Catholicism

What are the Facts?

MARY - *Immaculate? Sinner? Perpetual Virgin?*
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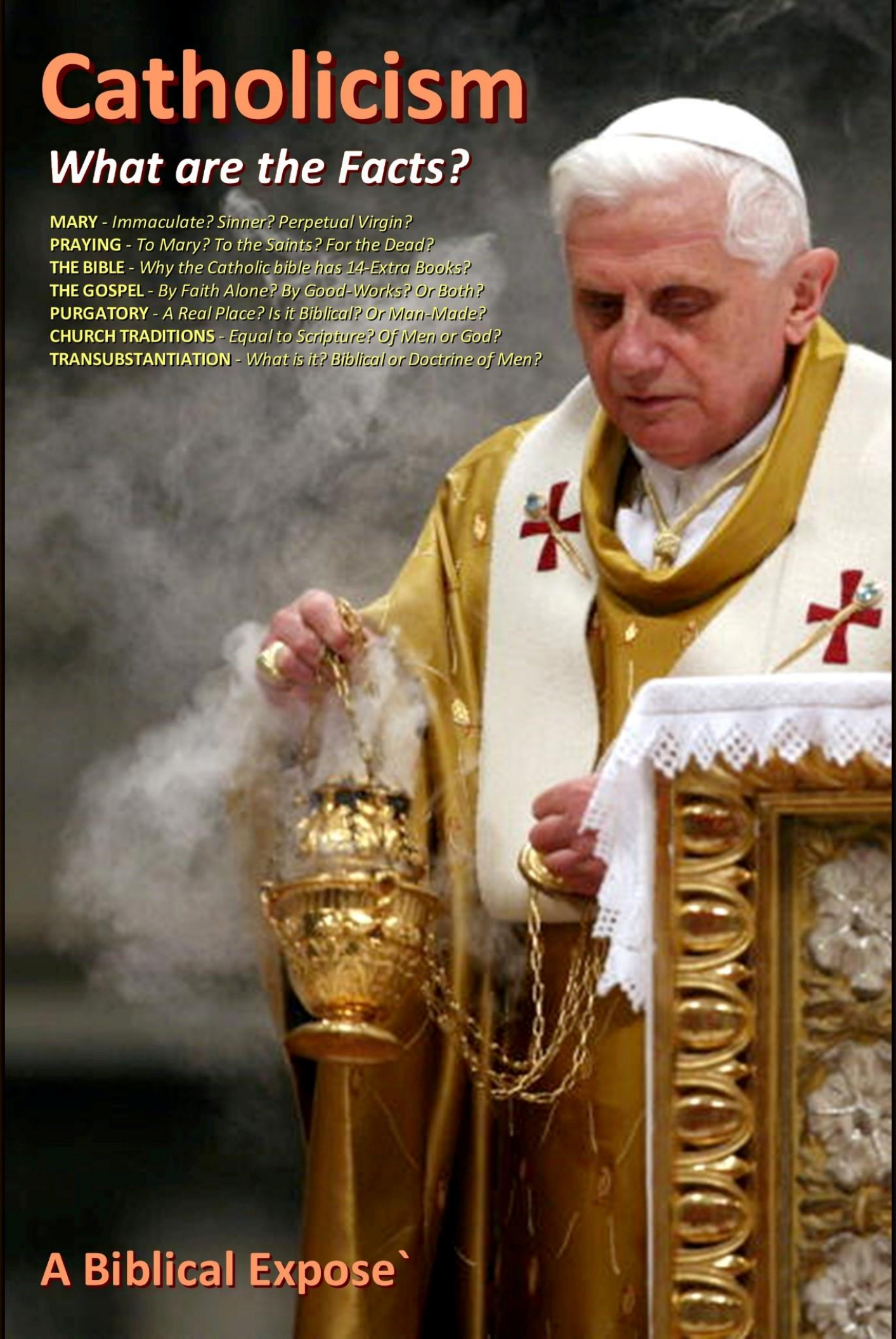

A Biblical Expose`

ROMAN CATHOLICISM

by Charlie H. Campbell

Origins of the Roman Catholic Church

The Book of Acts records for us the birth of the New Testament Church in Jerusalem of Israel, which occurred around 37ad. Acts also records some of the history of the first 30 years of Christianity. In spite of great persecution, by the end of the 1st century A.D. Christian churches had been established in numerous cities throughout the Roman Empire, long before the birth of the Roman Catholic movement, which started in 330ad and becoming official in 590ad, long after Jesus and the Apostles!

Primarily, because of its location in the capital of the Roman Empire, the church in Rome slowly began gaining some prominence. When the Roman Emperor Constantine legalized the Christian faith and ended the persecution of Christians with the Edict of Milan in 313, the church in Rome started gaining prominence. As the church in Rome allied itself with the Roman government, it continued to grow in its authority and influence. As early as the 4th (300-399ad) century the leaders of the church in Rome were claiming for themselves a supremacy over other churches throughout the Empire, when it came to matters of doctrine, despite vigorous rejection by Church Leaders in Jerusalem and abroad.

So by the 6th century the Church in Rome was exercising jurisdiction over the churches. And thus, the Roman Catholic Church was born. Most scholars, outside of the Catholic Church, reject the popular teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, that the Church at Rome was established by Christ Himself through the apostle Peter. WHY?

1. There is no record that Peter was ever the bishop of Rome as the Catholic Church claims.
2. Irenaeus, a Bishop in the early church *[at Lyons, in modern day France]* from 178 – 200ad provided a list of the first 12 bishops of Rome:

--Peter's name does not appear.
--Irenaeus says that the first Bishop of Rome was a man by the name of Linus.
--Irenaeus is a very trusted source. He was a disciple of Polycarp who was a disciple of Apostle John.

3. Eusebius, *(c.260- sometime before 341)* who is called the *"**Father of Church History**"* never mentions Peter as the Bishop of Rome. He does tell us that Peter came to Rome *"**about the end of his days**"* and was crucified there.

4. The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Church at Rome, greets more than two dozen people by name at the end of his letter, but never addressed Peter. That would be a strange omission if Peter was living in Rome, and especially if he was the bishop there.

Most scholars date the beginning of the Roman Catholic Church at 590 A.D. when the leader of the church in Rome, Gregory I…

--consolidated the power of the bishops in Rome
--and set the church on a new course

Rome's claim to supremacy and legal jurisdiction was vigorously resisted by other church leaders and could never be enforced in the eastern portion of the Empire. Dissension remained in the Church between those in the West, based in Rome, and those in the East, based in Constantinople. This finally led to a major split in the church in 1054, when the Eastern churches broke away from the Church in Rome. The Church in the East went on to be known as the Eastern Orthodox Church, *(also known as the Greek Orthodox Church).* The next major split came in the sixteenth century *(the 1500's)*. In Wittenberg, Germany, on October 31, 1517, a Catholic monk by the name of Martin Luther *(1483 – 1546)* nailed his ninety-five theses to the door of the local RCC, protesting numerous teachings of the Catholic Church.

Martin Luther's disagreements with the Catholic Church sparked a fire of protest against the Catholic Church that spread throughout Europe. That movement became known as the Reformation. Far more than protesting trivial, debatable matters, the protest of the Catholic Church revolved around the Gospel message itself *(which we'll talk about more in a few minutes)*.

The Greek word for the word *"**Gospel**"* is ***evangelion***, and, as you know, means *"the good news."* So Martin Luther dubbed his breakaway movement the *"**evangelical church**."* And the division that took place nearly 500 years ago between Catholics and Evangelicals exists to this day. *[Evangelicals would include: Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, just about all Christians outside of the Catholic Church]*.

Size of the Roman Catholic Church

Today, nearly 1 out of every 6 people alive today would call themselves a follower of the Roman Catholic Church. Out of the 6 billion people alive today, there are approximately 1 billion Catholics worldwide. The word *"**Catholic**"* comes from the Greek word "***katholikos***" meaning: ***Universal***. The Catholic Church began referring to itself as the *Catholic* Church because for so long it believed that it was the one and only true church universally.

For centuries it was taught that there was no salvation outside of the Roman Catholic Church. Pope Innocent III said in A.D. 1208:

> *"With our hearts we believe and with our lips we confess but one Church, not that of the heretics, but the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church, outside which we believe that no one is saved."* *(but notice **Rom 10:9-10**)*

Pope Pius IX said in A.D. 1854:

> *"It must be held by faith that outside the Apostolic Roman Church, no on can be saved; that this is the only ark of salvation; that he who shall not have entered therein will perish in the flood."* *(but notice **Acts 4:12 • Rom 10:13 • John 14:6 • John 10:9**)*

In 1965 at an event known as *"**Vatican II**"*, a change took place. Pope Paul VI delivered a message entitled: *"Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions"* that elevated protestant evangelical believers from being lost to being, and I QUOTE: *"**Separated Brethren**"*.
[Unfortunately it was also suggested non-Christians, in faiths such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam, might also be saved.]

Agreements Between Catholics & Evangelicals

There are many doctrines that Evangelical, Bible believing Christians, and Catholics agree upon... *For instance, both Evangelicals (Protestants) and Catholics believe that...*

1. The God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob is the sovereign creator & sustainer of universe
2. There is 1-God who exists eternally in 3-separate, but co-equal persons, Father, Son, Holy Spirit
3. Jesus was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, was Crucified, Died, rose bodily from the grave, ascended into Heaven, and is returning in glory to judge mankind
4. There is a future resurrection of the bodies of both the righteous and wicked
5. The Old and New Testaments are the inspired and infallible Word of God
6. Jesus is God

Disagreements Between Catholics & Evangelicals

But, there are many other significant doctrines that the Roman Catholic Church and Evangelicals disagree on. This afternoon, I'd like to talk about six of those *(for you note takers)*. Evangelicals and the Catholic Church disagree on…

1. THE GOSPEL

According to the Roman Catholic Church, salvation **is not** by **grace alone** through **faith alone**. According to the Catholic Church, being justified *[or declared righteous]* before God is a process that begins at the moment of baptism and then progresses and is maintained by a person's participation in what are called the Seven Sacraments.

The Seven Sacraments of the Catholic Church are:

1. **Baptism**
2. **Penance**: Penance must involve; **a**) contrition over sin **b**) confession to a priest, and then **c**) following the instructions of the priest, typically involving praying ten "Our Fathers" or ten "Hail Mary's"
3. **Eucharist** *(also known as Mass. Mass involves the re-sacrificing or re-presenting of the sacrifice of Jesus to the Father, in order to appease God's wrath and cover people's sins.)*
4. **Confirmation** *(this occurs when a bishop lays his hand on head of a Catholic, signifying that they are coming of age).*
5. **Matrimony** *(marriage)*
6. **Holy Orders** *(ordination to the office of a bishop, priest, or deacon)*
7. **Anointing of the sick** *(usually with oil and/or special prayers)*

Evangelicals think this is a ***perversion*** of the Biblical Gospel. Why?

A. The Bible, over and over, teaches that salvation is ***by grace***, through ***faith alone***, and not the result of ***any effort*** or ***work of man***.

Listen carefully to the following verses *(which interestingly enough were all written originally to believers in Rome).*

Romans 3:28 *"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified [how?] by faith apart from the deeds of the law."* **Romans 4:3** *"For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."*

Romans 4:5 *"But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness"* **Romans 5:1** *"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"*

These verses clearly, and I think forcefully, refute the Catholic notion that salvation is not by grace alone, through faith alone, but by grace *plus* our participation in the Seven Sacraments. Jesus Himself said there was only one condition for salvation and that was belief.

> **John 3:16** *"…whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."* NKJV

<u>John the Baptist taught that there was only one condition for eternal life</u>.

> **John 3:36** *"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."* **NKJV**

The Apostle John taught that there was only one condition for eternal life.

> **1 John 5:13** *"These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life,…"*

The apostle Paul taught that there was only one condition for eternal life.

> **Galatians 2:16** *"…a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified."* NKJV

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

Over and over again, the Bible affirms that there is nothing a person can do, or must do in exchange for his salvation. But, at the Council of Trent in 1546 the Catholic Church stated something that stands to this day. Listen carefully. QUOTE:

> "*If anyone says that 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*." [anathema is defined by Catholics as being excommunicated]

Now, is this a serious issue? I think it is.

Listen to these words in God's holy Word that was written 300 years before the Catholic Church began.

> **Galatians 1:8-9** *"But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that, which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be [what?] accursed."* **NAS**

The Greek word there for accursed is *"**anathema**."* The word refers to that which is devoted to destruction. That is a heavy warning. My heart aches when I think about how many people in the Catholic Church today think that they are going to heaven because of…

> --**their good works**
> --**their attendance at mass**
> --**their baptism**
> --**or their confirmation**

> …but who have never placed their trust in Jesus Christ.

A second area that Evangelicals and the Catholic Church disagree has to do with…

2. PURGATORY

The Catholic Church teaches that the souls of believers who have died will suffer for a time of purging that will prepare them to enter heaven. The purpose of purgatory, says the Catholic Church, is…

--to cleanse an individual of imperfections, venial sins *[less serious than mortal sins]*, and faults
--to do away with temporal punishment due to mortal sins forgiven in the Sacrament of Penance

Catholics differ in their opinions as to the nature of the suffering in purgatory. Most believe that suffering will include the physical pain of burning in fire. Evangelicals believe that the doctrine of purgatory is a man made invention that denies the sufficiency of what Christ did on the cross for our sins. The Bible teaches that Christians are immediately, upon death, ushered into the presence of God totally blameless, and forgiven of their sins. It does? Where? In verses like:

--**2 Corinthians 5:8** *(to be absent from the body)*
--**Philippians 1: 21-23** *(to go and be with Christ)*
--**Jude 24** *(present you faultless)*
--**Hebrews 10:14** *(for by one offering He has perfected forever)*

If ever there was a person who deserved to go to "purgatory" (if there was such a thing) it would have been the thief on the cross next to Jesus. He had just believed, and had no time to do any good works before he breathed his last, or to be baptized, confirmed, etc. But where did he go? Jesus said to him…

Luke 23:43 *"Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."* NAS

For the person who has put their faith in Christ, they too will immediately go into the presence of God in ***"Paradise."*** (Rev. 2:7) In fact, the word ***"purgatory"*** does not even appear a single time in the Bible.

Finally, think about this: If Purgatory was real and we can suffer for our own sins, and then go to Heaven, Why then did Jesus have to suffer Death for our Sins, if we could save ourselves through the purging of Purgatory? Remember when Jesus was in the Garden Praying and knowing that He was about to be arrested then Crucified? Remember how Jesus prayed to the Father, with drops of blood streaming down His Face and what Jesus prayed about? Jesus was praying about His time & manner of Death to come, something that had been planned before the foundations of this world were created (**2Peter 1:19-20**). Jesus knew that the Wrath of His Father was about to be laid upon Him for ALL the sins of the world. Here is what Jesus prayed:

Luke 22:42 *"Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done"*

The cup of Gods Wrath and Judgment was not removed from Jesus and Jesus HAD TO GO to the Cross because there WAS NO OTHER WAY for man to be saved. For Jesus, it would have been an unnecessary Sacrifice if the Catholic man-made Doctrine of Purgatory were true. If man could have been saved by going through Purgatory, why then did Jesus have to die, especially when Jesus prayed to not die on the Cross, if the Father was willing?

A third area that Evangelicals and the Catholic Church disagree has to do with…

3. PRAYING FOR THE DEAD, PRAYING TO MARY & THE SAINTS

First, let's consider praying for the dead. The Catholic Church teaches that Christians who are alive on earth can come to the assistance of those souls in Purgatory by *(among other ways)*…

--intercessory prayers *(as well as alms giving* [giving to the poor] *and other pious works)*

Evangelicals reject this on the basis that there is no Scriptural support whatsoever for this doctrine. *[see Geisler, p. 348ff]* There is not a single example, in the Bible of a person praying *for* a person who has died.

Second, let's consider praying to Mary and the saints [see Geisler, p. 350ff]

The Catholic Catechism says:

> "*The witnesses who have preceded us into the kingdom, especially those whom the Church recognizes as saints, share in the living tradition of prayer by the example of their lives... They contemplate God, praise him and constantly care for those whom they have left on earth. Their intercession is their most exalted service to God's plan. We can and should ask them [the saints] to intercede for us and for the whole world.*" Pg. 645, #2683 **(See also Pg. 249, #956)**

And so the church encourages its followers to pray prayers like this popular pray to Mary…

> "*O Mother of Perpetual Help, thou art the dispenser of all the gifts which God grants to us miserable sinners; and for this end He has made thee so powerful, so rich, and so bountiful, in order that thou mayest help us in our misery. Thou art the advocate of the most wretched and abandoned sinners who have recourse to thee: come to my aid, for I recommend myself to thee. In thy hands I place my eternal salvation, and to thee I entrust my soul. Count me among thy most devoted servants; take me under thy protection and it is enough for me. For, if thou protect me, I fear nothing; not from my sins, because thou wilt obtain for me the pardon of them; nor from the devils, because thou art more powerful than all hell together; nor even from Jesus, my judge, because by one prayer from thee He will be appeased. But one thing I fear: that in the hour of temptation I may through negligence fail to call on thee and thus perish miserably. Obtain for me, therefore, the pardon of my sins, love for Jesus, final perseverance, and the grace ever to have recourse to thee, O Mother of Perpetual Help*."

Catholics are encouraged by the Roman Catholic Church to pray prayers like this, not to God, but to *Mary*!! I read this and I gasp! Can we talk favorably about a religious institution who would encourage its followers to pray to something, or someone else rather than God?

This is absolutely contradicted by the Bible. The Bible says…

> ***Philippians 4:6*** *"…let your requests be made known to [who?] God"*

Jesus taught us to pray to……

> ***Matthew 6:9*** *"Our Father who art in heaven…"*

The Apostle Paul writes……***1 Timothy 2:5*** *"For there is **one** God and **one Mediator between God and men**, the Man Christ Jesus"*

Finally, The **Holy Ghost** is the dispenser of the gifts from God, not Mary! .....Read **1 Cor 12:4 – 11**.
There are prayers in the Bible from Genesis all the way to the Book of Revelation, and NONE of them are addressed to a saint, an angel, or anyone other than God. In fact, numerous passages in the Old Testament condemn all attempts to communicate with the dead or other gods. Those verses include:

-- ***Deuteronomy 18:10-12***
-- ***Leviticus 20:6, 27***
-- ***1 Samuel 28:5-18***
-- ***Isaiah 8:19-20***

Q: Is it a serious thing that the Catholic Church would mislead multitudes of people away from praying to the all living God and into prayer to the dead and sinners?
A: Absolutely!

Did you know that in the Old Testament, if a person violated these commands they were to be put to death?
(Am I suggesting that anybody do that now? God forbid! It does show you though how serious the issue is to God.)

4. MARY

The Catholic Church teaches that Mary…

-- **lived a sinless life** *(see Scriptures below that reveal Mary was also a sinner)*
-- **was immaculately conceived** (*preserved free from all stain of original sin"-Pope Pius IX, 1854)*
-- **was bodily assumed up into heaven** *(not found in Bible, another man-made Tradition)*
-- **remained a virgin after birth of Christ** *(see **Matthew 13:55-56** & **Mark 6:3**)*
-- **should be worshipped as the Mother of God** *(see **Luke 11:27-28 now**)*
-- **plays a part in our salvation as a co-redeemer with Christ** *(see **Isaiah 43:11** & **Hosea 13:4**)*

Evangelicals believe Mary *was* a great example for believers in her trust for the Lord and in her obedience, but there are numerous Scriptures that contradict the traditions that the Catholic Church has attached to her. For example, regarding the Catholic teaching on Mary's supposed sinlessness. Evangelicals believe that the Bible clearly contradicts this *"**sinlessness**"* in Scriptures, like:

> **Luke 1:46** where Mary herself states, "*my spirit rejoices in God my Savior"*

Above, Mary references God as her savior, implying that she to was a sinner, just as the Bible says…

> **Romans 3:10**. *"There is none righteous, no not one."*
> **Mark 10:18** where Jesus said……*"…No one is good except God alone."*

If Mary was without sin, these above verses would not have been taught in the Scriptures, yet Jesus nor did the Apostles ever teach that Mary was without sin. If Mary was without sin, the Bible would have said, "*There is none righteous, no not one, except God/Mary*"

Finally, there is the passage in ***Luke 2:22-24*** where Mary presents a sin offering to the Jewish priest for her sinful condition *(cross reference that with Leviticus 12:6-8)* and that sin offering was required by ALL women, according to the Law of Moses. It would not have been necessary for Mary if she had been sinless. Mary obeyed the Law of Moses.

So, if Mary is a Sinner, why should Mary be Worshipped? (**Luke 4:8**). How could Mary then be a Co-Redeemer with Jesus? Or how could Mary be equal with Jesus who claimed to be without sin? (**John 8:46**). The Catholic Church has turned Mary into an Idol even though the Bible and Mary admit to being a Sinner. If you are to read the ONLY verse, where Mary INSTRUCTS others to do anything, here is what Mary says: **DO WHAT HE** (Jesus) **SAYS**…..and Jesus never addresses Mary His Mother, but addresses her as WOMAN……(**John 2:4-5**). Mary also, in **Luke 1:48** acknowledged herself as a Handmaiden *(a woman servant)*. I don't think Mary or the Bible thought she was without sin, so why should we? The Catholics have placed Mary on an unscriptural pedestal.

5. THE BIBLE

Evangelicals believe that the Bible is made up of 66 Books. *(If you want to read about how the church discovered the Books that God decided were to be included, buy a copy of Norman Geisler's book "From God to Us, How We Got the Bible.")*

The Catholic Church, in 1546 at an event known as the Council of Trent, added these 11 Jewish writings to the Bible known as the *"**Apocrypha**"* to the Protestants and known as the *"**Deuterocanonical books**" (lit. "second canon")* to the Catholics.

What is the Apocrypha? The Apocrypha is a collection of 11 Jewish writings that were written down between 200 B.C. and 100 A.D. These 11-Writings were divided into 14-Books by the Catholic Church and were accepted by the Catholic Church as God-inspired Scriptures and were placed in the Catholic Bible. If you were to open up a Catholic Bible today you would see books in there with titles like...

- **Esther** (*from about the second century B.C.*) are popular expansions (*six passages*) to the biblical story, designed to introduce an underlying religious theme to the *Book of Esther*, which does not mention the name of God.
- **Baruch** (*from about the second to first century B.C.*) contains a prayer of confession, a poem in praise of wisdom, and songs of comfort. The book is attributed to Baruch, who was the scribe of the prophet Jeremiah. The book's theme is the Babylonian exile for punishment of Israel's sins, and foretells the return to Zion.
- **Book of Daniel** has three additions (*from about 165 to 100 B.C.*), which are partly legends about Daniel the Sage and Godfearer and partly liturgical text.
    - **Bel and the Dragon** (*which contains two stories in which Daniel proves the fraudulence of the idols worshipped by the Babylonians as a god.*).
    - **The Prayer of Azariah** and **Song of the Three Young Men** (*recounts the prayers of Shadrach, Meschah, and Azariah, and center on the misfortunes encountered by Jews despite God's covenant with them*.). **Susannah and the Elders** (*an attempt to explain the high regard given Daniel by the Babylonians. The book tells the story of how Daniel saved Susannah from a false charge of adultery, prompted by her rejection of the advances of two elders. Daniel's interrogation of the elders proved that they were not telling the true story*.).
- **1 Esdras** (*the Greek form of the name **Ezra***) (*150 to 100 B.C.*) is an addition to the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. The book contains historical material which formed the basis of Josephus' description of the exiles' return to Zion from Babylonia. Its major addition to the biblical account is the "*debate of the three young men*" which explains how Zerubbabel, depicted as a bodyguard to Darius I, gained permission from the Persian king for the Jews to rebuild Jerusalem.
- **2 Esdras** (*from about A.D. 70*) is an apocalyptic work attributed to Ezra, describing the destruction of Jerusalem because of the sins of Israel. The visions of the future tell that after a period of time Israel will be cleansed of its sinfulness and Jerusalem will be rebuilt.
- **Judith** (*about 150 B.C.*) contains a tale of a heroine, Judith, who used her charm to lure the invading Assyrian general Holofernes to his death by decapitation. She, thereby, lifted the siege of her city. The book is important for its description of Judith's meticulous observance of various religious laws.
- **The letter of Jeremiah** (*from about 300 B.C.*) is a short work attributed to Jeremiah in which the prophet condemns the worship of idols. In the **Vulgate**, the book also contains the letter of Jeremiah as the sixth chapter.
- **1 Macabees** (*from about 110 B.C.*) is the chief source for a history of the events of the **Hasmonean revolt** from the conquest of Alexander the Great and is the primary source for information on the events celebrated on the festival of **Hanukkah**.
- **2 Macabees** (*from 110 to 70 B.C.*) is essentially the same recounting of events as 1 Macabees but, with a stronger emphasis of the religious aspects of the revolt rather than serving as an historical account. Among the prominent religious themes in the book is the concept of martyrdom.
- **The Prayer of Manasseh**
- **Ecclesiasticus** (*Wisdom of Jesus ben Sira, or Sirach*) (*from about 180 B.C.*) is an apocryphal book of the *Wisdom of Literature* containing poems and proverbs offering advise on practical and godly living similar to the book of Proverbs.
- **Tobit** (*500 to 400 B.C.*) is a tale of domestic piety. It is the story of Tobit, from the tribe of Naphtali, who is exiled to Assyria where, despite his righteousness, misfortune befalls him. The book ends with Tobias, his son, rectifying the wrong done to his father.
- **The Wisdom of Solomon** (*from the first century B.C.*) pays homage to the traditional founder of Wisdom Literature without claiming to be written by Solomon. The book consists of three parts: an eschatology, depicting the ultimate fate of the righteous and the wicked; a "wisdom" section, containing the message that God is close to the Jews when they adhere to the values created by wisdom; and a homily on the Book of Exodus.

Though not part of the original project but published in 1895 the **Apocrypha** (*Greek for "hidden"*) is the term used to denote the fifteen books included in the Septuagint (*the first Greek translation of the Bible*) and the Vulgate (*Jerome's Latin translation of the Bible*), which were incorporated in the Catholic and Greek Orthodox

canons, but not in the Hebrew or Protestant Bibles. These books are believed to have been composed from about 300bc. – 70ad. Most were written in either Hebrew or Aramaic and contain Intertestamental historical works, additions to various canonical books, devotions, and apocalypses. They came under attack by the Protestants during the Reformation in the 16th century. **Martin Luther**, a leading figure of the **Protestant Reformation**, and other reformers **decided the Christian Bible should include only those books of the Old Testament that were in the Hebrew Cannon**. They kept the basic order of the Septuagint, but ended their book with the Prophets. The books not found in the Hebrew Bible were placed in another category as an appendix to the Old Testament. Catholic scholars refer to this group of works as the deuterocanonical books of Scripture (*those books and portions which came later to be recognized as authoritative in the Catholic Church only*). The **Catholic Church** declared these books to be authoritative at the ***Council of Trent*** (1546) and included them in the Bible as scriptures for the very 1st time, even though Jesus or the Apostles did not even quote or acknowledge them. As early as 1599 some English copies of the Bible omitted the apocryphal books altogether. The Catholic Church made this official statement about the Apocrypha. QUOTE:

> *"If anyone, however, should not accept the said books as sacred and canonical (i.e. part of the Bible), entire with all their parts…and if both knowingly and deliberately he should condemn the aforesaid tradition let him be anathema." (p. 157, Roman Catholics and Evangelicals: Agreements and Differences, Geisler and MacKenzie)*

There are numerous reasons why the early church and believers down through the centuries have rejected the apocryphal books as authoritative or divinely inspired.

A) Neither Jesus or N.T. Writers Quoted from Apocrypha as Scripture

Though Jesus and the Apostles cite the OT nearly 300 times in the pages of the NT, they *never* quote any of the apocryphal books accepted by the Catholic Church. They did however quote from others:

> *(There are in Jude, v. 9 as well as v. 14-15 some allusions to some extra-biblical false writings, such as the **Book of Enoch** (v.14-15) and **Bodily Assumption of Moses**. But this doesn't lend any support to the Catholic position because even they reject those books as non-canonical. And none of these are cited as Scripture or as divinely authoritative. The NT simply refers to a truth contained in those books which otherwise may have many errors. These writings are rejected by Roman Catholics as well as Protestants. Remember that even the Apostle Paul quotes pagan poets in Acts 17:28. That didn't mean they were divinely inspired.)*

B) Apocrypha Contains Numerous Historical/Geographic/Chronological Errors

There are many examples of this. Another error is found in the Book of Judith where it speaks of Nebuchadnezzar reigning in Nineveh. But it is a historical fact that this was never the case. Nebuchadnezzar was the king of Babylon and not the King of Nineveh. For instance, the Apocrypha claims that Tobit was alive when the Assyrians conquered Israel in 722 B.C. and also when Jeroboam revolted against Judah in 931 B.C., which would make him at least 209 years old; yet according to the account, he died when he was 158 years, which is hard to believe because of the average life spans of the time.
(www.christiancourier.com/archives/apocrypha.htm for some additional information on the errors of the apocrypha)

C) The Jews Never Accepted the Apocrypha as Inspired

The Jewish people of today and the leading Jewish teachers of that era recognized that this collection of Jewish writings did not belong in the Hebrew Bible. Go to a Jewish Book store and see that the Apocrypha is not included in their OT Bible. The 1st century Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus, tells us in his writings that the Hebrew Bible was composed of the same books that make up our Old Testament today, minus the Apocrypha Books. Philo, an Alexandrian Jewish teacher, who lived from 20 B.C. to A.D. 40 quoted the Old Testament numerous times from virtually every OT book and he never once quotes from the Apocrypha.

D) Apocrypha Contains No Predictive Prophecy that Substantiate it's Claims

The Bible over and over substantiates it's claim to divine inspiration with hundreds of fulfilled prophecies. In fact, 27% percent of the Bible contains predictive prophecy, and half of them have already been fulfilled. *[See 'Every Prophecy of the Bible' by John Walvoord]*. Unlike the books of the Bible, the Apocrypha contains none.

E) The Apocrypha Never Claims to be the Inspired Word of God

Unlike the OT books that over & over say things, like *"**thus says the Lord**"* or *"**the word of the LORD came unto him**"* the Apocrypha never says anything like this. Since that is the case, it seems unwise to call the authors of the Apocrypha *"**prophets**"* or *"**spokespersons of God**"* or *"**Inspired**"* when that is something that they themselves did not claim.

F) Apocrypha was Rejected by Many of the Leading Early Church Fathers

The early church recognized a distinction between the Old Testament & the Apocryphal books. Many of them, men such as Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Origen, spoke out against them.

G) Jerome Rejects Apocrypha & Left Out of His Latin Bible Translation (the Vulgate)

Jerome *(who lived from 340-420 A.D.)* was the man, who translated, for the first time, the Bible from Greek into Latin. Jerome is considered to be the greatest biblical and Hebrew scholars of the early medieval period. Jerome's translation (known as the Vulgate) became thee Bible translation for centuries to follow. It even became the official translation of the Roman Catholic Church. So if Jerome left them out of his translation, how did the Apocryphal books end up in the Vulgate, the Catholic Bible? The Church inserted them into the Vulgate after he died.

H) The Apocrypha Contains Numerous Non-Biblical and Heretical Doctrines

--The Apocrypha teaches the erroneous unbiblical doctrine of pre-existence of the soul, suggesting the kind of body one now has is determined by the character of his soul in a previous life *(Wisdom of Solomon 8:19-20)*
--The Apocrypha teaches prayer for the dead *(2 Maccabees 12:41-46)*
--The doctrine of purgatory *(even the righteous must suffer after death for a time before being accepted into heaven)*
--The Apocrypha teaches that salvation is available through good works in Tobit 12:19.
--The Apocrypha also teaches that salvation is available through the giving of alms

Tobit 3:9 says:*"It is better to give alms than to lay up gold: alms deliver from death & it shall purge away all sin"*

Tobit 4:11 says:*"For alms deliver from all sin and from death, and will not suffer the soul to go into darkness"*

These are doctrines that are not supported in the Bible, and are clearly even contradicted by authentic, proven Scripture, Scripture that was validated as true by Jesus Himself.

I) Apocrypha Not Declared Authoritative/Inspired by Catholic Church until 1546

1500 plus years after they were written!! Why did they do this so late? They did it to counter the teachings of Martin Luther and the other reformers. These men were exposing the fact that the Catholic Church was basing certain teachings on the Apocrypha, and not the sixty-six books of the Bible. So, the Catholic Church officially declared the Apocrypha was part of the Bible, inspired by God and to be accepted with the rest of the Bible!

NOTE: The Apostles and early church Fathers (the Disciples of the Apostles) and all the Disciples of the early Church Fathers wrote extensively one to another for centuries to the numerous churches that sprang up world-wide. These writings/Letters span from 35 ad to 1500 ad. These writings contain the quoting of Scripture. These writings are well known original artifacts that are now housed in many museums across this planet today. From these writings, the WHOLE BIBLE (66-Books only) can be reconstructed from these numerous writings/letters except for 8-verses! From these writings, not ONE-VERSE from any of the Books of the Apocrypha can be found or reconstructed because not one of these Church Fathers ever quoted from them, nor taught them as Scripture! It was not until 1546, (1500 years after Bible was written) that the Apocrypha was declared by the Catholic Church only, as Scripture/Inspired.

6. THE AUTHORITY OF CHURCH TRADITION

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that authority for faith and practice rests on two foundations:

1. **The Bible** *(which includes their 11 added books they added to the Bible, the Apocrypha)*
2. **The Church**, *(or Sacred church tradition)*

Authoritative Church tradition includes the decrees of various councils *[meetings of Church leaders]* as well as certain sayings of the Popes. The Catholic Church teaches that when the Pope speaks ***ex cathedra***, *(which literally means "from the chair")* he is absolutely infallible. Throughout the history of the Church, the various Popes have said numerous things in this manner. Those things stand irreversibly to this day, as truths that are equal in authority to the written Word of God.

So, when you read something on the Vatican's official website, or in a Catholic book on theology, you'll read something that says something like "Such and such is true" and instead of it giving you a Scripture reference for justification for a particular belief, it will just say something like: "Pope Pius XII" because to the Catholic Church that is equal to Biblical revelation. Evangelicals believe that authority for faith and practice rests solely upon one foundation, the sixty-six books of Scripture. This is something that the men who led the reformation *(i.e.Martin Luther and John Calvin, and Ulrich Zwingli)* called "***sola scriptura***," Latin for "***Scripture alone***." We believe that Scripture alone is the final court of appeal on all doctrinal and moral matters. Evangelicals believe that "***any tradition***" or ***"teaching"*** that contradicts the Scripture it is to be rejected, no matter how sacred or old it is!!!
Turn over with me to Colossians. Colossians, chapter two says…

> ***Colossians 2:8-10*** *Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition [the what?] of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. 9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; 10 and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.*" (**This verse was written 500-yrs before Catholic Traditions began**)

Any ***"tradition"*** (v.8) that conflicts with the absolute Word of God, as contained in the Scripture, is to be rejected (**Acts 17:11**, **Isa. 8:20**). Turn over to Matthew 15 with me. Listen to Jesus rebuke the Pharisees here for voiding the Word of God with their traditions...

> ***Matthew 15:1-9*** *Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying, 2 "Why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread." 3 He answered and said to them, "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? 4 For God commanded, saying, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' 5 But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God"-- 6 then he need not honor his father or mother.' Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition. 7 Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: 8'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. 9 And in vain do they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'"* **NKJV**

This is a why Evangelicals reject many of the Catholic traditions. They often contradict the commandments of God, and of course God does not contradict Himself. Another reason Evangelicals reject most of the traditions of the Catholic Church as authoritative is because if tradition is needed to supplement God's Word *(as the Catholic Church teaches)* then that means the Bible is insufficient as a guide for living. But that is exactly the opposite of what the Bible says about itself.

The Bible tells us that written ***"Scripture Alone"*** *is* sufficient. Turn with me to…

> **2 Timothy 3:14-17** Paul, writing to Timothy said…..*14 But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, 15 and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, [***notice: nothing else***] which are able to make you wise for salvation [***Scripture is sufficient to lead a person to salvation***] through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture [***notice again, Paul doesn't mention tradition***] is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be [what?] complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*" **NKJV**

The Word of God, *"**the Holy Scriptures**"* (v.15) are able to make a man *"**complete**"* (v.17). The Greek word there for *"complete"* (in v. 17) can also be translated:

-- **adequate**
-- **capable**
-- **fully furnished**
-- **proficient in the sense of being able to meet all demands**

Jesus said in **John 10:35** *"...the Scripture cannot be broken."* NKJV

He never said, "Tradition cannot be broken."

Jesus said in **Matt 5:18** *"For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law (scripture) till all is fulfilled."* NKJV

Again, Jesus above, is referring to the authority of *written* Scripture Alone, and not to oral traditions. Jesus used Scripture as the final court of appeal in every matter under dispute. To the Sadducees He said...

Matt 22:29 *"You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God."*

To the devil, Jesus consistently responded...

Matthew 4:4, 7, 10 *"It is written..."* (x3)

To the Pharisees, Jesus said.....

Mark 7:8-9 *"For laying aside the commandment of God [the written Word], you hold the tradition of men — the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do. 9 He said to them, "All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition."*

It was the man made traditions that people elevated above the written commandments of God that Jesus consistently had to condemn! So, Evangelicals follow Jesus' lead and believe that Scripture alone is the supreme and final authority. The Word of God tells us that it will equip us for *every* good work (**2 Tim. 3:17**).

But what about verses that uphold "tradition" as being valuable?

Paul *does* tell the Thessalonians to, QUOTE: "hold the traditions" in 2 Thessalonians 2:15. Let's quickly look at them. Turn to...***2 Thessalonians 2:15*** Paul writes to the believers in Thessalonica...

"*Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word [i.e. word of mouth] or our epistle*."

Paul seems to say here that believers *should* hold on to *"**tradition**"*!!! But, notice the critically important word there in v.15: *"**our**"*. Paul's *not* referring to traditions in general, but things that HE, along with Silas, and Timothy *[see 1:1]* had taught them previously. And notice, Paul said...

"*...hold the traditions which you were [notice that it's in the past tense] taught [that is, when Paul was with the Thessalonian believers], whether by word or our epistle*." (2:15)

Paul was writing to people here in this epistle that he had previously and personally *"**taught**"* (v.15, **1 Thess. 2:1-2, 13**) *as an Apostle of God.* The Apostles, for a time, communicated their teachings orally until those teachings could be permanently recorded in written form. *Those* are the traditions that Paul had in mind, *not* the traditions that the Roman Catholic Church would develop hundreds and even a thousand plus years later!

Did you realize that many of the traditions of the Catholic Church have no ties to the apostles or to Jesus? Many of them were developed long *after* the Apostles. Neither Jesus nor the Apostles taught any of these following Catholic Doctrines below. Listen to when the following Roman Catholic Church doctrines came into being:

-- **Perpetual virginity of Mary** . . . . . **553** AD *(5th Ecumenical Council at Constantinople)*
-- **Purgatory** . . . . . **593** AD
-- **Prayer to Mary, Saints & Angels** . . . . . **600** AD
-- **Practice of Kissing the Pope's Foot** . . . . . **709** AD
-- **The canonization of the dead saints** . . . . . **995** AD
-- **Celibacy of the priesthood** . . . . . **1079** AD
-- **Praying the Rosary** . . . . . **1090** AD
-- **Transubstantiation/Confess Sins to Priest** . . . . . **1215** AD
-- **Belief in Seven Sacraments** . . . . . **Late 13th Century**
-- **The Sinlessness of Mary** . . . . . **1547** AD *(at Council of Trent)*
-- **The Infallibility of the Pope** . . . . . **1870** AD
-- **Mary as Co-Redeemer with Christ** . . . . . **1891** AD *(Pope Leo XIII)*
-- **Mary Caught Up to Heaven in Bodily Form** . . . . . **1950** AD *(Pope Pius XII)*

Dates above taken from **The Moody Handbook of Theology, p.404, 531-32 and from the book named: **Roman Catholics and Evangelicals** by Norman Geisler and Ralph MacKenzie and verified by/from the Vatican Library*

The other verse the Catholic Church points to is 2 Thessalonians 3:6.

> **2 Thessalonians 3:6** ~ "*But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received **from us**.*"

Again, notice the words "***from us***" here in this verse. Not from the church to come and the leaders that will come on the scene hundreds of years from now.

> --*The traditions or teachings that came directly from the apostles are the ones that are binding*.

Also, notice that Paul speaks once again in the past tense in verse 6 below:
"...***according to the tradition which he received from us***."

> --*Those are the traditions that are authoritative (and we believe that were even written down) not the Catholic traditions introduced centuries later!!!*

So, again, Paul said to hold to the tradition which QUOTE "**you *were* taught**" *(in **2 Thess. 2:15**)* and that which you "**received from *us***" *(in **2 Thess. 3:6**)*. Those would *exclude* the traditions of the Catholic Church.

The Scriptures declare that the Lord's Supper is a memorial to the body and blood of Christ (Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24-25), not the actual consumption of His physical body and blood. When Jesus was speaking in John chapter 6 regarding the eating of His Body and Blood, Jesus had not yet had the Last Supper with His disciples, in which He instituted the Lord's Supper.

7. THE DOCTRINE OF TRANSUBSTANTIATION

Question: What is Transubstantiation?

Answer: Transubstantiation is a Roman Catholic Church Doctrine. The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines this doctrine in section 1376:

> *"The Council of Trent summarizes the Catholic faith by declaring: 'Because Christ our Redeemer said that it was truly his body that he was offering under the species of bread, it has always been the conviction of the Church of God, and this holy Council now declares again, that by the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood. This change the holy Catholic Church has fittingly and properly called transubstantiation."*

In other words, the Roman Catholic Church teaches that once an ordained priest blesses the bread of the Lord's Supper, it is ***transformed into the actual flesh of Christ*** *(though it retains appearance-odor-taste of bread)*; and when he blesses the wine, it is ***transformed into the actual blood of Christ*** *(though it retains appearance-odor-taste of wine)*. Is such a concept Biblical? There are some Scriptures that if interpreted strictly literally would lead to the *"**real presence**"* of Christ in the bread and wine. Examples are:

John 6:32-58 • **Matthew 26:26** • **Luke 22:17/23** • **1 Corinthians 11:24-25**

The passage pointed to most frequently is John 6:32-58 and especially verses 53-57, "***Jesus said to them, 'I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life … For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him … so the one who feeds on me will live because of me***.'"

Roman Catholics interpret this passage literally, and apply its message to the Lord's Supper, which they title the *"**Eucharist**"* or *"**Mass**."* Those who reject the idea of transubstantiation interpret Jesus' words in John 6:53-57 as *"**figuratively**"* or *"**symbolically**"*. How can we know which interpretation is correct? Thankfully, Jesus made it exceedingly obvious what He meant. John 6:63 declares, "***The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life***." Jesus specifically stated that His words are "**spirit**." Jesus was using physical concepts, eating and drinking, to teach spiritual truth. Just as consuming physical food and drink sustains our physical bodies, so are our spiritual lives saved and built up by spiritually receiving Him, by grace through faith. Eating Jesus' flesh and drinking His blood are symbols of fully and completely receiving Him in our lives.

At this Last Supper, Jesus clearly interprets the BREAKING of BREAD *(representing His Body)* and the WINE *(representing His Blood to be shed)* and then commands His Disciples to DO THIS ACT of Breaking of Bread & Wine in M-E-M-O-R-Y of Him. We are to take COMMUNION in MEMORY of Him. That is all that this means and nothing more! Jesus nor the Apostles, or the 1st-2nd-3rd-or 7th – Generation of Disciples ever taught that the BREAD & WINE *"**literally**"* and *"**magically**"* turn into the Body & Blood of Jesus and that the only way to be saved is to take Communion. In fact, this heretical Teaching did not occur until 1215ad.

To read the Lord's Supper/Christian Communion back into John chapter 6 is unwarranted. For a more complete discussion of these issues, please read our article on the Holy Eucharist. At:
http://www.gotquestions.org/Holy-Eucharist.html

The most serious reason transubstantiation should be rejected is because it is viewed by the Roman Catholic Church as a *"**re-sacrifice**"* of Jesus Christ for our sins, or as a *"**re-offering / re-presentation**"* of His sacrifice. This is directly in contradiction to what Scripture says, that:

"Jesus died *"once for all"* and "*does not need to be sacrificed again and again*" – (Heb 10:10 • 1-Pet 3:18)

In the Book of Hebrews 7:27 declares, *"Unlike the other high priests, He (Jesus) **does not need to offer sacrifices day after day**,(the Mass) first for his own sins and then for the sins of the people. He (Jesus) sacrificed for their sins **ONCE for all** when He offered Himself."*

Hence, based on this Doctrine of Transubstantiation, the Catholic Church erroneously, teaches that the only way to obtain Salvation and to maintain it, is to continually take Holy Communion, which they believe is; EATING the WAFER that is magically/literally changed into the LITERAL BODY & BLOOD of Jesus. Such Doctrine is a False Doctrine and never taught in Christendom until 1215 years after the Birth of Jesus!

Recommended Resource: The Gospel According to Rome: Comparing Catholic Tradition and The Word of God by James McCarthy.

So these are some of the areas that Catholics and Evangelicals disagree.

1) ***Mary***
2) ***The Bible***
3) ***Purgatory***
4) ***The Gospel***
5) ***Authority of Church Tradition***
6) ***Praying for Dead & to Saints/Mary***
7) ***Doctrine of Transubstantiation***

Because so many differences exist, we need to look upon our Catholic neighbors and not just assume that they are saved, but look upon them as people who still possibly have never been born again (John 3:3).

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

If you have Catholic friends or family that you would like to dialog with, but could use some extra help, there are some wonderful books that examine the teachings of the Catholic Church and compare them side by side with the Scriptures. If you have a Catholic friend or relative that you have an ongoing relationship with and dialog with, I would highly recommend any of these three books.

1) **Roman Catholics & Evangelicals**: **Agreements & Differences:** *by Norman Geisler &Ralph MacKenzie*
2) **Reasoning from the Scriptures with Catholics:** *by Ron Rhodes*
3) **Roman Catholic Controversy – Catholics/Protestants—Do the Differences Matter**? *by James R. White*

They are all very well written, and provide lots of good, well researched answers to tough questions and issues that may come up in your conversation. If you'd like to find the official Catholic teaching on a variety of different doctrines, you can do some research right on the Vatican's website at The Official Roman Catholic Website and research the Official Roman Catholic Catechism made available online at:

www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/ccc_toc.htm

ABOUT CHARLIE CAMPBELL

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BOOKING: *If you would like to have Charlie Campbell speak at your church, conference, Christian school, or retreat please call 760-726-4224 or email him at CharlieCampbell@CalvaryChapel.com. References available. For additional resources, audio messages, notes, DVDs, that will help you always be ready to defend the faith* (1 Peter 3:15) *check out...*

http://www.AlwaysBeReady.com