.

Those That Embrace A False Gospel Deny Salvation On The Merits Of Christ Alone -

As we have seen in chapters 1 and 2, in spite of the teaching of Scripture that propitiation of sin is found in Christ alone, the Catholic Church still insists there are other ways in which Catholics can experience forgiveness of sin and less punishment in terms of time spent in purgatory. According to Catholicism, the Mass, the Confessional; penance, indulgences, and purgatory all play a vital role in assisting Catholics with their quest for forgiveness and hope of eventual entrance into Heaven.

For instance, the Catholic Church teaches that through indulgences, "Catholics can attain their own salvation and at the same time cooperate in saving their brothers." 8 The pope claims to have the power to transfer the merits of one Catholic to another to reduce their punishment for sin. "An indulgence is a remission of the temporal

punishment due to sins which the sinner gains through the Church, which ... dispenses from the Vatican treasury ... the prayers and good works of Mary and all the saints. "9 Rome also "commends alms-giving and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead. "10 Yet, from Scripture we know that: "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him" (Psalm 49:7).

For over 400 years Rome has not only preached a different Gospel but also has condemned anyone whom believes the glorious biblical Gospel. Many Bible-believing Christians are unaware the Councils of Trent and Vatican II issued over 100 anathema's (condemnations) on anyone who believes salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. All these condemnations are still in effect today as evidence by these two statements:

"If anyone says the sinner is justified by faith alone, meaning that nothing else is required to cooperate in order to obtain the grace of justification, let him be anathema."

The Catholic Church, "condemns with anathema those who say that indulgences are useless or that the Church does not have the power to grant them. "

The Roman Catholic Church also condemns anyone who believes they are assured of eternal life. This anathema denies the words of Christ, Who said, "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (John 10:28). For those who reject the words of Christ, Jesus said, "He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My Words, hath one that judgeth him: the Word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). Catholics must recognize there are more serious consequences for being condemned by the infallible Word of God than by the fallible teachings of their Church.

Those That Embrace A False Gospel Deny The Sufficiency Of Christ's Work On Calvary -

The Church of Rome's teaching denies that Christ's sacrifice was sufficient to expiate all the guilt and punishment of sin. Instead they teach a cleansing fire is needed for "*those who are expiating their sins in purgatory.*" 11 The doctrine of purgatory is an utter denial of the sufficiency of Christ's perfect sacrifice for sin, yet Catholics are asked to accept it as a grace. 12 According to Catholic theology, the pope has the power to bring them out of purgatory, but refuses to do so, unless indulgences are offered in their name. Their Catechism states, "*All who die still imperfectly purified undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.*" 13

Rome teaches that Catholics can carry their own cross to expiate their sins and the sins of others. 14 What a glaring contradiction this is. The Work of the sinless and perfect Saviour on Calvary's cross is said to be insufficient to completely expiate sins, yet the

cross of lowly sinners is said to be sufficient to do what Christ could not do. No priest can tell Catholics how many indulgences are needed or how long one has to suffer for each sin. This only perpetuates a religious system that holds Catholics in bondage and at the mercy of their Church indefinitely. However, the writer of Hebrews declared, "For by one offering He (Jesus) hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14), and "when He (Jesus) had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Hebrews 1:3).

Those That Embrace A False Gospel Deny Christ's Sacrifice Is Finished -

As we have seen earlier the Catholic Church teaches the sacrifice of Christ must continue daily on its altars for the reparation of the sins of the living and the dead.¹⁵ The Second Vatican Council declared, "*The mystery of the Eucharist (consecrated bread) is the true center of the sacred liturgy and indeed of the whole Christian life.*" In this central act of worship Rome claims that the Mass is "*a sacrifice in which the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated.*" This is done, they say, so that sins may be expiated and the wrath of God may be appeased.

Although Scripture teaches the Lord's Supper is a memorial of the Person and Work of Christ, Rome declares it is a real sacrifice and asserts Jesus is immolated (killed) as a sacrificial victim each time the Mass is offered. "The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice. "16 Rome claims the Catholic priest has the power to call Jesus down from Heaven, and transubstantiate a wafer and wine into His physical body, blood, soul and divinity. After almighty God has been reduced to a lifeless inanimate piece of bread the priest lifts it up to be worshiped. The priest then represents Jesus Christ as a sacrifice to the Father. This practice is strongly rebuked by Scripture. The apostle Paul wrote "Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God" (Romans 6:9-10). In anticipation of those embracing a false Gospel and declaring Christ is present when He is not, The Lord Jesus warned us, "if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not" (Matthew 24:23). When the Lord Jesus, "after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God ... there is no more offering (sacrifice) for sin" (Hebrews 10: 12,18). To deny the Words of our precious Saviour, Who said "It is Finished" is to reject one of the essential doctrines of the biblical Gospel, "The Work Of Christ." For if the Work of redemption is not finished then all humanity remains condemned to Hell and dead in their sins.

Those That Embrace A False Gospel Deny Salvation And Justification By God's Grace Through Faith In The person And Work Of Jesus Christ-

Rome says, "If anyone shall say that it is by the righteousness of Christ itself that men are formally justified - let him be accursed" (Council of Trent, Session VI, Canon 10).

Further, "If anyone shall say that justifying faith is nothing else than trust in the Divine mercy pardoning sins for Christ's sake; or that it is that trust alone by which we are justified - let him be accursed" (Canon 12). Here Rome places her curse on the very Word of God!

The Bible teaches "*By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight...But now the righteousness of God ... which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe* (Romans 3 :20-22). Again it states, "A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Romans 3 :28), and "God imputeth (credits) righteousness without works" (apart from works) (Romans 4:6). And the apostle Paul states in Romans 4:5, "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted/or righteousness." Further, in Acts 13:38-39, we read about Paul's sermon in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia concerning the all-important subject of how one is justified before God and receives forgiveness of sins. "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man (Christ) is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. "

Rome's Gospel, however, is a Gospel of human works and merits. "Sins must be expiated (to atone or make amends for). "This may be done on this earth through sorrows, miseries and trials of this life and, above all, through death. Otherwise, the expiation must be made in the next life through/ire and torments or purifying punishment" (purgatory) (Vatican II, *Indulgentiarum Doctrina*, 1.2).

In total contrast, the Bible teaches, "Being now justified by His (Christ's) blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Romans 5:9). Again, "Therefore being (having been) justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5: 1). "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). The apostle John gives the reason for this freedom from condemnation: "your sins are forgiven you for His (Christ's) name's sake" (First John 2:12). This is the Gospel that Rome rejects.

Those That Teach A False Gospel Demand Submission To Mediators Other Than Christ -

Catholics must submit to the pope who "by reason of his office as Vicar of Christ, has full supreme and universal power over the whole church, a power he can exercise unhindered. "17 They must also submit to the Magisterium, which is said to be the infallible teaching authority of the Church. Catholics are taught, as we have learned earlier, they cannot receive forgiveness for mortal sins unless they confess to yet another mediator, a priest. Catholics also seek Mary, the earthly mother of Jesus, as a mediator. "The blessed Virgin is invoked in the Church under the titles of Advocate, helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix" (Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, VIII, Paragraph 62).

Paragraph 61 of the same document says Mary "shared her Son's sufferings as He died on the cross. Thus, in a wholly singular way she cooperated ... in the work of the Saviour in restoring supernatural life to souls."

Pope John Paul II, the former pope, has stated emphatically that in Mary "is effected the reconciliation of God with humanity ... is accomplished the work of reconciliation" (Pope John Paul II, *On Reconciliation and Penance*, St. Paul Editions, p. 139).

It is vain for Rome to claim that all this does not violate the Scriptures, which teach, "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man *Christ Jesus*" (First Timothy 2:5). Contrast the slogan adopted by the Second Vatican Council, "Death through Eve, life through Mary" (Lum. Gent. VIII, Paragraph 56). This is Rome's Gospel.

Those That Embrace A False Gospel Deny The Sufficiency And Authority Of The Bible -

We discovered in chapter 3, Rome declares that sacred Scripture along with "tradition must be accepted and honored with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence. " Pagan traditions and practices began tainting the doctrinal purity of the early Church when it ignored the rebuke of Christ concerning tradition. The Lord Jesus firmly denounced religious leaders for allowing their traditions to nullify the Word of God (Mark 7 :6-13). Those that embrace another Gospel show a lack of awe and reverence toward the Bible by supplanting its authority with an authority of their own. They do this by removing, adding and altering the inspired Word of God. Catholic Bishops have removed the second commandment of God in their new Catechism (page 496). It is no wonder Rome removed the commandment, which forbids the making and worshiping of statues. There are huge profits that have been made from the sale of statues. In the sixteenth century Rome added the Apocrypha to its canon of inspired books in an attempt to justify its doctrine of purgatory.¹⁸

Bible-believing Christians understand that the divine command throughout the Bible is not to add, delete or alter the Word of God. The Bible sets boundaries which we are not at liberty to go beyond. The apostle Paul for example exhorted the Corinthian believers "not to exceed what is written" (First Corinthians 4:6). In Deuteronomy 4:2 we are commanded: "Ye shall not add unto the Word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you." Proverbs 30:5-6 instructs us: "Every Word of God is pure: add thou not unto His Words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." Revelation 22:18-19, likewise tells us: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the Words of the prophecy of this Book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this Book: And if any man shall take away from the Words of the Book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of life."

Beloved, the Bible teaches us everything we need to know relative to our spiritual life. We do not have to go outside the Bible for anything relative to salvation and living the Christian life.

A Parting Word -

Is the Roman Catholic Church guilty of embracing a false Gospel? The evidence appears to be overwhelming. The truth must be told in love with courage and conviction by Bible-believing Christians. The eternal destiny of millions of precious souls hangs in the balance. The Catholic Church has fallen away from the faith of the apostles and gone the way of a false Gospel.

How are Christians to respond? Toward individual Catholics we must obey the Scriptures and call them out of their false Gospel (Revelation 18:4). We must proclaim the true biblical Gospel and make disciples of them! Toward the belief system that holds Catholics in bondage, we must expose their unfruitful deeds of darkness (Ephesians 5:11). We must correct and rebuke their false teaching (Second Timothy 4:2) and contend for the biblical faith (Jude 3).

And finally we must avoid those who oppose sound doctrine (Romans 16: 17). This means refusing to join hands with apostates "to advance the mission of Christ." It means rebuking the ecumenical thrust for unity at the expense of biblical truth. We must obey the Scriptures for the glory and purpose of Christ. May He be exalted and praised in all that we do!

A Word With My Catholic Friends -

If you have read this entire book, I want to commend you for your patience and open-mindedness to examine this biblical contrast with the Catholic Church's teaching regarding the Gospel as outlined in First Corinthians 15:3-4. You could have discarded it, assuming the author was just another disgruntled former Catholic with an ax to grind. However, you would have been mistaken. I wrote this book, not out of anger or bitterness, but out of a deep respect for what God teaches in the Scriptures as inspired. The Lord states explicitly: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God (God breathed), and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect (spiritually mature), throughly furnished (fully and completely equipped) unto all good works " (Second Timothy 3: 16-17). This book was presented in a spirit of respect and love for those of the Catholic faith. My only motive is to point people to the biblical Christ of Scripture for personal salvation.

It is my sincere hope and prayer that this book has helped the convinced follower of Catholicism better understand biblical Christianity and, at the same time, more clearly understand the faith on which he is staking his destiny in this life and eternity.

A Word Of Encouragement -

I want to encourage you to go back to the beginning of Christianity in the Gospel's and epistles and start your journey from there. Read them all with an open heart and mind. Seek the Christ of the Bible by returning to the voice of God speaking in the Scriptures.

Do you know what will occur if one goes back to what the Scriptures teach and embrace through faith alone in the Christ of the Bible? You will simply be a biblical Christian, a member of the body of Christ. One can turn to the Bible and read what the apostle Paul preached and how people responded to the Gospel. It is all there, very clearly, very distinctly, in the most understandable terms, for any of us to read. The assurance they enjoyed in knowing that their sins were forgiven can be yours also if we receive the same biblical Gospel, for God has only one way of forgiving sin and saving people.

Breaking with tradition, stepping outside the religious norm and going against the tide are not easy for any of us. But when our beliefs are shown to be in conflict with sacred Scripture, we are left with no other option than to abandon those beliefs in favor of the truth.

Look at all the Jews in the days of Christ, who broke with their religious traditions in order to follow Him. Even the apostle Paul had to acknowledge that what he had believed and practiced all his life was not in line with the will of God. As a result, he had to make a drastic change. Paul's new-found faith in the Lord Jesus Christ brought

him persecution and eventually death, but it also brought him into a right relationship with God. If we could ask Paul right now if the decision to change from ritualistic religion was worth it, we know what he would say. Whenever any of us chooses to differ from what the majority accepts as being correct, then we can expect to meet with conflict.

An Invitation To Become Part Of The Family Of God By Trusting The Biblical Plan Of Salvation -

I want to conclude with a personal invitation to my Catholic friends. After reading the Scriptures presented in this book, why not right now as the Holy Spirit leads you to accept the sacrifice of Christ once and for all time to redeem your soul.

Realize and accept the biblical way to eternal life by trusting the completed sacrifice of Jesus Christ as your only means of salvation. He alone made a sufficient sacrifice for sin. He alone is able to forgive sin and impart the power to live the Christian life. Therefore, look back to the cross of Calvary for it is there that your redemption was accomplished. It is there that you can receive a full and complete pardon for your sins. Do not look to another sacrifice, or a representation of the sacrifice of Christ. There is no need to do so. It is clear from Scripture, that Catholic teaching regarding the Gospel is not compatible with what Scripture teaches and therefore is a counterfeit, a substitute for the real thing. Rome's Gospel does not exalt nor glorify Jesus Christ, for it teaches falsehood about His death. If you willingly partake in it after seeing the teaching of God's Word, you are knowingly rejecting the finished Work of Christ in favor of the incomplete and imperfect way of the Catholic Gospel. What will your decision be? I trust it will be for Christ!

If you have trusted Christ alone to save you we would love to hear from you so that we may rejoice with you. We have resources available to help in your daily walk with the Lord. Or if you would like to know more about biblical salvation or have questions concerning other subject matter please write or call:

Missionary Outreach To Catholics
P.O. Box 17453
Louisville, KY 40217-0453
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(502) 548-9774 (cell)

A Word With My Bible-Believing Friends -

In comparing and contrasting biblical doctrines with Catholic doctrines regarding the Gospel, I have endeavored to be true to biblical Christianity and honest and fair to the Roman Catholic Church. I trust, by God's grace, I have accomplished my objective.

If you are a Bible-believing Christian, dedicated in the past to sharing the Gospel with our Catholic friends, I commend you for your love and desire to see these wonderful people come into a right relationship with Jesus Christ. Keep up the godly work you are doing!

If you are a Christian unaware of the unbiblical teachings of Rome prior to reading this book, I want to challenge you to allow God to open your eyes to the spiritual needs of Catholic people. Hopefully, after reading this book, you are better prepared to be an effective witness to them. You have been alerted to the unbiblical doctrines and practices of Catholicism and now your heart has been prepared to enjoy a ministry among these people. Your former fear and uncertainty are gone and you anticipate each new opportunity to witness to Catholics with new-found joy and confidence.

Bible-Believing Christians Must Be Discipled In Catholic Evangelism -

We must realize that the moral opinions shared by Catholics and Bible-believing Christians are not more important than the doctrinal issues that divide us. In the Church today, there seems to be a basic lack of understanding regarding Catholicism than any other period of Church history. Perhaps this is why our present efforts in evangelism are not more directed to reach Roman Catholics. Graduates from many Bible Colleges are no more familiar with Romanism than they are with the Moslem faith. They may never meet a Moslem, but they may very well encounter Catholics every day. Many pastors and evangelists are not trained to preach a message that will especially touch the heart of these people.

In the past, have you believed that it is more important to unite with Catholics to fight against the social ills (abortion, etc.) of America rather than give them the biblical Gospel for eternity? We must ask ourselves repeatedly whether we truly believe that our Lord Jesus Christ is the only way to Heaven and whether we live according to His words. Can we say with the apostle Paul, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ"? Do we really believe that His Gospel is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Romans 1 : 16) and that the world is lost without Christ? Has the full and awesome meaning of that fact truly gripped our hearts and minds?

Are you content with your Catholic friends embracing a sacramental system of salvation? Do you see Heaven as their home? Do you believe there is more than one way to Heaven? The ministry of Missionary Outreach To Catholics and others has

endeavored to expose the false Gospel of Roman Catholicism that is still sending countless millions to Hell. Yet in spite of excellent scholarship available to Christians to reach these precious people, the Catholic "Gospel" gains an ever-wider acceptance among evangelicals and fundamentalists. There use to be many sound authors and leaders who powerfully opposed Catholicism. Now scarcely anyone raises an objection to this religious system that has likely sent as many to Hell as has Islam. Yet well known leaders of the evangelical Church like Rick Warren, Billy Graham and others still embrace Catholicism as just another way to Heaven.

Didn't the Lord in "*The Great Commission*" command His disciples to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature? Has that command ever been revoked? Absolutely not! It still holds for every Christian today. But which Gospel should one preach? The Gospel has been so perverted, compromised and Catholicized that the power of God unto salvation has been taken out of it for fear of giving offense. Would those in Hell thank us for sparing them the offense that would have taken them instead to Heaven?

Do we withhold the Gospel from the unsaved for selfish reasons? Are some of us ashamed of the narrow gate that the Gospel directs us to present to those who prefer the broad road to destruction? The Word of God is clear: "*The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe*" (Proverbs 29:25). Time is short and eternity is forever. We need to reexamine our hearts and begin to live as though we really believe that if our Catholic friends die embraced to a sacramental system of salvation, will spend eternity alienated from God. That alone, beloved, is sufficient incentive for us to do everything possible to reach these precious souls with the biblical Gospel.

What will your response be?

End Notes

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This book asks and answers the pertinent and relative questions regarding whether or not the Roman Catholic Church is a Christian Church from a biblical perspective.

Are Rome's doctrines regarding the biblical Gospel compatible with what sacred Scripture teaches?

What does Catholicism teach regarding the Person and Work of Jesus Christ, sin, Scripture, and the resurrection of the Saviour, as it relates to First Corinthians chapter fifteen verses three and four?

These questions and other teachings unique to Catholicism are answered in this book.

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