

# Biblical Christianity

# Roman Catholicism

## **What's the Difference?**

## **Why Does it Matter?**

The Battle for the Truth...

“If the truth cannot be fearlessly proclaimed in the church, what place is there for truth at all? How can we build a generation of discerning Christians if we are terror-struck at the thought that non-Christians might not like hearing the unvarnished truth?”

John MacArthur, *The Truth War*, p. 200

...CONTEND EARNESTLY FOR THE FAITH  
WHICH WAS ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.

Jude 3

Presented by Dan Flaherty  
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## The Roman Catholic Church...

has always been identified with Christianity because it upholds four fundamentals of the Christian faith:

- The deity of Christ,
- The Triune God,
- The virgin birth, and
- The bodily resurrection and return of Christ to the earth.

However, Catholic teaching opposes the biblical doctrine that is most essential to the Christian faith – **the doctrine of justification by faith alone**. The Vatican not only denies this doctrine, but also condemns anyone who believes it. Other Catholic doctrines deny Christ's work of redemption is finished and that His atonement is sufficient. For this reason Roman Catholicism must be identified as an apostate church and Catholics need to be evangelized.

With over one billion Catholics in the world and a growing ecumenical movement to unite all religions under the power and influence of the pope, the truth about Roman Catholicism must be told. The precious souls who are blinded by religious deception must obey the first command of Jesus "repent and believe the Gospel" (Mark 1:15).

## A Word About the Motivation of Catholics

It is important to note that most clergy and lay people that teach Roman Catholic doctrines are not deceiving people with malicious intent. They are simply passing on what has been taught to them, believing that it is the truth. Many Catholics have a zeal for God but it is not based on biblical knowledge.

Prayer, love, compassion, and understanding are needed along with the power of the Word of God to penetrate their hearts. Patience is needed to untangle Roman Catholics from the dogmatic web in which they are held captive (Colossians 2:8).

## A Brief History of Catholicism

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Glossary of Some Common Catholic Terms**

(With references from the Catholic Catechism, 1994)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Rome vs. the Bible

***What would you do if you found out many of the teachings of Roman Catholicism stand opposed to the Bible?***

***Would you choose to believe the Word of God or the words of men?***

***It is impossible to believe both.***

***(Paragraph numbers in parenthesis are from The New Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994).***

### AUTHORITY

**THE BIBLE** teaches Scripture has authority over the church. *“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness”* (2 Tim. 3:16)

**CATHOLICISM** teaches the Church has authority over Scriptures. The manner of interpreting is ultimately subject to the judgment of the Church...to the Pope and to the bishops. (100, 119)

### JUSTIFICATION

**THE BIBLE** teaches man is justified once by faith because justification provides a permanent right standing before God and results in glorification (Rom. 8:30). *“To the man who does not work, but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness”* (Rom. 4:5)

**CATHOLICISM** teaches man is to be justified repeatedly by sacraments and works because he loses grace of justification each time a mortal sin is committed. The sacrament of Penance offers a new possibility to convert and to recover the grace of justification (1446)

## REGENERATION

**THE BIBLE** teaches man is regenerated at the baptism of the Spirit. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body (1 Cor. 12:13). *“From the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth”* (2 Thess. 2:13).

**CATHOLICISM** teaches baptism of water is the sacrament of regeneration (1213). The water of Baptism truly signifies our birth into the divine life (694).

## SALVATION

**THE BIBLE** teaches man is saved by God’s unmerited grace. *“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast”* (Eph. 2:8-9).

**CATHOLICISM** teaches man is saved by meriting the graces needed for salvation. We can merit for ourselves and for others the graces needed for the attainment of eternal life (2010).

**THE BIBLE** teaches man is saved for good works. *“For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do”* (Eph. 2:10).

**CATHOLICISM** teaches man is saved by good works. In this way they attain their own salvation and cooperate in saving their brothers (1477).

**THE BIBLE** teaches man is saved for all eternity. *“And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance”* (Eph. 1:13-14).

**CATHOLICISM** teaches man is saved only until the next mortal sin is committed. Those who die in a state of mortal sin descend into hell (1035).

**THE BIBLE** teaches salvation is offered to those outside the church. *“We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors as though God were making His appeal through us, be reconciled to God”* (2 Cor. 5:20).

**CATHOLICISM** teaches salvation is offered through the Church. Basing itself on Scripture and Tradition, the Church is necessary for salvation. Anyone refusing to enter it or remain in it cannot be saved (846)

**THE BIBLE** teaches that all sins are purified by the blood of Jesus (1 John 7).

**CATHOLICISM** teaches some sins are purified in the fires of Purgatory. They undergo purification in Purgatory, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven (1030-31).

## SAINTS and PRIESTS

**THE BIBLE** teaches that man becomes a saint when the Spirit baptizes him into the body of Christ. (Eph. 4:11-12).

**CATHOLICISM** teaches man becomes a saint only if the Pope canonizes him. This occurs when he solemnly proclaims that they practiced a heroic virtue and lived in fidelity to God's grace (828).

**THE BIBLE** teaches every Christian is a priest and a member of the royal priesthood (1 Pet. 2:9)

**CATHOLICISM** teaches every man needs a priest for salvation. Catholic priests guarantee that Christ is acting in the sacraments which are necessary for salvation (1120-29)

## THE LORD'S SUPPER

**THE BIBLE** teaches the Lord's Supper is a memorial. "*Do this in remembrance of me*" (1 Cor. 11:24-25).

**CATHOLICISM** teaches the Lord's Supper is a sacrifice. The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice...the same Christ who offered Himself once in a bloody manner on the altar on the altar of the cross is contained and offered in an unbloody manner (1374-78).

**THE BIBLE** teaches that believers receive Jesus once, spiritually, in the heart. "*God...put his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee*" (2 Cor. 1:22).

**CATHOLICISM** teaches Catholics receive Jesus physically, frequently, in the stomach. The body, blood...soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ...is truly, really and substantially contained in the Eucharist (1374-78).

## CONDEMNATION

**THE BIBLE** condemns anyone who perverts the Gospel including the Roman Catholic clergy. "*If we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!*" (Gal. 1:6-9).

**CATHOLICISM** condemns with over 100 anathemas those who believe the Bible instead of the Canons of the Council of Trent. The condemnations are still in effect today.

## DOCTRINE OF JESUS

### Jesus the Savior

**THE BIBLE** "*He saved us, not because of any righteous deeds we have done, but because of His mercy*" (Titus 3:5)

**CATHOLICISM** teaches that "*by His death and resurrection, Jesus has 'opened' heaven to us*" (1026). Each person attains His own salvation by grace and good works (1477).

### **Jesus the sinless Redeemer**

**THE BIBLE** *"For you know it was not with perishable things...that you are redeemed...but with the precious blood of Christ"* (1 Pet. 1:17-18).

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

### **Jesus our Advocate and only Mediator**

**THE BIBLE** *"God is one, one also is the mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"* (1 Tim. 2:5, 1 John 2:1).

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

### **Jesus expiates our sin**

**THE BIBLE** *"Through His blood, God made him the means of expiation for all who believe"* (Rom. 3:25).

**CATHOLICISM** teaches that sins are expiated in purgatory through a *"cleansing fire"* and that we *"must to accept this temporal punishment of sin as a grace"* (1030, 31; 1472-75)

### **Jesus finished the work of redemption**

**THE BIBLE** *"By one offering He has forever perfected those who are being sanctified"* (Heb. 10:14). *"Unlike the other high priests, He does not need to offer daily sacrifices"* (Heb. 7:27, 28).

**CATHOLICISM** denies it is finished. *"The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice...the same Christ who offered Himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross is contained and offered in an unbloody manner"* (1367). The sacrifice is *"offered in reparation for the sins of the living and the dead"* (1414).

### **His life, death and resurrection provided the only way to be saved**

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

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



### **His shed blood is the only remission for sins**

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

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

### **Jesus cleanses us from sin**

**THE BIBLE** *“When He [Jesus] had cleansed us from our sins, He took His seat at the right hand of the majesty in heaven”* (Heb. 1:3). *“Christ ...presents you to God holy, free of reproach and blame”* (Col. 1:22).

**CATHOLICISM** teaches that *“all who die in God’s grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified...undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven”* (1030).

### **Jesus, Head of the Church**

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

**CATHOLICISM** teaches that the Pope, *“by reason of his office as Vicar of Christ, and as the supreme pastor of the entire Church has full, supreme and universal power which he can also exercise unhindered”* (882). He exercises infallibility when *“he proclaims by a definitive act a doctrine pertaining to faith or morals”* (891)

### **Jesus the soon coming King**

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

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

## TWO DIFFERENT GOSPELS

<p><b>The Gospel of Grace Reveals:</b>  <u>Jesus Christ, His life death and resurrection</u>          (1 Cor. 15:1-4)</p> <p><u>Salvation is...</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Only through Christ (Acts 4:12)</li> <li>-A gift of God's grace (Eph. 2:8,9)</li>   <li>-By faith alone (Eph. 2:8,9)</li>   <li>-Attained by Christ (Rom. 5:9)</li> <li>-At the moment a sinner believes the gospel (Eph. 1:13,14)</li> <li>-Secured by God (John 10:27-30)</li> </ul> <p><u>Sins are expiated by Christ's blood</u> (Rom. 3:25)</p> <p><u>Salvation glorifies God alone</u> (Eph. 1)</p> <p><u>The work of salvation is finished</u> (John 19:30)</p>	<p><b>The Gospel of Roman Catholicism Reveals:</b>  <u>A religious system</u> of sacraments, indulgences, purgatory, and prayers for the dead (1032; 1471-79; 1498)</p> <p><u>Salvation is...</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Through the Roman Catholic Church (846)</li> <li>-Merited by doing good works (1815, 1821, 2010,2027)</li> <li>-By faith plus the law, sacraments, and good works (1129, 1131)</li> <li>-Attained by man (2010, 2027)</li> <li>-A process from baptism through purgatory (161-2, 1254-55)</li> <li>-Never assured in this life (1036, 2005)</li> </ul> <p><u>Sins are expiated by suffering in purgatory</u> (1030-31)</p> <p><u>Mary and all the saints are also glorified</u> (1476-77)</p> <p><u>The work continues with daily sacrifices</u> (611, 1405)</p>
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These teachings of Roman Catholicism demonstrate how the traditions of men can nullify and oppose the Word of God (Mark 7:7-13). True saving faith is granted by God as people hear and believe His Word (Rom. 10:17). Eternal life can be received only as a gift of God's grace, through faith in Jesus Christ. Accordingly, we must come to the cross of Christ with empty hands of faith, leaving everything behind, except our sins (2 Cor. 5:21).

### Questions that may help determine a Roman Catholic's eternal destiny:

1. ***Are you sure of going to heaven when you die?*** Catholic teaching states that anyone who claims to have the assurance of salvation through God's power or mercy has committed the sin of presumption (2092).
2. ***Do you know what God's righteous justice demands for all sin?*** Catholic teaching state venial sins do not bring death to the soul or eternal punishment (1472).
3. ***Do you believe purgatory purifies you of your sin?*** This belief denies the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice for the expiation of sin (1473).

Taken from Mike Gendron @ Proclaiming the Gospel Ministry

Gospel Tracts "Roman Catholicism: Scripture vs. Tradition" and "Rome vs. the Bible"

Sources quoted are from: "The New American Bible." Catholic Biblical Association, Wichita, Kansas: Catholic Bible Publishers. 1978/1979 Edition. All Scripture quotation are from "The New American Bible".

Catholic Doctrine References from "The Catechism of the Catholic Church". San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1994