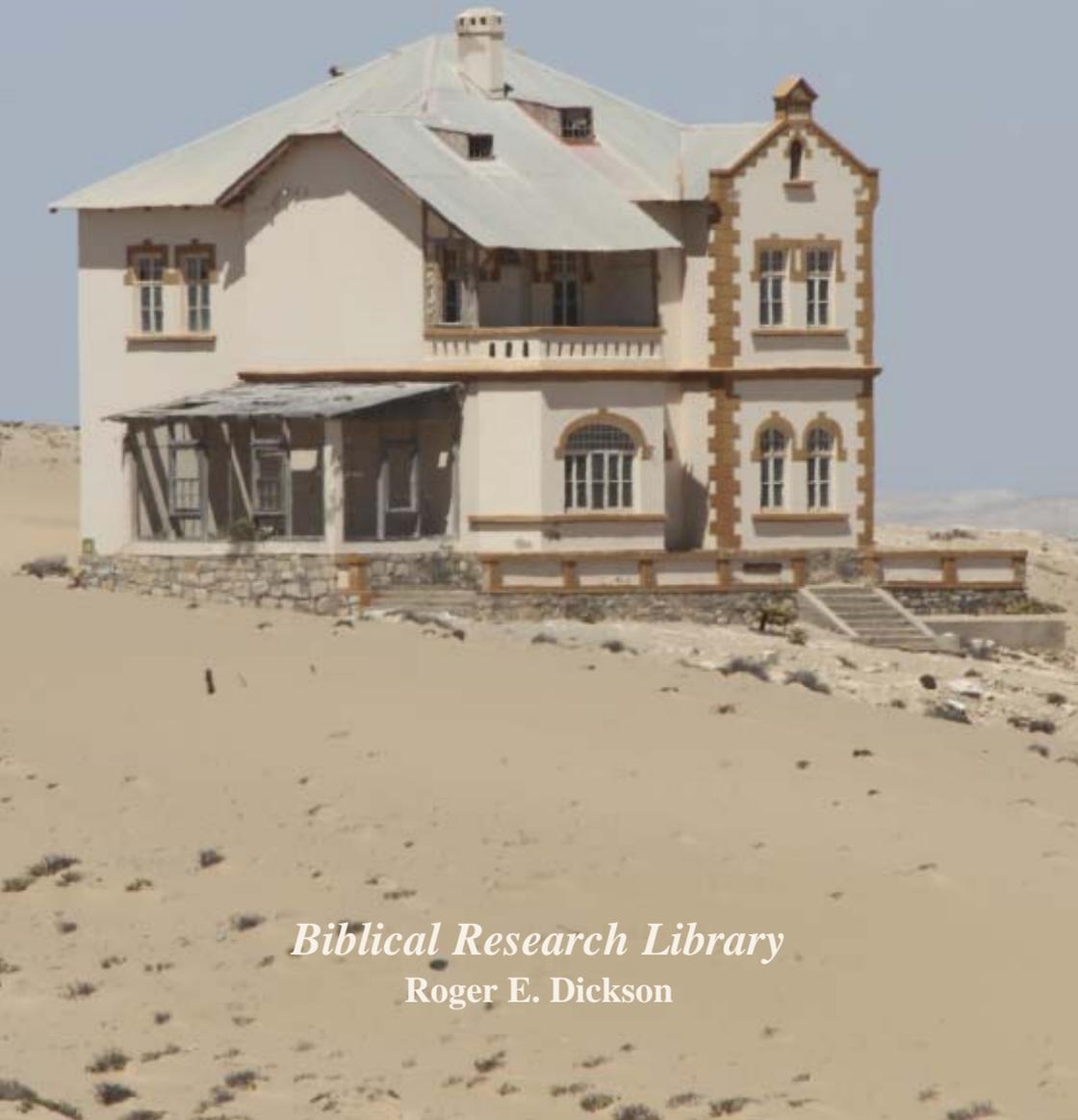


ROMAN CATHOLICISM



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CONTENTS

Introduction – 3

1 – *Papal Supremacy And Infallibility* – 4

2 – *Peter: The First Pope* – 14

3 – *Penance* – 30

4 – *Celibacy* – 36

5 – *Extreme Unction* – 42

6 – *Purgatory* – 47

7 – *Mariolatry* – 57

8 – *Transubstantiation – Consubstantiation* – 69

Bibliography – 78



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ROMAN CATHOLICISM

The great deception of apostasy is that it is such because of the beliefs of a vast majority. Since this vast majority gives heed to the teaching of the apostasy, then it is assumed to be true, and thus, no apostasy at all. As human beings, we are fickle by nature. We want to believe. Unfortunately, our desire to believe is mixed with our desire to have things our way. We are thus fertile ground for apostasy of great magnitude. Add the religious nature of our character to our belief system, and we develop beliefs and behavioral patterns to which we give great adherence. Such is the nature of the Great Apostasy of Roman Catholicism. It is a religious system of such great magnitude that its adherents give little credibility to those who would question its validity. But question we must. Every teaching of man must be brought under the judgment of the word of God.

INTRODUCTION

Never has come in the history of Christendom such an apostasy as the Roman Catholic Church. It came upon the pages of history through a process of slow development. As the early Christians began to forsake the centrality of the word of God, or simply because there were few copies of the Bible to be had, ignorance began to take its toll on the minds of men. The unquenchable desires of religious minds thus sought to incorporate surrounding myths, fables, traditions and superstitions into the theologies of those who had long forgotten the truth of Holy Scripture. The result of this ignorance of the Scriptures was the birth of an apostasy that swept away the larger number of believers who retained Christ in their theology.

As this apostasy gained the minds of the majority of Christendom, it moved into the realm of politics. In his efforts

to preserve the Roman Empire in the days of its evening hours, Constantine did Christendom no favors by engrafting pagan temple behavior and terminologies into the framework of Christian teaching. He sought to bring Christians into the realm of his politic, and thus gain the adherence of a great many Christians in the Empire. Unfortunately, his efforts expedited the continued apostasy of believers from the truth of God.

When the syncretism of religion and politics was complete, the Roman Catholic Church enforced great control over the minds and affairs of men from its seat in Rome. Humanity subsequently moved into the superstitious centuries of the Dark Ages. The minds of men had been led captive by a superstitious religion that brought all thought into bondage. The Scriptures were left without translation into the languages of the common people,

and thus concealed in an effort to retain the biblical ignorance of man upon which the Catholic Church fostered its domination.

But in 1456 the world changed. With the invention of the printing press, the word of God could no longer be kept from the minds of men. The first book to come off the press was a copy of the Bible. From that date forward, history changed as sincere seekers learned firsthand what the Bible said. A Reformation Movement was sparked. Regardless of the Catholics Church's efforts through the burning of Bibles to keep men ignorant of the Scriptures, the world came out of the Dark Ages to where the common man had a copy of the Scriptures.

We would not be so naive as to believe that the Catholic Church would collapse when men freed their minds of its religious/political control. We must not underestimate the power of tradition. We must not forget that the urge to be led captive is stronger than the desire for one to free himself from the deceptions of those who would religiously reign over us through our ignorance of the Scriptures. We still have itching ears. And since itching ears will always go after that which scratches the itch, then great heresies as the Catholic Church will always

have a majority. It is still true that many are called, but few are chosen.

I have thus deemed it necessary to set forth the following discussion concerning the heresy of the Roman Catholic Church. One of my former instructors who worked for years as a missionary in Italy among Catholics once said, "There is little truth in the Catholic Church." My studies of the same have reaffirmed the correctness of his statement. Every biblical teaching is in some way distorted by the teachings of the Catholic Church. It is for this reason that we must investigate some of the major teachings of this heresy.

In this brief survey of some of the principal teachings of the Catholic Church, I have sought to deal specifically with those teachings that manifest the greatness of the heresy. As Christians, we must arm ourselves with a knowledge of these fundamental teachings of Catholicism. It is my prayer that these discussions will at least alert you to the fact that the heresy of Catholicism must not be patronized. It is a heresy that attacks some of the very fundamentals upon which Christianity is built. It is for this reason that every Christian must understand that Roman Catholicism is a direct attack against true Christianity.

Chapter 1

Papal Supremacy And Infallibility

In A.D. 588, the bishop of Constantinople, John the Faster, for the first time made a proclamation that rocked the religious world. He pro-

claimed himself to be the "universal bishop of the church." At the time, Gregory the Great was bishop of Rome. When John the Faster made his claim,

Gregory was deeply concerned. He was so concerned that he wrote a stern letter to John, using the text of Matthew 23 that we should call no man father (pope) on earth. In his letter, Gregory denounced the concept of having a universal pope of the church.

However, historical events changed the attitude of Gregory about eighteen years after John's proclamation. The emperor of Constantinople was assassinated. Some think Gregory had a part in the assassination. A few years later, Gregory also died and Boniface III succeeded him as bishop of Rome. After his succession, Boniface III had the Roman Emperor Phocas declare him as "pope" of the universal church. Before this time, the word "pope" had been used only in a local sense. It was not until Boniface III that the word was used universally to refer to a man being the universal head of the church. A.D. 606 was the year this proclamation was made, and thus the word "pope" was for the first time applied to Boniface III as the universal head of the church.

From the time of the first official proclamation of a universal pope in 606, the universal powers of the pope of Rome began to increase. Church decisions began to be centralized in Rome. Not only were religious powers and decisions centered in Rome around the pope, political authority as well came to center in Rome. However, it was not until centuries later in 1870 that the pope was declared infallible. It was announced in 1870 that when the pope spoke "*ex cathedra*", that is by virtue of his position as head of the church,

his proclamation became law for the church. What is interesting about the development of the doctrine of papal infallibility is that **the proclamation of infallibility predated the theological arguments for the claim**. In other words, the pope was declared infallible, and then the Catholic theologians went to their traditions and dogma, mixed with some twisted Scriptures, in order to substantiate the proclamation. This is one of the strongest arguments against the assumed infallibility of the pope, and one that is an embarrassment to the Catholic Church when discussing this matter with Catholics.

The Catholic Church teaches that the present pope of Rome is the successor of the apostle Peter, and thus has the right to assume preeminence in the church as they claim Peter had in the early church. In the pope's position as head of the universal church it is assumed that when he speaks *ex cathedra*, he speaks by inspiration.^{11:12,13} It is affirmed that the pope "speaks with the authority of Christ" and that "when he speaks as head of the church", he cannot make an error.^{1:59,60} By this assumption, it is believed "that the Catholic Church of Christ is divinely kept from the possibility of error in her definitive teaching in matters of faith and morals."^{3:253} In conjunction with what is proclaimed by the pope, the Bible can be "infallibly interpreted" only by the pope and priests of the Catholic Church.^{3:253} This teaching is maintained by the Catholic Church because it is believed that God made the "pope infallible as His representative upon earth, in order to safeguard His divine revelation."^{2:114}

There are some of the preliminary teachings of the Catholic Church upon which the foundation of its theology stands. Therefore, if the pope is infallible, and the pope and priest do not have exclusive right to interpretation of the Scriptures, then the foundation for numerous teachings of the Catholic Church fall. It is imperative, therefore, to understand that there is no infallible man on earth who can speak for God. All truth from God has been consigned to man through the inspired Scriptures. Every individual believer has a right to this truth through personal study and interpretation of the Bible.

A. The Bible teaches that it is all-sufficient to guide the believer.

One of the basic fundamental teachings of the Bible is the fact that it is sufficient to spiritually guide all people through its instructions for daily behavior. God never intended that inspired men continually direct His people as He did before the giving of the written Old Testament law to Israel on Mount Sinai (Hb 1:1). At Mount Sinai He changed from speaking to the fathers of the extended families to putting His directions into written form. The initial five books of the Bible, the Pentateuch, were thus written through Moses. Since that time, God has allowed His inspired written word to be its own interpreter. For this reason, He expects people to assume their responsibility to follow His guidance through what has been revealed in His word.

1. All truth has been delivered to God's people. This point is paramount to the refutation of the doctrine of papal infallibility. If the Bible claims to be an all-sufficient guide for the people of God until Jesus comes again, then there is no need for an infallible pope. Neither is there any need for his supposed infallible proclamations to guide the church. If the Bible is sufficient as our guide, then the pope is presumptuous to assume that he must also be considered necessary as an infallible head of the church. The biblical teaching that the word of God is all-sufficient makes doctrines as papal infallibility erroneous.

a. Jesus promised the apostles that they would receive all truth. Our argument for the all-sufficiency of the word of God begins with a promise of Jesus to the twelve apostles. In the context of a personal conversation with the twelve in John 14, Jesus made a personal promise to the apostles concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit. *“But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance that I have said to you”* (Jn 14:26). In the same conversation, Jesus also promised, *“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all the truth”* (Jn 16:13). This promise was made exclu-



**The Apostles
Received
A Personal
Promise
To Receive
All Truth.**



sively to the apostles. It was made to no other man. To claim this personal promise to the apostles, therefore, is to be presumptuous. It is presumptuous to assume that God directly delivers to each believer all truth that He promised to the apostles only.

It would be arrogance to presume that the very words I am now writing are inspired by the Holy Spirit as part of the “all truth” that was to be delivered to us. I am writing through my own initiative. My words are not inspired. They are only my personal reflections and interpretations of the inspired word of truth that has already been completed.

The point is that the apostles were the mediums through whom God chose to deliver all truth to the church. As the prophets of old, they were the ones the Holy Spirit personally carried along through the process of inspiration (2 Pt 1:21). For this reason, the things that they wrote to the early church were the “commandment of the Lord” (1 Co 14:37). The “commandment of the Lord” was recorded in written form, and thus we study the “commandment of the Lord” today by study of the written word of God.

b. The apostles delivered all truth to the church. The apostles fulfilled their role in the first century by delivering to the church those things God knew we would need for guidance until Jesus comes again. To the Ephesian elders, Paul stated that he


**The Delivery Of
 All Truth Sealed
 The Delivery
 Of More Truth.**


“kept nothing that was profitable” (At 20:20). “For I have not shunned to declare to you all the counsel of God” (At 20:27). The “all truth” was first delivered through spoken word. It was in this manner that Paul delivered the whole counsel of God to the Christians with whom he had personal contact. Since “all truth” was initially revealed, then there is no more truth from God to be revealed today. “All truth” seals the continued revelation of more truth.

c. All truth was committed to writing. As the church grew beyond the personal contact of the apostles and early inspired prophets, the written word came into existence. Peter affirmed that through this spoken and written word God’s “divine power has given to us *all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who has called us to glory and virtue*” (2 Pt 1:3). Such was accomplished in order that “*the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work*” (2 Tm 3:17).


**The “While Counsel”
 Assumes That
 There Will Be
 No More Counsel.**


The “all truth”, or “whole counsel of God” came by revelation of God (Ep 3:3). The Holy Spirit used the words of men of His choice in order to convey to all people what was necessary for godly living. Concerning this process of inspiration, Paul wrote, “Which things we also speak, not in the words that man’s wisdom teaches, but what the Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual

words” (1 Co 2:13). The Spirit used His wisdom in selecting those words that would communicate spiritual things to sincere people, and thus the words He used became spiritual words because they communicated spiritual truth.

d. All truth was revealed in order to produce faith. The Spirit’s reason for the work of inspiration was to generate belief. He wanted to produce faith in the heart of those who would live outside the time frame of the early miraculous events of the first century and immediate company of the early Christians. Those to whom John wrote were such people. The gospel according to John, therefore, was “*written so that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through His name*” (Jn 20:31).

e. All truth prevents the Christian from being led astray by doctrinal error. We have the written word of God so that we not be tossed about by every wind of doctrine (Ep 4:14,15). It is the “perfect law of liberty” in the sense that it sets us free from the traditions of men and the necessity of perfect law-keeping in order to be saved (Js 1:25). If it is the “perfect” law, then there is no need for any other law. If it is able to thoroughly equip us unto every good work, then we need no other guide. If the Bible is what it claims to be in the life of the Christian, then there is no need for any other supposed inspired books or people to guide the church. The doctrine of the infallibility of the pope cannot stand in view of the fact that the Bible claims to be the sufficient guide for the

Christian in order that he or she be thoroughly equipped for every good work. The “all sufficiency” of the word of God does not need to be subsidized by the infallible speaking of any man.

2. No man is to add to or subtract from the revealed truth of God. The Bible is permeated with injunctions that no one add to or subtract from the word of truth. Since the Bible is the word of God, we would expect nothing less. God

knew that men would have the desire to create religions after their own desires. He knew that it was the desire of religious scholars to develop “systematic theology” that would justify their religious behavior. For this reason, He gave warnings against adding to or subtracting from His word in order to protect believers from the world of man-made religions in which those who love and obey the truth would live.

a. Early warnings against adding to the word of God: From the very first time God committed His will to written form, He imposed on those who would follow Him that they not add to or subtract from His word. “*You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take anything from it ...*” (Dt 4:2). At the conclusion of His delivering His final written commands to His people He gave the same injunction. “*For I testify,*” the apostle John wrote, “*To everyone who*



**Commands Not To Add
To Or Subtract From
God’s Word Assume
That It Is All-Sufficient.**



hears the words of the prophecy of this book, if anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book.

If anyone will take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part out of the tree of life, and out of the holy city and the things that are written in this book” (Rv 22:18,19).

There is nothing obscure about what God intended should happen in reference to His will for those who would claim to be His children. He does not want religious laws and dogma added to the commands that He has taught His children. If one would so add, God says he has gone beyond what He teaches the church. “Whoever goes ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God ...” (2 Jn 9).

b. Adding to God’s word is adding to the gospel: Those who would be so arrogant as to add to the written instructions of God for the church to obey, are those who would actually be adding to the message of the gospel. If they add to the instructions for the church, they do not have God. But if they add to the message of the gospel, they bring upon themselves the anathema of God. Paul warned, “As we said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed” (Gl 1:9).

It is not difficult to misunderstand from the preceding scriptures that God


**Those Who Would
Add To God’s Word
Assume That It Is
Insufficient.**


does not want anyone adding to what has already been delivered to the church for instruction. Neither does He allow additions to the message of the gospel. If one would so add, he does not have God. He is accursed by God. It is for this reason that the pope, or anyone else who would claim infallibility as the pope, are presumptuous when they suppose that they can add “ex cathedra” dogma and law to that which has already been delivered unto the saints (Jd 3). Such people stand under the anathema of God for they have presumed to have authority from God to bring the church under their own presumptuous commands.

B. The Bible teaches that it is all-sufficient.

If God would pronounce a condemnation on those who would add to His word, then the assumption would be that He considers the Bible to be all-sufficient in directing the individual believer into being all that he or she should be in His presence. Since God would expect His word to so function in the life of the believer, then we would expect to find throughout the word of God statements that affirm that the Bible is sufficient to guide the child of God unto eternal glory. This is exactly what we find in the Bible.

1. The Bible claims to be all-sufficient. Paul wrote, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, thor-

oughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tm 3:16,17). It is this word that “*is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified*” (At 20:32). It is this word that we are to “*receive with meekness*” because it is “*able to save your souls*” (Jn 1:21). It is this word that produces faith in the hearts and minds of those who commit themselves to live by its instructions (Jn 20:30,31; Rm 10:17). And it is through this word that God “*has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness*” (2 Pt 1:3).



**The Doctrine Of
“Ex Cathedra” Denies
The All-Sufficiency
Of God’s Word.**



If the Bible claims to be this effective in building up the Christian and in directing his life unto eternal glory, then we must assume that no more inspired direction is needed. Therefore, those who would presume to add further inspired instruction for the Christian are saying that the word of God is not sufficient. Every time the pope speaks ex cathedra, Christians throughout the world must understand that he is attacking the all-sufficiency of the word of God. Any time any man would bind where God has not bound, he is speaking presumptuously, and thus denying the sufficiency of the word of God.

2. *The Bible claims to be the effective rule of the believer’s life.* Since the Bible claims to be all-sufficient, the conclusion would be that God expects us to respond to its directions in a manner that

would lead us to eternal glory. The teaching that the word of God is all-sufficient means that it must have authority of command in the life of those who have committed themselves to serve God. The Bible, therefore, is the “*commandment of the Lord*” (1 Co 14:37). It is the only rule by which the Christian must allow himself to be directed by God (See 2 Jn 9; Rv 22:18,19). Its application, therefore, is to be directed to all Christians (See Rm 1:7; 1 Co 1:1; 2 Co 1:1; Ep 1:1; Ph 1:1). This application of the word of God in the life of the believer makes God’s word the only standard by which we will be judged (Jn 12:48; Rv 20:12). It is for this reason, that the word of God must be the center of reference to the Christian’s instructions on what to do in order to be pleasing to God.

There are several statements in the Bible that affirm the sufficiency of God’s written word. This sufficiency must be manifested in the life of the one who has committed himself or herself to obedience to those things that God has revealed. The following is an example of those things the word of God will produce in the life of the sincere believer who seeks to obey God:

- 1. Obedience to the word makes us perfect** (2 Tm 3:16,17).
- 2. Obedience to the word makes us free** (Jn 8:32).
- 3. Obedience to the word sanctifies our soul** (Jn 17:17).
- 4. Obedience to the word cleanses our soul** (Jn 15:13).

5. **Obedience to the word quickens our spirit** (Ps 119:5).
6. **Obedience to the word saves** (Js 1:21).
7. **Study of the word reproves our behavior** (Jn 16:7-13; 2 Tm 3:16).
8. **Study of the word produces faith** (Jn 20:30,31; Rm 10:17).
9. **Study of the word gives understanding** (Ps 119:130).
10. **Study of the word brings light to our life** (Ps 119:105).

The claim that the pope is infallible cannot stand in view of the above claims of the Bible. If the Bible's claim to be all-sufficient for the believer is true, then why would God inspire a man on earth to give further instruction to the church? The doctrine of the infallibility of the pope in delivering inspired interpretation and instruction to the church and the doctrine of the all-sufficiency of the word of God, cannot stand together. One has to be error. If we say that the all-sufficiency of the word is error, then we must deal with every passage in the Bible that claims it to be all-sufficient. If we say that the pope does not have the right to give inspired instruction and interpretation to the church, then the Bible maintains its purpose as the center of reference and the sole source for instructions as to what Christians must do. And if the pope does not have the right to pronounce either supposed inspired instruction and interpretation, then the foundation upon which the Catholic Church stands falls.

The point is that God does not contradict Himself. He has not stated that

His revealed written word is all-sufficient, and then added another infallible source of information for the church. The biblical teaching that the Bible is all-sufficient has put a seal on revelation from God. It has sealed up all revelation for the church until the end of time. There is finality in the doctrine of all-sufficiency. That finality is in the commandment of the Lord for His people until Jesus comes again.

The doctrine of the infallibility of the pope assumes the inability of God to give sufficient direction to His children through the written word of God. If an inspired interpreter as the pope is needed in order to deliver added dogma to the church, then the doctrine of biblical all-sufficiency cannot stand. It is for this reason that the doctrine of papal infallibility must be erroneous. It is a doctrine that attacks the very purpose for which God revealed His word to man in written form. It is an indictment against God that He cannot give His word to man in written form in a manner that can be understood by man.

C. The Bible teaches that it can be understood by all men.

One of the primary beliefs behind the doctrine of papal infallibility is the belief that only the leaders of the church have the right or ability to interpret the Scriptures correctly. The Catholic Church teaches that the pope alone has the infallible right to speak *ex cathedra*. However, the bishops and priests are given credit for being the only authorized

interpreters of the Scriptures. But the doctrine of infallible interpretation contradicts a basic teaching in the Bible that the revealed word of God was given to the common believer in order that he or she read for himself or herself in order to understand the will of God.

In the context of the doctrine of papal infallibility, one must understand the biblical principle that God expects His children to read and study His word (2

Tm 2:15). They must read and study in order to be directed according to His will. In order not to be tossed to and fro in a world of doctrinal error, God expects every individual believer to study the Bible. And if God expects this of every Christian, then certainly He has revealed His instructions to us in a way that can be understood by the novice student of the Bible.

The core principle of what Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:3-5 argues the fact that God revealed His will to man in a manner that needed no inspired interpretation.

... how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in few words. Therefore, when you read you can understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed in spirit to His holy apostles and prophets
....



God's Injunction That Christians Study His Word Assumes That He Does Not Inspire Interpretation.



D. The Bible teaches that only God is to be placed in the position of worship.

Since the pope has claimed infallibility in presenting inspired interpretation and dogma for the church, his office as head of the church assumes that he is to be worshiped. But such exaltation of any man is contrary to all Bible teaching in reference to the One we are to worship as Christians. Worship of men on earth was condemned by Jesus in the general statement that He made in reference to the Pharisees in Matthew 23:9. ***“And call no one your father on earth, for One is your Father, He who is in heaven.”***

When Gregory the Great used this statement against the presumptuous move of John the Faster to assume the position as universal bishop

of the church, he presented a biblical concept that cannot be answered. Jesus emphatically stated that we call no one father on earth. If we do,

we replace worship that is to be directed to God with worship that is directed to someone on earth. How can one worship a father on earth, and at the same time give worship only to the Father who is in heaven? The Christian has only one Father. It is our Father **in heaven**. Only He must receive worship from the Christian.

The early disciples were strict about worshipping anyone on earth. When others fell before them in worship, they immediately corrected the error of such



All Worship Must Go To The One Who Is To Receive All Worship.



worship. When misguided idolaters in Lystra worshiped Paul as Hermes and Barnabas as Zeus, Paul and Barnabas *“tore their clothes and ran in among the people, crying out and saying, ‘Men, why are you doing these things? **We also are men with the same nature as you ...**”* (At 14:14,15). Paul and Barnabas were terrified about being worshiped as gods. When Cornelius fell down before Peter and worshiped, Peter commanded him to stand up. Peter reminded Cornelius that he also was a man (At 10:25,26). On one occasion John was overcome by the presence of an angel during the visions of Revelation. He fell down before the angel. But the angel responded, *“Do not do that. I am your fellow servant ...”* (Rv 19:10). When one would accept worship that belongs only to God, he is self-condemned because he is accepting that which is to be directed only to God.

The New Testament speaks of those who loved to be first among the disciples. Diotrephes was such a man, for he loved to be preeminent (2 Jn 9). Paul even prophesied of those who would set themselves up as God (2 Th 2:3,4). But such men are self-condemned, and thus must be rejected. They are assuming a position of worship that is to be given only to God.

In reviewing this chapter, we must remember that Jesus promised that only the apostles would receive all truth that was to be delivered to the church. They subsequently received this truth when the Holy Spirit came upon them on the day

of Pentecost. This truth was delivered to the church as the apostles went forth to teach. By inspiration of the Holy Spirit, this truth was committed to written form for the church of all time. Since the word of God is all truth that God desires should be given to the church, then God says that His word is all-sufficient in directing our lives in godly living. Since the conclusion of the written word of God in the first century, no more truth has been revealed.

The truth was committed to written form in order that every believer until Jesus comes again be able to read for himself or herself what God would have us do to be saved. This truth will direct one in what to do to be pleasing to Him. God never intended that an inspired interpreter stand between the believer and His word. He communicated the written word to man in a manner that all could understand what was essential for salvation and godly living. If any man assumes the position of being an inspired interpreter of the Bible, at the same time he is attacking the ability of God to reveal His will to man in a written form that can be understood. Therefore, no pope, priest or preacher should ever place himself in the position of being a supposed inspired interpreter of the word of God, and thus assume a position of inspirational authority over the people of God. Doing such is asserting oneself as the center of reference to whom God’s people should seek authoritative guidance. But we must keep in mind that Jesus is our only center of reference.

Chapter 1

Introduction To Fundamental Truths

Of all the teachings of the Catholic Church, this teaching lies at the heart of the succession and authority of popes. The Catholic Church teaches that Peter was the first pope because “he was made pope by Jesus Himself.”^{1:59} It is thus taught that Peter was the “first pope and bishop of Rome, prince of the Apostles, vicar of Jesus Christ, and human foundation of the church.”^{3:380} He was “the first pope and he was upon the papal throne from 43 to 67 A.D.”^{13:548} It is also affirmed that Peter’s authority as pope “was handed down to a man named Lenus, and after he died, it was handed down to another, and so on, during the past 2000 years”^{1:60}

It is also affirmed by the Catholic Church that Peter was the first head of the church on earth. It is stated that “after the death of St. Peter, the Pope, the Bishop of Rome, has always been taken as the visible head of Christ’s Church, because St. Peter established his See at Rome and consecrated it with his blood.”^{14:3} The Catholic Church thus affirms, “If anyone should deny that ... blessed Peter should have a perpetual line of successors in the primacy over the Universal Church, or that the Roman Pontiff is the successor of blessed Peter in the primacy, let him be anathema!”¹⁵

At the center of the existence of the Catholic Church is the doctrine that Peter was the first pope and that there has

been a succession of popes as head of the church since the death of Peter. It is thus affirmed, “The Catholic Church teaches, also, that our Lord conferred on St. Peter the first place of honor and jurisdiction in the government of His whole Church, and that the same spiritual supremacy has always resided in the Popes, or Bishops of Rome, as being the successors of St. Peter.”^{8:118}

A. The Bible teaches that Peter was not the first pope.

When discussing this claim it must first be understood that the biblical arguments by the Catholic Church to assert Peter as the first pope **were made after Boniface III assumed the position of pope of the universal church in A.D. 606**. But, it was not until 1870 that the pope was declared to speak infallibly when he spoke *ex cathedra*. History proves that the position of the pope was first a historical development within the apostate Catholic Church, and then efforts were made by Catholic authorities to biblically prove the position. This is the historical development of this teaching, which development is proof that it is not a biblical doctrine.

When considering the life of Peter during his time with Jesus, he did not portray the character of a pope. He never acted like a pope, neither did he profess

to be a pope after the death and ascension of Jesus. Jesus never positioned him as pope of His disciples, neither did Jesus establish him as the pope of the church.



Assumption Of Papal Authority Came Without The Sanction Of The Scriptures.



1. Peter did not claim to be a pope.

Nowhere in the New Testament is there a claim by Peter that he was the pope of the church. He never assumed such a position, neither did he allow others to place him in such a place of authority in the affairs of the church. When he wrote his first letter to Jewish churches of the Dispersion, he simply identified himself as “*an apostle of Jesus Christ*” (1 Pt 1:1). He further identified himself in this first epistle as “*a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ*” (1 Pt 5:1). The term “Chief Shepherd” is used only once in the New Testament (1 Pt 5:4). It is used by Peter and in reference to Jesus Christ, not to himself. Peter used this term after Jesus’ death and ascension. Therefore, at the time Peter was writing there was still only one Chief Shepherd. That Chief Shepherd was Jesus, not Peter. If Peter never assumed the position in the church that the pope assumes today, then certainly he was not the first pope of the church.

2. Peter did not exercise the authority of a pope. We would assume that if Peter was actually the first pope of the church, and had the worldwide jurisdiction and authority of a pope, then he

would certainly have exercised such authority in the activities of the early church. But Peter did not exercise such authority, neither did he assume authority over the other apostles of Christ. There were five occasions in the New Testament during which the opportunity presented itself for Peter to exercise the authority of a pope. On all these occasions Peter refused to act as a pope.

a. Selection of another Christ-sent apostle. In Acts 1:15-26 Peter had the opportunity to authoritatively choose another apostle to fill the vacancy that was left by the death of Judas.

But he did not exercise papal authority. The selection of another to take the place of Judas was accomplished by the casting of lots. The text does not even say that the casting of lots was directed by the Holy Spirit. It simply says that the lot fell on Matthias (At 1:26). We only assume that the lot fell on Matthias in answer to the prayer of Acts 1:24,25.

b. Refusal of worship from Cornelius. In Acts 10 another occasion presented itself for Peter to assume the position of a pope. When he came into the house of Cornelius, a Gentile, Cornelius bowed down before him in order to worship him. If Peter had acted as the pope today, he would have laid his hand on him and blessed him. But Peter said to Cornelius, “*Stand up. I myself also am a man*” (At 10:26). If Peter was



Jesus Is Still The Only Chief Shepherd Of All Believers.



in any sense a pope, he certainly would not have done this. As the pope of Rome today, he would have allowed people to bow down before him and worship him.

c. Peter did not assume authority during the Jerusalem meeting. In Acts 15 Peter had the opportunity to pronounce an authoritative dictate for the church to obey as the pope would do today. In order to settle a dispute in the church, he could have done this if he had the authority the pope assumes today. But he did not. The decision that was made on this occasion was made by the whole church, the elders and the apostles. There was no authority focused on Peter in order to make a decision for the church.

d. Peter did not rebuke Paul. When legalistic judaizing teachers came up from Jerusalem to Antioch, Peter withdrew from the Gentile brethren (Gl 2:12). In doing such he was denying the truth of the gospel of grace, and thus stood condemned (Gl 2:13,14). On the occasion, it was Paul who rebuked Peter. Peter did not rebuke Paul. If Peter was a pope, then certainly this would have been awkward.

e. Peter did not forgive sins. In Acts 8:20-24 Simon, the sorcerer, stood before Peter in a condemned state because he thought that he could buy the gift of God to impart the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit (At 8:18,19). By making this request, Simon revealed wickedness in his heart. Peter did not have the power to forgive his sin. He did not assume the position of doing such. He commanded Simon, *“Therefore, repent of this your wickedness and pray the*

Lord that, if possible, the thought of your heart may be forgiven you” (At 8:22). If Peter had the authority that the pope assumes today concerning the forgiveness of sins, then certainly Peter could have forgiven sins on this occasion. But he did not.

The actions of Peter in his relationship with the early church manifests nothing concerning the actions of the pope today. On the contrary, it seems that in all his actions in reference to the church, Peter did the opposite of what the pope does today in reference to those who give heed to his assumed supremacy. The very behavior of Peter in his relationship with the early church is an argument against the pope behaving in a papal manner today.

3. Peter did not have the attitude of a pope. If Peter was the first pope of the church, then we would certainly be correct to assume that he would have conducted himself as such. But on the contrary, we see Peter giving all credit for direction for the church to Jesus. In referring to Jesus, Peter said that we *“have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls”* (1 Pt 2:25). He gave credit to Jesus for being the *“Chief Shepherd”* of our souls (1 Pt 5:4). In referring to Jesus in such a manner, he considered himself only a *“fellow servant”* and *“fellow elder”* (1 Pt 1:1; 5:1). Peter did not


**Peter Did Not Have
The Authority To
Personally Forgive
The Sins Of Sinners.**


place himself in a position that would in any way compete with the authority of Jesus over the church.

As previously stated, Peter, as well as all the apostles, took special care not to present themselves as special personalities with authority over the church. As other leaders in the church, he refused to allow others to bow to him (At 10:25,26). He encouraged everyone to speak from the oracles of God (1 Pt 4:11) and to humble themselves before the mighty hand of God (1 Pt 5:6). In both his behavior, and teaching, therefore, Peter focused people's minds on God and the authority of His word, not himself.

As opposed to the authority projected by the pope of Rome, Peter did not assume a personal lording jurisdiction over the church. He did not even assume authority over the elders of the church. He simply presented himself as a **fellow** elder (1 Pt 5:1) who should not seek to lord over the flock of God (1 Pt 5:3). If Peter were a pope at the time he made this statement in 1 Peter 5:3, then he would be writing hypocritically if he himself was lording over the flock of God with his supposed papal authority. It would be good for the pope of Rome today to follow the instructions of 1 Peter 5:3. If he follows these instructions, then he will have to give up his lording over the flock of God.

As one who lived as others in a domestic relationship with a wife, Peter

gave an example of righteous living to others (See Mt 8:14; 1 Co 9:5; compare 1 Pt 5:1; with 1 Tm 3:2; Ti 1:6). Peter's life and example portray the life of an ordinary man with exceptional responsibility as a Christ-sent apostle. The totality of his life manifests that he conducted himself as one who sought to be a humble servant.

B. The Bible teaches that the church did not recognize Peter as a pope.

If Peter was the first pope, then we would assume that it would have been the duty of the early church to accept him as the pope. We would assume that there would be a pattern throughout the record of the early church that indicated the church's acceptance of Peter as the pope. But in the New Testament, there is no appeal to Peter to legislate in church matters with the authority of papal supremacy. There were occasions when Peter could have conducted himself in a papal manner. However, when given the opportunity to so act, he did not behave as a pope.

1. Peter did not act like a pope in Jerusalem. As previously stated, during the Jerusalem meeting that was conducted in Acts 15, Peter had every opportunity to be accepted by the church as the pope. When the church worked for a decision in the matter of Jew-



**No Man Has
A Right To
Lord Over
The Flock
Of God.**




**Peter Never Assumed
Papal Authority
Even When Given
The Opportunity.**



ish legalism, it was James, not Peter, who first presented a solution. Today, the church looks to the pope for determining final “inspired” decisions concerning matters of faith. But in the Jerusalem meeting, the whole church was considered in the matter of making decisions (At 15:22-29). If Peter was the first pope, we would expect the church to look to him for a final decision on matters that were under consideration. But the church did not do this because they did not view Peter to have papal powers.

2. Peter did not act like a pope in Antioch. When judaizing teachers came up from Jerusalem while Peter was in Antioch of Syria, he withdrew himself from the Gentiles (Gl 2:11-14). The withdrawal of Peter and the other Jewish brethren was a gesture of condoning the legalism of the judaizing teachers. Such was a denial of the freedom we have in Christ. By so conducting himself, Peter manifested a denial of the truth of the gospel. If Peter was the pope of the church, we would wonder why he would do such a thing. And if he had papal authority to legislate in such matters, we wonder why Paul took the lead to approach him about his hypocrisy. The events that transpired in Antioch on this occasion clearly manifested the fact that Peter never considered himself a pope of the church, neither did others consider him to be such.

3. Peter did not act like a pope when he and John were sent to Samaria. In Acts 8:14 Peter and John were sent to Samaria by the apostles in Jerusalem. If Peter was the pope, then the apostles

would have been sending the pope on a mission. But a superior is not sent by those over whom he rules. He is the one who does the sending. Jesus had earlier said, “*Truly, truly, I say to you, a bond-servant is not greater than his lord, nor he who is sent greater than he who sent him*” (Jn 13:14). If Peter was the greater, then he should have been the one doing the sending on the occasion of someone going to Samaria.

4. Peter did not act like a pope in his relationship with the other apostles.

In the context of Matthew 16:18, the Catholic Church claims that Jesus made Peter the first pope by placing on him the responsibility of establishing law for the church on earth. But this is not what is taught in the context of Matthew 16:18,19.

It was not too long after the events of Matthew 16 and the statement of Jesus to Peter in verses 18 & 19, that the apostles had a discussion among themselves as to who was the greatest in the kingdom (Mt 20:20-27; Mk 10:35-40). If Jesus meant to establish Peter to be prominent among the apostles as pope in Matthew 16:18,19, we wonder why there was still discussion among the apostles as to who was the greatest. Even during the events of the final supper of Jesus with the apostles before His betrayal and crucifixion, Luke recorded, “*Now there was also a dispute among them as to which one of them should be considered the greatest*” (Lk 22:24). From the time Jesus made the statements to Peter in Matthew 16:18,19, to the time of the event of Luke 22:24, the apostles cer-

tainly did not consider Peter to have been given the prominent position of a pope.

If Peter had been given the position of a pope, then we would also wonder why, in the context of the final supper of Jesus with His disciples, he did not rebuke the other disciples for not giving him their submission. The fact is that none of the apostles had been given a position above all the apostles. No apostle had been given by Jesus a position above the other apostles or any leadership in the church. If they had a discussion concerning which one of them was the greatest, then certainly none of them understood that Peter had been given any advantage by Jesus over any of them.

What Jesus did say to them on the occasion of the final supper was that they as **a group** would rule as kings of the earth (Lk 22:24-30). All of them would rule by the authority of the inspired word that would be given them through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Jn 14:26; 16:13). There would be no chain of command from the top to the bottom. There would be no government authority as that which was portrayed by the kingdoms of the world.

When Paul made the Galatians 2 trip to Jerusalem, taking with him Titus, he made an interesting statement concerning the other apostles in Galatians 2:6. *“But from those who seemed to be important—whatever they were, **it makes no difference to me**; God shows no partiality to man—for those who seem to be important contributed nothing to me.”*


**Paul Was Not
Less Than Peter.**


This would certainly be an arrogant statement on the part of Paul if Peter was the pope of the church. If Peter was superior to Paul, then why would Paul make such a statement?

On another occasion when he wrote to the Corinthians, Paul stated, *“... for in nothing am I behind the very eminent apostles, ...”* (2 Co 12:11). If Peter was the pope at the time this statement was written, then Paul would have been wrong. Peter, as pope, would have been superior to Paul. But the Holy Spirit did not direct the hand of Paul to make Peter superior. There was no rank among the apostles.

It is interesting to note that the New Testament writers frequently gave warnings to the early church concerning apostasy (See Mt 7:15; 24:5,11,24; Mk 13:22; At 20:29,30; Rm 16:17; 2 Tm 4:3). However, throughout all these warnings of apostasy, there are no instructions that the church should consult Peter, or a succeeding supposed pope, for final decisions as to what was to be done. All instructions for correcting apostasy relate to the church looking to the word of God (See At 20:32; E; 4:11-16). Once the will of God was revealed through the apostles, the church was to look to the inspired word for instruction and direction, not a single man. Peter knew this, and thus never assumed the position of a pope of the early church.

C. The Bible teaches that Peter could not be a supreme ruler of the church.

One of the most obvious reasons why Peter could never have been a pope of the church is that neither he nor any other man could have fulfilled such a position. The supreme nature of the authority of the church could never have been fulfilled by a man. Only God could hold this position and authority. And since only God could so rule over the church, then it would certainly be presumptuous of any man to assert himself to function in the position of God. For this reason, Peter never gave any indication in either teaching or behavior that he was the first pope of the church.

1. As a pope, Peter would have been the wrong foundation for the church. Matthew 16:18 is used by those who promote the papacy as proof that Jesus built the church upon Peter. But this is not what Jesus taught in this context.

First consider the statement of Paul in 1 Corinthians 3:11. ***“For no other foundation can man lay than what is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”*** Paul’s statement is clear. There can be no other foundation of the church other than Jesus Christ. We must assume, therefore, that Jesus did not make Peter another foundation of the church in the statement of Matthew 16:18. Also consider the fact that if Jesus established Peter as a foundation upon which to build the church, then He built it upon a man who cursed


**In Order To Be
 Directed By God
 Christians Must Look
 To The Word Of God.**


and denied Christ at the time of His betrayal (See Mt 26:72-74). It would have also been built on one who played the part of a hypocrite in front of the church (See Gl 2:13,14). If the church was built on Peter, then Peter would have been a false teacher because he said himself that the church was built on Jesus Christ as the Chief Cornerstone (At 4:11; 1 Pt 2:6). The fact is that Jesus never meant in Matthew 16:18 that the church would be built on Peter as a foundation. Neither did Peter claim that the church was built on him. (For a complete explanation of Matthew 16:18,19, see point H.1.)

2. As a pope, Peter would have been the wrong head of the church. The Catholic Church affirms that Peter was made the head of the church. In other words, as head he was to be the center of

reference and controller of the visible church on earth, whereas Jesus was the head of the invisible church from heaven. Peter, as pope, was to control the visible church as Jesus controlled the invisible church from heaven. But no such claims or definitions as this are made in the New Testament.

Paul wrote that Jesus is the head of the church (Cl 1:18; Ep 5:23). Since no one else is affirmed to be the head of the church, then we must conclude that there is only **one head** of the church. As the only head of the church, Jesus must be supreme. All other heads are eliminated from this position.


**Jesus Is The Only
 Eternal Foundation
 Of The Church.**


Regardless of this very clear biblical teaching that there is only one head of the church, Paul warned that there would come one who would set himself up to be worshiped (2 Th 2:3,4). He warned that there would be those who would assume the position of a Christ-sent apostle (2 Co 11:13-15). Since there will always be those who love to be preeminent (see 3 Jn 9), then we must assume that throughout history there will always be those who will seek to rule as the pope of the church. But we must always remember that the work of headship of the church belongs only to Jesus. He is the only center of reference for the church. He is the only one in control of all things for the sake of the church (Mt 28:18; Ep 1:22; Hb 1:3).

3. As a pope, Peter would have been in the wrong work for the church. The apostles were chosen for a special work in the church. Concerning His resurrection from His death, Jesus said to the apostles, “*You are witnesses of these things*” (Lk 24:48; see 1 Pt 5:1). All the apostles were witnesses of Jesus after His resurrection. All the apostles were promised to receive all truth by inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Jn 14:26; 16:13). All the apostles were given the same commission to preach the gospel to the world (Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15). All the apostles were baptized with the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 (At 2:1-4). The point is that the work of the apostles was for all the apostles, including Peter. Peter was not elevated to a specific work that the other apostles did not also have. They all had the same work, and thus they all

equally fulfilled their work to which Jesus had commissioned them.

D. The Bible teaches that the apostles were equal.

This is one of the most devastating arguments against the supposed supremacy of Peter. Keep in mind that the practice and exaltation of the pope came many centuries after the establishment of the church. Once Boniface III of Rome assumed the position of pope of the church in 606, Catholic scholars sought to justify this claim by the Bible. They tried to develop a succession of popes back to Peter, and thus make Peter preeminent among the apostles. But this is not what we see in the New Testament.

1. All the apostles would sit on thrones. In Matthew 19:28 Jesus promised that **all** the apostles would “*sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*” This promise was not made to only one apostle. It was made to all of them.

2. All the apostles were baptized with the Holy Spirit. On the day of Pentecost before the first official announcement was made of the kingdom reign of Jesus, **all** the apostles were baptized with the Holy Spirit (At 2:1-4).

3. All the apostles preached on the day of Pentecost. Peter had the privilege of making the first official announcement on Pentecost of the reign of Jesus. However, all the apostles were already preaching before he stood up to make this announcement (At 2:14). Though Luke

recorded only the sermon of Peter in Acts 2, we must not misunderstand what took place. The eleven were preaching before Peter stood up to make the first announcement of the kingdom reign of Jesus. All the apostles were speaking the message of God in different languages before Peter's announcement as to how one must obey the gospel (At 2:38)..

4. All the apostles were given credit for preaching. On Pentecost, the multitudes addressed Peter and

all the apostles when they inquired concerning what was happening (At 2:37). Though Peter was there and had just concluded his address concerning the resurrection of the Jesus they had crucified, the multitudes asked **all the apostles** what they must do to be saved. The multitudes, therefore, did not recognize Peter as preeminent among the apostles.

5. Paul was not behind any of the apostles. Though different apostles were prominent, none were preeminent. For this reason, Paul affirmed that he was not behind those apostles who were prominent in the church (2 Co 11:5). If Peter was the pope of the church at the time Paul made this statement, then certainly he would have been showing disrespect to one God had supposedly exalted in the church. But the fact that Paul's statement was inspired by the Holy Spirit, proves that Peter was not preeminent at the time Paul wrote 2 Corinthians 11:5.



**Peter Was Prominent
Among The Apostles
But Not
Preeminent.**



E. The Bible teaches that no apostle would have authority over the other apostles.

The authority of the apostles rested only in the inspired word that they delivered to the church. There was no inherent authority in their person. In other words, they did not rule over the church because of their apostleship. Their power, not authority, as Christ-sent apostles was manifested in the fact that they went about working special miracles. Paul referred to the "signs of an apostle" (2 Co 12:12). He did not explain what these "signs" were. We can only assume that they included the laying on of hands in order to give others the miraculous gifts of the Spirit (See At 8:18). Another "sign" could have been the apostles' ability to raise the dead. Another could have been the apostles' power to inflict physical punishment on those who blasphemed (See At 5:1-11; 13:11). But in reference to power, the apostles stood equal. In reference to their authority to deliver all truth to the church, they were equal.

The following passages support the fact that the apostles were equal among themselves:

1. Matthew 20:25-27: In the context of this passage, James and John, through their mother, asked for special positions with Jesus in what they believed was to be a physical kingdom (See Mk 10:35-40). In the context of the passage, the disciples disputed as to who was the greatest. Even during the last supper with

Jesus, they had such a dispute (Lk 22:24). In the context of these disputes, Jesus' statement concerning servanthood should be clearly understood.

Jesus said, "*You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them. And their great ones exercise authority over them. But it will not be so among you*" (Mk 10:42,43). This is not the language for establishing popes. In the church, authority would not be as it was among those in the world. In the church, leaders are the servants to the needs of others. In the church there is thus no earthly system of rule as is characteristic of the leadership in the world.

2. 1 Corinthians 1:12: In the Corinthian church there were those who had denominated themselves after either Cephas (Peter), Apollos or Paul. Such sectarian denominationalism was carnal according to the statements of Paul in 1 Corinthians 3. Paul rebuked the Corinthians by saying, "... *you are still carnal*" (1 Co 3:3). Paul then reminded the Corinthians that he, Apollos and Peter were only servants to them (1 Co 3:5). If Peter was a pope among them, this instruction would seem odd. Why would Peter be considered only a servant as Paul and Apollos if he was the pope?

3. Acts 8:14: In the context of this point, reconsider the historical events of what happened in Acts 8. When the apostles heard that the Samaritans had obeyed the gospel, they as a group com-

missioned Peter and John to go to Samaria. Since he who is sent is not greater than he who sends (Jn 13:16), we would wonder why the apostles sent Peter if Peter was supposedly the pope of the church.

The conclusion to the preceding points is that neither Peter, the other apostles, or the church viewed Peter as special in reference to power and authority. Peter was just one of the Christ-sent apostles. He was not preeminent over either the other apostles or the church.

G. The Bible does not place Peter as pope in Rome.

It is taught by the Catholic Church that Peter was the first pope of Rome when he moved his See from Antioch to Rome.^{8:87} However, the New Testament nowhere states that Peter was in Rome during his ministry. It is believed that Peter was pope in Rome between A.D. 43 and 67. But this does not historically fit the chronology of Peter's life as it is revealed in the New Testament.

1. A.D. 40: Prior to A.D. 40, Peter and John made a trip to Samaria (At 8:1-14). Peter later returned to Jerusalem around A.D. 40. It is believed that Paul may have been converted between 37 and 40, but then spent three years in Arabia after his conversion. After this time, Paul said that he went up to Jerusalem. While


**In The Church
Leadership Is
Characterized By
Servanthood.**



**Peter Was Sent To
Preach The Gospel,
But Popes Seek
To Send Preachers.**


in Jerusalem he met with Peter (Gl 1:18; see At 9:26). Therefore, in the early 40s Peter was still in Jerusalem.

2. A.D. 45: Around A.D. 45 Peter visited churches in the area of Palestine. He visited Lydda, Joppa and Caesarea (At 9-11). He was imprisoned by Herod Agrippa I, but he was miraculously delivered from this imprisonment by an angel. After his release, Herod sought Peter but could not find him, for Peter went to Caesarea and stayed there for some time (At 12:19). According to Josephus, Herod died in the fourth year of the reign of Claudius (See At 12:20-30). This would mean that Peter was still in Palestine at the time of Herod's death in A.D. 45. Peter was nowhere near Rome before A.D. 45.

3. A.D. 54: Fourteen years after his first visit to Jerusalem to see Peter (A.D. 40), Paul returned to the city (At 15; Gl 2:1,9). This second visit took place around A.D. 54. At the time, Peter was still in Jerusalem. Sometime after the Jerusalem meeting of Acts 15, Peter went to Antioch. While there he encountered the judaizing teachers who came up from Jerusalem bringing a legalistic teaching concerning salvation (Gl 2:11-14). In the middle 50s, therefore, Peter was still in Palestine.

4. A.D. 55 - 60: According to Peter's introduction to his first epistle which he wrote sometime between A.D. 55 - 60, Peter and his wife spent some time traveling throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia (1 Co 9:5; 1 Pt 1:1-28). In both 1 & 2 Peter, Peter made no mention that he visited or re-

sided in Rome.

5. A.D. 58: Paul wrote an epistle to the Christians in Rome around A.D. 58. He addressed twenty-seven people in the epistle, and yet he did not mention Peter. If Peter was actually in Rome at the time the Roman Christians received the letter of Romans, it would have been quite rude of Paul not to send him greetings if he was pope in Rome at the time Paul wrote the letter to the Roman Christians.

6. A.D. 61: When Paul first arrived in Rome in A.D. 61, he was a prisoner of the Roman State. The Jews who met him had received no information from Judea concerning him (At 28:11-31). If Peter was pope in Rome at this time, it is strange that Paul had to inform them of himself and of the kingdom of God. In fact, they said to Paul upon his arrival, "*We neither received letters out of Judea concerning you, nor any of the brethren that came showed or spoke anything bad about you. But we desire to hear from you what you think, for as concerning this sect we know that it is spoken against everywhere*" (At 28:21,22). If Peter was pope in Rome at this time, this statement by the Jews would certainly be strange. If Peter was the pope, what was he doing in Rome if these Jews knew nothing about this "sect"? Evidently none of these Jews knew anything about Paul or the church which was believed to be a sect of Judaism. Peter was not in Rome at this time.

7. A.D. 61 - 62: During the first imprisonment of Paul in A.D. 61,62, Paul wrote Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians and Philemon from prison. In none of these letters did he mention Peter. Not

one word is stated concerning Peter being in Rome or being a pope.

8. A.D. 63 - 66: The letter of 2 Peter was written sometime between A.D. 63 and 68. Since the content of the letter seems to indicate the imminent destruction of Jerusalem which occurred in A.D. 70, the letter was probably written closer to A.D. 68, if not in that year. But in the letter Peter mentions that he is in Babylon (2 Pt 5:13). Some commentators have assumed that Peter uses the name “Babylon” in a figurative sense. Since Paul had already fulfilled the commission of taking the gospel to Rome, there would have been no need for Peter to go to the city. I feel that there is no need for the assumption that Peter uses the word “Babylon” in a figurative sense, especially since there would be no need for Peter to so use the word. The ancient city of Babylon was over 2,000 kilometers from Rome. If Peter was in Babylon at the time he wrote 2 Peter, then certainly he was not in Rome.

9. A.D. 67: Paul was released from the first imprisonment, but subsequently arrested again and imprisoned in Rome in A.D. 67. It is believed that it was during this imprisonment that he wrote 2 Timothy. In 2 Timothy 4:11 he mentioned that only Luke was with him at the time. If Peter was the pope of Rome at this time, then where was he? It is for this reason that I believe that when Peter wrote 2 Peter around this time, he was actually in Babylon, and not Rome (2 Pt 5:13).

In the New Testament there is no chronological proof to place Peter in

Rome. According to the preceding historical events that took place between A.D. 40 and 68, Peter cannot be placed in Rome as the pope of the church.

It is true that tradition places Peter in Rome at the time of His death. However, we must keep in mind that this is simply tradition, and tradition is often twisted to suit the ideas of those who perpetuate the tradition.

H. There are no “proof texts” that make Peter the pope.

There are no texts in the Bible that teach the preeminence of Peter as the pope of the church in Rome. The following are some of the common texts that are used to teach the supremacy of Peter, as well as his position as a supposed pope of the church:

1. Matthew 16:18,19: The primary passage that is used to support the view that Jesus conferred upon Peter special preeminent authority in the church is Matthew 16:18,19. However, when understood in the context of what Jesus actually said, this assumption is erroneous. Read carefully what Jesus said to Peter.

And I also say to you, that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. And I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, an whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will have been loosed in heaven.

The problem with using this passage to supported the view that Peter was made preeminent over the other apostles is the fact that it does not say what it is believed to have taught.

a. “Upon this rock”: The “rock” upon which the church was to be built was the truth of the confession that Peter made in verse 16. “*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.*” As the Christ, Jesus was the fulfillment of all Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah (Lk 24:44). As the Son of God, He was the miraculously proved Word from heaven to man (Jn 1:1,14). These two facts were the foundation upon which we, the church, are built (1 Co 3:11). We believe Jesus to be the fulfillment of prophecy. We believe that He is the Son of God. It would not have been possible for any human to be what Jesus was.

“Flesh and blood” did not reveal this to Peter, nor to us (Mt 16:17). Such was revealed by God (Jn 20:30,31). We are the church, therefore, because we believe that Jesus is the Christ and Son of God. He is the Chief Cornerstone of our belief (At 10:34; Gl 2:6).

b. “This rock”: When Jesus used the metaphor “rock”, He could not have been referring to Peter. The Greek word for “Peter” is *petros*. This word is **masculine** in gender. However, the Greek word for



**The Rock Foundation
Of The Church Is The
Sonship And Messiahship
Of Jesus.**



“rock” (*petra*) which Jesus used, is **feminine** in gender. In other words, Jesus would have been using incorrect Greek grammar if He was referring to Peter as the rock upon which the church would be built. The antecedent of *petra* cannot be *Petros*. The *petra* was the rock that Jesus was the Christ and Son of God.

c. “Whatever you bind on earth”: In verse 19 Jesus made this statement in reference to Peter. Some have assumed, therefore, that Peter was given the power to enact “church law”. But consider two very important things before making this conclusion. First, the charge here is also applied to **all the apostles** in Matthew 18:18 and John 20:21-23. It was not that Peter would alone reveal that which God intended should be revealed to man. Jesus promised that “all truth” would come through the medium of all the apostles (Jn 14:26; 16:13).

Second, the future perfect indicative of the verb “bind” emphasizes the fact that what had already been bound in heaven, would be bound on earth through the proclamations of the apostles. The *King James Version* incorrectly translated this verb tense with the phrase, “shall be bound in heaven”. The translation should be, “will have been bound in heaven”. It was not that the apostles were given the authority to originate church law, and then submit God to their proclamations. Such an arrogant concept is totally con-



**All Truth Was
Revealed Through
The Apostles.**



trary to all biblical teachings concerning God's authority over man. What Jesus was saying to the apostles was that when they revealed truth to the church on earth, **that truth had already been established in heaven.** Their right to reveal all truth to the church was only in the fact that the truth originated with God. The Catholic Church is presumptuous to think that man has the arbitrary right to dictate truth, and then assume that that truth will be bound on God.

If those who assume that their "truth" is bound in heaven as a result of it being bound on earth through papal proclamation by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, then the point is still proved. **If the pope contends that his proclamations were directed by the Holy Spirit, then the proclamation would have already been bound in heaven before it was verbally proclaimed by the pope on earth.** It was only revealed through the Holy Spirit to the pope in order that he make his so-called proclamation. In other words, the Catholic Church is being quite inconsistent in taking the stand they do in reference to using Matthew 16:19 as a proof-text for the proclamations of the pope.

Some would argue that the Catholic Church is binding what has already been bound by God. But their system of binding tradition works contrary to this belief. Human religious traditions originate with man, not God. We do things tradition-


**Traditions Originate
With Man,
Not with God.**


ally, and often this traditional way of doing things becomes church law. The Catholic progression to the establishment of law begins with tradition. Tradition is first pronounced dogma, and then dogma becomes law. The problem with this system of establishing law is the origin of the tradition. It is with man, not God. God does not bind human religious traditions on man as law.

d. The context: Immediately after Jesus made the statements of Matthew 16:18,19, Peter expressed that it was his will that Jesus not suffer (Mt 16:22). It was Peter's desire that the suffering of Jesus not be bound on earth. However, Jesus would have it bound, for He came into the world in order to suffer for the sins of man (Mt 16:23). This incident teaches at least one thing. The apostles could bind on earth only that which Jesus desired to be bound. Their authority, therefore, was limited to revealing to the church only that which God wanted revealed.

In fact, if the apostles sought to bind something other than what God desired should be bound, they were working for Satan. This is brought out in Matthew 16:22,23 when Jesus rebuked Peter for taking the side of Satan to detour Him from the cross. It was not Satan's desire that he be crushed by the cross. If Peter's desire would have been carried out, then there would have been no redeeming cross.

2. Luke 22:31,32: Jesus said of Peter, "*Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has desired to have you so that he may sift*

you as wheat. But I have prayed for you so that your faith not fail. And when you are converted, strengthen your brethren." This passage is used to support the pre-eminence of Peter because Jesus prayed specifically for Peter.^{16:134} However, nothing is said in this passage concerning the supremacy of Peter. Simply because Jesus prayed specifically for Peter in this situation does not mean that He did not specifically pray for the other disciples.

Jesus also prayed for the apostles as He prayed for Peter (See Jn 17:9,15,20). The reason Jesus prayed specifically in the context of Luke 22:31,32 for Peter was because He foresaw Peter's weakness and denials that would come at the time of the arrest and trials of Jesus. Jesus was simply giving Peter comfort in advance of the fact. After Peter's denials of Jesus, he would think back on what Jesus personally said to him on the occasion of Luke 22:31,32. He would then understand that Jesus knew he would deny Him. But Peter would also understand that Jesus accepted him regardless of the denials. For this reason, Jesus wanted Peter to know that He had made special prayer for him in order that after the denials he would return to his apostleship and feed the sheep of God.

Since it is the duty of all Christians to pray for the weak, Jesus was simply praying in advance for a time of weakness He knew would come in the life of Peter (See At 14:22; Gl 6:1). No special papal powers were being bestowed upon Peter. In fact, when understood in the context of what Jesus did for Peter, the

opposite seems to be the case. Instead of Peter being a supposed "rock" upon which the church was to be built, the fact is that Peter showed special weakness. The other apostles would not be put in a position to deny Jesus publicly. Nevertheless, they all fled during the time of the arrest of Jesus. But because Peter would publicly deny Jesus, Jesus prayed specifically for him.

3. John 22:15-17: On this occasion after the resurrection of Jesus, Jesus gave the following three instructions to Peter: "*Feed My lambs*", "*Shepherd My sheep*", and "*Feed My sheep*". Because Jesus made these statements to Peter alone, it is assumed that he was giving supremacy and special authority to watch over the flock of God.^{8:126}

John 22:15-17 says nothing about Peter being preeminent over the other apostles simply because Jesus gave him these instructions. There is no mention in the instructions concerning a successor to Peter to continue feeding the sheep. Simply because Peter is given instructions to feed the flock of God does not assume that Jesus is giving him a preeminent position in the church.

We must keep in mind that the instructions of Jesus to feed the flock of God were given to all the apostles on other occasions (See Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15; Jn 20:21-23). Even the elders of the church in Ephesus were given the responsibility of feeding the sheep of God (At 20:28). But they were not made popes of the church. Simply because Jesus gave specific instructions to Peter to feed the flock does not mean that Jesus

was commissioning him to be the pope of the church.

The context of Peter's denials is the foundation upon which this special exhortation to Peter must be understood. Previous to this exhortation, Peter denied Jesus three times (Jn 18:27). In the context of the event of John 21, Jesus wanted to extract three confessions from Peter. In order to do this, He asked Peter three times, "Do you love Me" The experience was humbling to Peter. He finally realized that he had no right to feel superior to the other apostles. His denials made him human as all men.

This experience certainly reminded him of his presumptuous statements he staunchly made when he affirmed loyalty to Jesus before the betrayal and trials of Jesus (Lk 22:33,34). Because of what he had gone through, Peter knew that he had no reason to engage in any rivalry among the apostles as to who was the greatest. I am sure all the apostles were humbled by their forsaking of Jesus during His arrest and trials.

4. *Matthew 10:2:* In Matthew 10:2, Matthew listed the apostles who were with Jesus. Because Peter was listed first in Matthew's list of apostles, it is assumed by some that Peter was preeminent over the other apostles. It is obvious that there is no foundation whatever to this claim. Nevertheless, when people seek to prove something that is not true, they resort to any sort of reasoning and

scripture that might prove their point.

When considering the listing of the apostles that is made in Mark, Luke and Acts, Peter is not at the top of the list (See Mk 3:16; Lk 6:14; At 1:13). In Galatians 2:9, Paul referred to James, Cephas and John. Because he listed James first does not assume that he considered James preeminent over Cephas (Peter) and John. The order of the listing of the apostles' names has nothing to do with their authority.

Throughout the New Testament there is not a single mention of the office of a pope. Neither is there any indication that Peter held such a position in the early church. Peter did not exalt himself above the other apostles. Neither did the early church exalt him as a universal pope of the church. In fact, after the close of the New Testament canon of Scriptures, there is no mention of the exaltation of Peter in any of the early church writings. There is no mention of the office of pope.

The church was built on Christ as the only head of the church. The apostles taught with equal authority through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. No apostle was so presumptuous as to assume to be in competition with the headship of Jesus.

When considering the history of the early church, there is no evidence that Peter ever resided in Rome. It is also interesting to note that for the first six centuries after the establishment of the


**If There Is No Mention
Of A Pope In The
New Testament, Then
There Is No Pope.**



**Peter Gave Three
Statements Of
Commitment
For Three Denials.**


church there is not one mention of a pope in the church. To now assume that there must be a pope of the church is an assumption that is arrogant in reference to the universal headship of Jesus. It is an attack against the sufficiency of Jesus

being the only center of reference for control and direction of the church through the authority of His word. Any teaching that endangers the total headship and authority of Jesus over the church, cannot be true.

Chapter 3

Penance

Penance is the teaching that one must declare his or her sins “to a priest with the purpose of obtaining forgiveness.”^{2:159} It is believed that sins after baptism are forgiven upon repentance of one’s sins. Sins are forgiven in order that eternal punishment be avoided. However, temporal punishment still remains for those sins. Sins, therefore, must be confessed before a priest in order to receive complete remission of sins. It is believed that “all bishops and priests of the Catholic Church can forgive sins”^{1:85} In order to receive complete forgiveness of sins one must confess his or her sins “to a Catholic priest.”^{1:85}

In conjunction with the confession of sins, one is given certain works of penance in order to bring about forgiveness. These works are assigned by the priest. The Catholic priest, therefore, has the power to forgive sins because sins must be confessed to him. His power to forgive is compounded by his assigning of works of penance to be accomplish by the penitent sinner.

The power of the priest in reference to forgiveness gave rise to the doctrine of indulgences. The right to sin was sold

to individuals who proposed to commit a sin. In other words, one could buy the right to sin. By purchasing the right to indulge, all temporal punishment was avoided. “By a plenary indulgence is meant the remission of the entire temporal punishment due sin so that no further expiation is required in Purgatory.”^{9:783}

A. The Bible teaches that God directly forgives the penitent believer.

One of the comforting teachings of the Bible is that the believer has direct contact with God in reference to the forgiveness of sins. He or she has direct contact through prayer. No one stands between the believer and God in the matter of prayer for forgiveness of sins. This fundamental truth has existed since the beginning of time between God and man.

God knew that we would sin. He thus kept the communication lines open between Himself and every believer. This link in prayer was established long before the Catholic Church came up with the idea of the mediatorship of the priest. Since each one of us must give account of himself before God, then it is neces-

sary that each one of us be able to approach God directly in reference to our sins against God. The repentant heart must at all times be able to communicate with God concerning sins committed against God.

1. God directly forgives our sins.

The believer must firmly believe that God can forgive his or her sins upon repentant confession. When we confess our sins, God is able to forgive “*all our trespasses*” (Cl 2:18). Since Jesus came in order that our sins be forgiven (Ep 4:32), our sins are forgiven “*for His name’s sake*” (1 Jn 2:12).

Only God has the power to completely forget our sins. When He forgives, therefore, He promises that He will remember our sins no more (Hb 8:12; 10:17,18; Is 43:5).

In reference to the sins of the righteous, God seeks our confession in order that He might forgive and forget our sins. The confidence of the Christian in his relationship with God is in the fact that God will forgive sins, which sins will never be brought before the Christian again.

2. God forgives sin upon the humble confession of the believer.

This is one of the precious promises of the Father that gives us confidence in our relationship with Him. John wrote, “*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*” (1 Jn 1:9; see Ps

32:5; Pv 28:13). This promise of God is not based on the condition of a priest standing between the one who confesses and God. Nowhere in Scripture is it stated that one’s forgiveness is dependent on a priest being substituted as a mediator in reference to our forgiveness of sins. If we personally confess our sins, God will directly forgive us.

In the context of prayer, Jesus taught the disciples during His earthly ministry to pray directly to the Father (Mt 6:9). In His example prayer for the disciples, He taught that if we forgive our debtors, God will forgive us (Mt 6:12). No monetary condition was placed on our forgiveness. In other words, our forgiveness of our debt to God is not dependent on our payment of money to a priest. Forgiveness is conditioned only on a merciful and repentant heart forgiving others.

It is actually an attack against God’s ability to forgive if we contend that one must pay money in order to receive forgiveness. Jesus offered one sacrifice for our sins, which sacrifice was sufficient for all time (Hb 10:12). “*For by one offering He has perfected forever those who*

are being sanctified” (Hb 10:14). Jesus’ atonement, therefore, was complete. It

needs no supplemental offerings on our part in order to have effect in our lives. Jesus’ sacrifice for our sins does not need to be subsidized by penitential offerings by those who sin. God calls for humble


**Direct Accountability For Sin
Means Direct Access To God
Who Forgives Sin.**



**Forgiveness Is
Conditioned Only On
Repentant Confession.**


confession. Upon this requirement alone one can receive forgiveness of sins directly from God.

B. The Bible teaches that the believer has access to God through Jesus.

A fundamental teaching of Scripture is that the repentant believer who confesses directly to God through the mediatorship of Jesus, will receive forgiveness of sins. The erroneous nature of the doctrine of penance is manifested by its contradiction of many Bible teachings concerning the believer and prayer. If remission is conditioned on the confession of the righteous to a priest, and the assignment of penitential deeds to receive forgiveness, there are several New Testament teachings that are contradicted. The following are some concepts concerning prayer that must be understood to be in conflict with the practice of penance:

1. *The Christian can pray directly to God.* As stated previously, Jesus taught His disciples to approach God directly through prayer (Mt 6:9). He taught His disciples, “*And whatever you will ask in My name, that I will do so that the Father may be glorified in the Son*” (Jn 14:13). The Christian asks of the Father. When he or she so asks, Jesus promises to respond. Jesus encouraged the disciples, “... *whatever you ask of the Father in My name*”, I will give according to your requests (Jn 15:16; see 15:7,23).

Our prayers, therefore, are directed to the Father (Lk 11:2-4). They are di-

rected to the Father who has the willingness to forgive our sins, for our sins are against Him. Nowhere in the Bible is it taught that we must approach God, against whom we sin, through someone on earth. Approaching the Father for forgiveness through someone on earth does not affect the answering of our prayers. A third party cannot move the Father to forgive the unrepentant heart of someone else. It is the sinner who must personally go before the Father.

2. *The Christian prays in the name of Jesus.* Jesus conditioned the answer of our prayers on the authority of His “name” (Jn 14:13). “In My name” signifies two things.

a. It signifies that Jesus offered Himself as a propitiation (or, “satisfaction”) for the sins of men (See Rm 3:25; 1 Jn 2:1,2; 4:10). Jesus’ offering was sufficient. It was complete, and

thus needs no subsidizing.

When we approach the Father “in the name of Jesus”, we are depending on the atoning sacrifice of Jesus to bring about forgiveness. Since Jesus is the one who offered Himself for our sins, then we can approach the Father for forgiveness that is based on His redemptive act. “In My name”, therefore, refers to our dependence on Jesus’ atoning sacrifice for our forgiveness.

b. Jesus is the only mediator between God and man (1 Tm 2:5). When



we pray in the name of Jesus, we are calling on the authority of the mediatorship of Jesus who pleads our case before the Father. John wrote, *“My little children, these things I write to you so that you do not sin. And if anyone sins, we have a Counselor with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous”* (1 Jn 2:1). Our prayers go to the Father through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus who works as our counselor. There is no room for a priest or any other person in this direct approach to the Father for forgiveness of sins.

3. The Christian prays with a penitent heart. The repentant believer who is struggling to live the Christian life will receive forgiveness of sins if he or she will only ask of God. God promises, *“But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin”* (1 Jn 1:7; see Ep 1:7; Cl 1:14). The Christian as continual cleansing of sins if he or she is walking in the light. Walking in the light is the condition for cleansing of sins since “walking in the light” is the signal to God that we are seeking to be His obedient children.

The case of Simon, the sorcerer, illustrates the point that when we sin, we must approach the Father for forgiveness. When Simon sinned, Peter commanded Him to **pray to the Lord** (At 8:22). Simon subsequently repented and then asked Peter and John to pray that

none of the things about which Peter said would come upon him in his life. In this case it is interesting to note that Simon did not ask either Peter or John to pray to God for his forgiveness. He asked that they pray that the things about which Peter spoke not come upon him. Simon had to personally pray for forgiveness. He called on Peter and John to call on God to stop the “things”.

It is also necessary to note that Peter did not require either money or penitential works from Simon in order that he receive forgiveness. Peter only required of him that he repent and pray for forgiveness. Peter and John gave Simon advice on what he must personally do. The condition for his forgiveness was not dependent on either Peter or John.

C. The Bible teaches that God has the power to forgive.

This point must be introduced by emphasizing the fact that requests for forgiveness are to be directed solely to God, the one against whom we sin (Mt 6:9-12; At 8:24). Since sin is against God, then it is God alone who can forgive. It is He who forgives in order that one not lose his soul because of sin and separation from His eternal preserving power.

In the context of prayer and forgiveness, many do not understand or simply misapply what James stated in James 5:16. *“Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man accomplishes much.”* James is not stating that fellow Christians have the power


**Jesus Gave Us The
Privilege Of
Depending On Him.**


to forgive one another's sins. Neither does he teach that forgiveness is based on the prayer of others.

What James states is that our confession is an act of repentance. One understanding of this passage is that this confession is to a specific person against whom we may have committed an offense. However, an alternative meaning is that the word "sins" should be translated "faults". The Greek word that is used here is the word that is normally translated "sin" in other contexts. It means "to miss the mark". Such is the case with our faults. We miss the mark of what we desire to be or do as Christians. It is as what Paul wrote, "*For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold into bondage to sin. For what I do, I do not understand. For what I would do, that I do not. But what I hate, that do I*" (Rm 7:14,15). We seek to achieve that which we know is right, but our humanity makes us fall short of the mark. James asks that Christians confess their failures to one another, which failures in many cases cause offense to others. We speak a harsh word when we know we should not. We do an unrighteous act for which we are later repentant. The fact that we know that we cannot perform according to our desires is evidence that we struggle to reach our desired spiritual goals. What James is asking us to do is to confess when we go wrong. The confession is to one another, not to any specific person as a priest.

Confession of faults to one another is one of the characteristics of the community of God. James' exhortation is

relational among all Christians, not any particular Christian. In order to fulfill what he asks, therefore, Christians must be in a relationship with one another that is conducive to confession of one another's faults to one another. Jesus said it in another way in Matthew 5:23,24. "*Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there you remember that your brother has something against you, leave there your gift before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.*"

Confession of sins is the obligation of every Christian. This does not mean, therefore, that confessions are to be made to specific people to the exclusion of others. Regardless of who one is, James obligates each of us to confess our sins to one another.

In the context of offenses between brethren, Jesus admonished that the two between whom the offenses have occurred must sort out the matter with one another. Jesus taught that if a brother sins against another brother, the first course of action is that the two brothers seek to reconcile themselves privately with one another (Mt 5:23-25; 18:15-17). If the brother who has caused the offense refuses to hear the brother he has offended, then the matter is to be made public before the church (Mt 18:15-18). One's forgiveness of sin by God, however, is not dependent on the forgiveness of the



one that has been offended. If the offending brother attempts to make reconciliation with the one he has offended, but the offended refuses to forgive, then the unforgiving spirit of the offended does not deter God's forgiveness of the sinner. The Bible nowhere teaches that God's forgiveness is dependent on the forgiveness of someone other than the one who sinned.

Contrary to the doctrine of penance, Jesus was the only man on earth who had the authority to forgive sins. In the context of His healing of one who was afflicted by palsy, He said, "*But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins ...*" (Mt 9:6; see Mk 2:10). Since He was God on earth with the power to heal, then certainly He was God in person who could forgive.

John 20:23 does not contradict the preceding truth. Jesus said to the twelve disciples, "*If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them. And if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.*" In the context of John 20:23 Jesus is giving the great commission to the apostles for the first time after His resurrection (See Jn 20:21). He is also making the statement of verse 23 in view of the apostles receiving of the power of the Holy Spirit which is explained in verse 22. The statement of John 20:23, therefore, is the consequence of what is explained in verses 21 & 22 that would take place in their lives.

Matthew 16:19 and 18:18 are parallel concepts to John 20:23. Jesus had earlier promised the apostles, "*And I will*

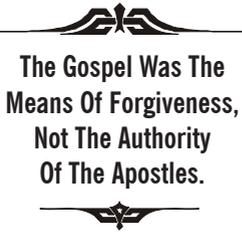
give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will have been loosed in heaven" (Mt 16:19). The

statements of Matthew 16:19 and Matthew 18:18 are commentaries of what Jesus meant in John

20:23. The fulfillment of the "binding and forgiving" must be understood in the context that Jesus delivered all truth to the apostles (Jn 16:13). After they were baptized with the Holy Spirit in fulfillment of the promise of Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:8 (see At 2:1-4), they went forth preaching everywhere (Mk 16:17-20). They delivered "all truth" to those who believed. By inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the truth was revealed, which truth was the standard by which sin was revealed in the lives of those to whom they preached. Obedience to the gospel was the standard by which one was determined to be in Christ. We would conclude that the apostles forgave sins through their preaching of that which brought forgiveness. They preached the gospel wherever they went. When men and women obeyed the gospel, their sins were forgiven (At 2:38). Through baptism for remission of sins, sin was forgiven. Peter preached this message in Acts 2, and subsequently, his preaching led to the forgiveness of about 3,000 people (At 2:41). If Peter had not preached the message of the gospel,

**Jesus Was the
Only One On Earth
Who Could Forgive Sins.**

about 3,000 people would have retained their sins. In this sense, therefore, the apostles had the power to forgive sins. The power was in the message of the gospel they preached, not in some authority that was given to them by God to personally forgive sins.



When God forgives sins, there is no need for someone else to be a condition upon which the sins must be forgiven. God’s forgiveness remits all punishment

due the sinner. This is so because God’s forgiveness is complete and forever. God requires only that the Christian repent and confess his sins. Those who continue to repent and confess their sins are continually kept clean of sin by the blood of Jesus, which blood was offered as an atoning sacrifice for the sins of all those who have obeyed the gospel. For this reason, those who have obeyed the gospel can be assured that Jesus is still working as their counselor before the throne of God. Our forgiveness is not dependent on the actions of any other person. It is dependent only on our confession directly to God who only has the authority to forgive sin.

Chapter 4

Celibacy

Celibacy is a teaching of the Catholic Church that forbids their bishops, priests and deacons the right to marry. This teaching was first established as “an obligatory law of the Western [Catholic] Church, imposed with a view to the dignity and duties of the priesthood The earliest law enforcing celibacy was passed by the council of Elvira in Spain about the year 300. Bishops, priests and deacons were to be deposed if they lived with their wives and begat children after their ordination.^{2:193} “In the Western [Catholic] Church, marriage is prohibited to all clergy of the rank of subdeacon and upwards.”^{3:83} The Catholic Church teaches, “Although celibacy is not expressly enforced by our Savior, it is, however, commended so strongly by Himself

and His Apostles, both by word and example, that the Church felt it her duty to lay it down as a law.”^{8:328} It is taught, therefore, that “virginity possesses a higher sanctity [spirituality] than marriage.”^{9:481-483} “In fact, the Church has ever spoken with no uncertain voice on the excellence of the celibate over the married state.”^{10:35} In other words, the Catholic Church teaches that celibacy “is holier than marriage.”^{7:305}

A. The Bibles teaches that marriage is a natural state.

God intended that marriage be a natural and honorable state of life for all men and women and that bearing children be a part of the existence and continuation

of society for all time.

1. Marriage is honorable in the sight of God. Marriage is a divine institution. The marriage relationship was instituted by God after the creation of man and woman (Gn 2:18-25). Therefore, the Hebrew writer stated, “*Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled*” (Hb 13:4). On many occasions, Jesus taught on the subject of marriage (See Mt 5:31,32; 19:3-9; Mk 10:2-13; Lk 16:18). The Holy Spirit inspired the early New Testament writers to give instruction concerning the behavior of husbands and wives in a marriage relationship (See Ep 5:25-33; Cl 3:18-21). The point is that marriage is a privilege that should be celebrated by every man and woman, including those who are preachers. Never in the Bible is it stated that the state of marriage is less honorable or spiritual than being celibate.



2. Procreation through child bearing is the creation of God. The first command God made to the first married couple was to bear children. Moses wrote the mandate of God in Genesis 1:28 of Adam and Eve, “*Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth*” The Psalmist wrote, “*Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward*” (Ps 127:3). “*Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them [children]*” (Ps 127:5; see 113:9). To bear children is in the plan of God to “fill the

earth”. Child bearing is not dishonorable. Marriage is an honorable state because in marriage God’s will to “fill the earth” is accomplished.

It is superfluous to say that celibacy is a higher state of sanctity than marriage. Procreation through the sexual union of a married husband and wife is a gift of God. To degrade this natural behavior of married life, is to degrade the plan of God for the continuation of the human race. Any teaching that affirms that married people are on a lower standard of spirituality than a celibate person is contrary to God’s plan of procreation for the existence of the human race. God intended that sexual intercourse in the union of marriage should be the means by which the world would be populated. To develop a doctrine that is contrary to this original plan of God, is to stall the work of God.



B. The Bible teaches that religious workers can marry.

It is unfortunate that some religious groups seek to set the clergy apart from the laity. A distinction is often made between those who work full-time for the church and those who are supposedly the “common” members of the church. In order to exalt the full-time worker (the clergy), the Catholic Church initiated the doctrine of celibacy. But this concept is nowhere taught in either the Old or New Testaments.

1. Priests of the Old Testament married. The Levitical priests under the Old Testament law were married if they chose to be. Aaron, who was the first high priest of Israel, was married (Ex 6:25). Aaron's sons who succeeded him as high priests were also married (Ex 6:25; 28:1; 29:9; Nm 3:32).

The descendants of Aaron were to be priests (Ex 28:1). But in order for there to be descendants of Aaron, there had to be procreation in the bond of marriage. The Levitical priesthood of Aaron continued under the Old Testament law simply because children were born to the descendants of Aaron who were married.

2. All priests under the New Testament can marry. Under the New Testament of Christ, **all believers are priests of God.** They are a spiritual house in order to be a holy priesthood (1 Pt 2:5). If all priests had a right to marry under the Old Testament law, then certainly all priests under the New Testament law can be married. Since all Christians are priests of God under the New Testament law, this would include all full-time workers of the church.

3. The early apostles were married. In 1 Corinthians 9:5 Paul wrote of himself and Barnabas, *“Do we not have the right to take along a believing wife, even as the other apostles and the brethren of the Lord and Cephas.”* The apostles of Christ were married men. Peter was a

married man (Mt 8:14). The physical brothers of Jesus were married men (Mt 13:55), which meant that James, the inspired writer of the book of James, was married (See Gl 2:9; Js 1:1). **These men did not leave their wives when they became the disciples of Jesus. They did not leave their wives when they accepted the ministry of apostleship and leadership in the church.**

Since the doctrine of celibacy is based on the supposed example of the early church leaders who were supposedly celibate, the argument for celibacy is tremendously weakened in view of the fact that the apostles and early church leaders were actually married. Jesus lived a celibate life. Paul was celibate. However, the other prominent leaders of the early church were married men who led about their wives when they went forth preaching the gospel.

C. The Bible teaches that all have a right to marry.

No inspired biblical writer ever made a statement that it was unlawful for church leaders to marry. Jesus stated that marriage was instituted by God in the beginning. He taught that what God had joined in marriage, no man should put asunder (Mt 19:4-6). Therefore, if any married man made a decision to be a full-time worker, he was never to consider putting away his wife.

Since marriage was a divine institution of God, Paul used this institution to illustrate the relationship between the church and Christ (See Ep 5:22-33). He



taught that younger widows should marry, bear children, and care for the house (1 Tm 5:14). He instructed that older women should train younger women to live with their husbands and children (Ti 2:4). All such teachings reaffirmed the honorable institution of the family.

It is interesting to note that when apostasy came, there would be some who would invent the doctrine of celibacy. In 1 Timothy 4:1 Paul introduced a coming apostasy that would include the teaching of those who would forbid marriage. *“Now the Spirit clearly says that in the latter times some will depart from the faith”* He explains in verse 3 one of the teachings that would characterize those who would “depart from the faith”. **Some would forbid others to marry.** The doctrine of celibacy, therefore, is a doctrine that signifies those who have departed from the faith.

D. There is no biblical support for teaching celibacy of the clergy.

As with many erroneous teachings that have been invented by men, scriptures are torn out of context in order to make such teachings “biblical”. However, when investigating these scriptures in their context, they do not support the erroneous doctrine which they are purported to support. This is the case with the teaching of celibacy. The following passages are commonly used to support the teaching of celibacy. However, when they are considered in their context, they teach no such doctrine.

1. Matthew 19:12: In this passage Jesus said, *“For there are some eunuchs who were born that way from their mother’s womb. And there are some eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men. And there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake.”*

Jesus did not make this statement in order to advocate a teaching as celibacy. He was not teaching that the life of a eunuch was more spiritual than those who are not eunuchs. In Matthew 19:12, Jesus is discussing the dedication of eunuchs, not the clergy. Add to this the fact that He says nothing in the passage about celibacy. He is simply stating that some have made the decision to make themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. If a eunuch chooses to remain unmarried, that is his choice. But the subject of marriage is not under discussion in Matthew 19:12.

2. 1 Corinthians 7: The entire chapter of 1 Corinthians 7 is a supposed proof-text for the teaching of celibacy. Some teach that Paul is teaching celibacy for the clergy in order to manifest a supposed greater spirituality of the celibate. But such is not what is taught in the entire chapter.

In order to understand the context of 1 Corinthians 7, there are some very important points that must not be overlooked. The following are some of the important points:

a. It was a time of “distress”. 1 Corinthians 7 must be understood in view of the “distress” (persecution) of

verse 26. *“I suppose that this is good because of the present distress, that it is good for a man to remain as he is”*, that is single. Though we do not know precisely what “distress” was being encountered by the Corinthian Christians, the fact remains that Paul’s advice in the entire chapter must be understood in the context of this distress.

b. It is not a sin to marry. Paul says nothing in the 1 Corinthians 7 about it being a sin for a man to marry. Neither does he teach that one **does sin** if he marries. One has a right to marry. One is also free to remain single. Paul gives his recommendation to remain single because of the distress. We must remember that Paul had a right, even through inspiration, to give advice that was not binding as law. This principle is often overlooked when discussing the contexts of 1 Corinthians 7. Paul gave advice to remain celibate. But this did not mean that his advice was to be taken as law. It was only advice in view of the hostile environment in which the Corinthians were living at the time he wrote.

c. Paul gave no law against the marriage of the “clergy”. Paul says nothing in the context of 1 Corinthians 7 that there is a law that the “clergy” cannot marry. His teaching concerning celibacy was only advice. It was advice in view of the distress that was facing the Corinthian brethren.

d. Those with children have greater worries. What Paul is saying that in times of persecution, those who are married will have greater worries than those who are single and without fami-

lies (See 1 Co 7:26,28,32). It was thus his advice that it was not expedient to bring children into a hostile environment. However, this did not mean that those who did marry in times of persecution, and had children in a hostile environment, sinned against God. It only meant that they would have a more difficult time in caring for their family.

It must be understood, therefore, that Paul nowhere in 1 Corinthians 7 gives a command for celibacy. In fact, he introduced the chapter by stating that *“it is better to marry than to burn with passion”* (1 Co 7:9). But to state that he has in mind a doctrine concerning the celibacy of the clergy is to understand the chapter completely out of context.

3. 1 Corinthians 7:32,33: The specific verses that are used in 1 Corinthians 7 in support of the teaching of celibacy are verses 32 & 33. Paul wrote, *“But I want you to be free from concern. He who is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord. But he who is married cares for the things of the world, how he may please his wife.”*

Some have affirmed that one can lead a more spiritual life if he is celibate simply because he can focus more on spiritual matters. The celibate person, therefore, supposedly has a better opportunity to grow spiritually than the one who is married. However, this passage must be understood in the following manner:

a. Paul is teaching in the context of distress. As stated before, 1 Corinthians 7:32,33 must be understood

from the context of verse 23 where Paul stated, *“I suppose that this is good because of the present distress”* The early Christians were under “distress” (persecution), though we do not know exactly what this distress was at the time Paul wrote 1 Corinthians. Whatever the distress, it was Paul’s advice that celibacy would be a better state than marriage simply because being married with children would complicate the distress. He wanted them *“to be free from concern”* for the responsibilities of a married life. In times of distress, the focus on the things of the world are increased. Simply because one is trying to survive under distress means that he or she must concentrate on survival. It is for this reason that Christians must always pray for times of peace in order that they may better focus on spiritual things (1 Tm 2:2).

b. Paul is not teaching against marriage: Neither was he making a general statement against marriage. He does suggest, however, that those who can restrain themselves from sexual immorality could remain unmarried. In remaining celibate, one can give more time to the Lord without the responsibilities of marriage. However, giving more time to the Lord does not mean that one is more spiritual. Though the apostle Peter was married, this did not mean that he was less spiritual than Paul who was celibate. Since the doctrine of celibacy is based on the assumption that the celibate are of a “higher sanctity” than the married, then those who teach this doctrine are saying that Paul had a “higher sanctity”

than Peter, since Peter was married.

c. Paul’s emphasis is on time and effort. Paul’s emphasis in 1 Corinthians 7:32,33 is that the time and efforts to maintain a marriage relationship would subtract time and efforts from service to others outside a marriage relationship. We must keep in mind, however, that the time and effort given to a good family is not less important than that which is given to those outside the family. The time and effort that is given to the development of a good family is well-spent (See Ep 5:22-33). However, when one is married, his attention to those outside his immediate family is less than those who are single. A married man must give much of his energy to the secular part of life in order to adequately support his family. Those who are celibate can give more time and effort to others. But regardless of time and effort that is spent on the family, or those outside one’s family, those who are serving are still serving others, whether service is to one’s own family or someone outside the family.

4. Matthew 22:30: In the context of His discussion with the Sadducees concerning the resurrection, Jesus made the statement, *“For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels in heaven.”*

The preceding statement of Jesus does not teach that the celibate life puts one on a level of spirituality equal with angels. In the context of the passage, Jesus is talking about what will be **after the resurrection**. He is not discussing a

state of celibacy in this life on earth. Neither is He discussing spirituality. His teaching in this context must be understood in the context that there will be no need for procreation in heaven.



**Peter Was Not Less
Spiritual Than Paul
Because He
Was Married.**



On earth it is the general instruction of God that through procreation men and women fill the earth (Gn 1:28; 9:1,7). If the doctrine of celibacy was practiced by all men in order to reach a higher level of spirituality, then there would be no growth of the human population. Mankind would eventually vanish from the face of the earth. It is for this reason that any teaching that would bring into question the general instructions of God to populate the earth must itself be brought into question.

Marriage was instituted by God in the beginning to propagate the human race. Mothers and fathers were instructed to

multiply and replenish the earth. This is a general statement of procreation that comes with the blessing of marriage. It is for this reason that marriage must be held in high esteem among all men. It is this state of living which God speaks of as honorable.

There is no statement in the Bible in any context that infers that celibacy is necessary in order for one to reach a higher level of spirituality. Neither is there any passage in the Bible that restricts the clergy from being married. In fact, there are warnings that doctrines as celibacy would be an indication of a time when men would fall away from the truth.

In the Old Testament, the priests of God were married. In the New Testament, the apostles of Christ were married. And, those evangelists who were not married still had a right to marry. By example and teaching the biblical writers thus affirmed that marriage is a normal relationship for those who would minister the word of God to others.

Chapter 5

Extreme Unction

Extreme unction is the teaching that the soul is strengthened just before or after physical death in order to insure that it will pass through purgatory and into heaven.^{11:38} It is taught that “extreme unction is the sacrament which gives health and strength to the soul and sometimes to the body when we are in danger of death.”^{1:92,93} This “sacrament is given

only to those who are dangerously sick It is a divine sacrament intended for the dying, and should, if at all possible, be administered before the patient becomes unconscious.”^{2:225} But it is also claimed that “extreme unction can deal with the relics of sin in a sinner who lies insensible.”^{12:9,10} Therefore, it is taught that this sacrament “obliterates the traces

of sin and invigorates the power of the soul” even after consciousness is lost in order to assure the entrance of the soul into heaven.^{12:9,10}

A. The Bible teaches that one is forgiven while alive and conscious.

A Christian’s sins are forgiven as a result of his attitude and actions while still alive and conscious. Forgiveness of sins is conditioned on two things. It is conditioned on one’s conscious repentant attitude toward God. It is also conditioned on one’s obedient life. Forgiveness of sins is between the individual and God. It does not involve a third party. The forgiveness of our sins does not depend on whether another person prays for us. Our obedient attitude toward God and our confession of sin are the criteria for our personal forgiveness of sins.

1. Forgiveness depends on our merciful attitude toward others. Our attitude toward others is a condition for our own forgiveness. Jesus stated, “*Blessed are the merciful, for they will obtain mercy*” (Mt 5:7). The Holy Spirit said the same thing through James. “*For judgment will be without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy*” (Jas 2:13). If one does not show mercy in forgiving others, then certainly he or she should not expect to receive mercy from God. “*Therefore, be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful*” (Lk 6:36).

2. Forgiveness depends on our forgiving attitude toward others. Not only must one have a merciful attitude toward

others, he must manifest this attitude through real forgiveness. Jesus said, “*For if*

you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Mt 6:14,15; see Mk 11:25; Lk 11:4; 17:3,4; Rm 12:14,17,19,21; Ep 4:32; Cl 3:13). At the end of the parable of the unforgiving servant, Jesus said, “*So likewise will My heavenly Father do also to you, if each one of you does not from the heart forgive his brother*” (Mt 18:35; see 18:21-35). The truth of the parable is taught in this one statement. Our forgiveness is based on our forgiveness of others.

The preceding principle is necessary simply because an unforgiving heart will grow into a bitter heart. It is a heart of one who has separated himself or herself from the one he or she does not forgive. Unforgiveness always results in separation. When there is unforgiveness among brethren, there is separation. And separation destroys fellowship. It is for this reason that forgiveness among brethren must always take place while people are living and conscious. The unforgiving heart is not a candidate for heaven simply because it is the manifestation of an unmerciful attitude toward others.

3. Forgiveness is the manifestation of a penitent heart. John wrote, “*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us*” (1 Jn



1:8). In order for forgiveness to take place in our hearts, we must realize that we sin. Arrogant people confess no sin. But John wrote, *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* (1 Jn 1:9). If we have a penitent heart, we will always recognize our struggle with sin. It is for this reason that the penitent are blessed. Jesus said, *“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted”* (Mt 5:4). When we mourn over our sin, God comforts. Therefore, instead of being arrogant about our lives, we must do as James instructed concerning our attitude toward our sin, *“Be distressed and mourn and weep”* (Js 4:9). When we have such an attitude toward our own sins, **we will be merciful and forgiving of the sins of others.**

The point in reference to extreme unction is that the unconscious have no consciousness of their sin. They cannot weep and mourn over their sin. They cannot confess their sin. If one must have extra strength to pass into heaven, it is too late for giving extra strength to one who is in a state of unconsciousness before death. Our sin is in reference to ourselves and God. We must each be responsible in life for our own behavior before God (See 2 Co 5:10). No one else can aid us in our accountability before God. It is for this reason that the practice of extreme unction is of no value to



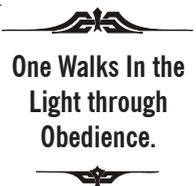
those who are about to die, or have already died.

The comfort of the Christian is not in a last-minute confession of sins at the time of death. If the Christian has walked in the light, the blood of Jesus has continually cleansed him of all sin (1 Jn 1:7). One who dies “in the light”, therefore, has no sin. He is clean, not because of perfect keeping of law, or because sufficient good works were supposedly performed to atone for sin. He is clean because of the cleansing blood of Christ. For this reason, every faithful Christian can die in peace.

B. The Bible teaches that we must be obedient in life.

Our personal lives as Christians is based on the principle of walking in the light of God’s word (1 Jn 1:7). It is a walk of obedient faith (Js 2:14-16). Any teaching that contradicts the simple truth of being obedient to the word of God, cannot be true.

1. Christians must be faithful to God. John stated that the blood of Jesus will cleanse those who are walking in the light of God’s word (1 Jn 1:7). It is not difficult to understand that “walking in the light” is obedience to the word of God. John wrote, *“And whatever we ask, we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight”* (1 Jn 3:22). If



we ask for forgiveness, then our keeping of God's commandments is the prerequisite for forgiveness. God will answer our prayers when we are faithful to His will.

2. Christians must confess their sins. Confession of sins by the Christian is a necessary condition for forgiveness. God has promised that if we confess our sins, He is faithful to forgive (1 Jn 1:9). Confession is something that takes place when one is alive and in a conscious state of being. A condition for forgiveness, therefore, is that one must confess his sins when he is conscious and rational. The belief that one can receive forgiveness of sins on the basis of a third party praying for us at the time of death is entirely foreign to the Bible. If we believe that such is necessary in order to supposedly strengthen the soul, then we are manifesting our lack of faith in the cleansing blood of Jesus.

The Bible teaches nothing about another person being able to have our personal sins forgiven before God. Since forgiveness is based on one's personal obedience and confession, then forgiveness cannot be dependent on the obedience and confession of another for our personal sins. Jesus is the only mediator between God and man. Therefore, to substitute another mediator to expedite our forgiveness of sins is to minimize the work of Jesus to work on our behalf.

C. The Bible teaches that we must be prepared for death.

We must be prepared for death at all

times. We must also be prepared for the final coming of Jesus, for He could come at any time. In view of death and the final coming of Jesus, emphasis in the New Testament is on preparedness.

1. Five virgins were not prepared.

The primary teaching of the parable of the virgins is that the five foolish virgins were unprepared to meet the groom

(See Mt 25:1-12).

The conclusion to Jesus' teaching of the parable of the

virgins is, "*There-*

fore, watch, for you know neither the day nor the hour" (Mt 25:13). This should be the Christian's attitude toward both death and the final coming of Jesus.

2. The rich man had no second chance. The rich man in Luke died unprepared for judgment (See Lk 16:23-26). He sought to have Jesus send a messenger back to his brothers on earth in order that they avoid coming to the place in which he dwelt. **The fact that he asked for someone to return and warn his brothers is evidence of the fact that he did not have a second chance.** He knew he could not escape torments. He just did not want his brothers to come to where he was. And if his brothers were not to come to torments where he was, they had to make a decision to change their lives **while alive**. Only the living can change their lives and their destiny. It is too late for the dead.

3. Jesus' message is that we be prepared at all times. Jesus stated in view



of impending judgment that we always be ready for judgment, though judgment may come in life or at the end of this world. In reference to His coming in judgment, He said that *“the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not expect Him”* (Mt 24:44; see Lk 12:39,40). We should live as if Jesus would come at any time in our life. This should always be our attitude toward judgment. Any teaching that would make one complacent concerning coming judgment is a teaching that is against the very nature of the warnings in the New Testament concerning our being prepared at all times for death and the final coming. Christians must always be prepared (See Js 4:13-15). There is no such thing as “last minute salvation”. If we are not prepared at all times to meet the Lord, then we will not meet the Lord.

D. The Bible teaches that judgment will be personal.

The Bible emphasizes individual accountability at the final judgment. In all statements and scenes of judgment in the Bible there is not one hint of the performance of the rite of extreme unction at the point of death. For those who seek to serve God according to His word, this should be the first warning that this doctrine is an addition to the word of God.

When Jesus comes, He will render to everyone according to his or her deeds (See Mt 16:27; Rm 2:6; Rv 22:11,12; compare Ep 6:8; Cl 3:25; Rv 2:23). *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that every one may re-*

ceive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad” (2 Co 5:10). Judgment is individual. It is between the individual and the Judge. *“So then every one of us will give account of himself to God”* (Rm 14:12). In final judgment the dead will be *“judged from the things that were written in the books, according to their works”* (Rv 20:12).

The picture of judgment we read about in the word of God pictures individual responsibility in judgment. No other man will act as a condition upon which another man will be judged. No other man will act as a mediator between man and God. The doctrine of extreme unction places the salvation of a soul in the hands of another person. It places one’s salvation in the hands of the one who is performing the sacrament of extreme unction at the time of death. But this concept is contrary to the picture of death and judgment we read about in the New Testament. Our salvation depends on no other person than ourselves. Each person must take ownership of his own salvation, and thus seek God and His word. If our salvation depended on someone other than ourselves, then we could make an accusation against others for being lost.

E. The Bible teaches that Jesus’ work on our behalf is sufficient.

If an earthly third party is involved in reference to one’s salvation, then the individuality of personal accountability before God in judgment is questioned. If a third party is involved in our salva-

tion, then the mediatorship of Jesus is also questioned. The sacrament of extreme unction places a man on earth between heaven and the soul of the dying. This third party is the priest who performs the sacrament for the one who is facing death. The whole concept of extreme unction is contrary to some fundamental functions of the work of Jesus on our behalf.

1. Jesus is our counselor.

John wrote, “And if anyone sins, we have a Counselor with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 Jn 2:1). The doctrine of extreme unction attacks the sufficiency of the counselorship of Jesus on behalf of the believer.



2. Jesus is our mediator. Paul wrote, “For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tm 2:5). Jesus sits at the right hand of God (Ep 1:20-22; Hb 8:1). He sits there as our high priest and mediator, doing the work of an intercessor for us (Rm 8:34). However, if someone else

is needed to guarantee our salvation at the time of our death, then the sufficiency of the mediatorship of Jesus is questioned.

3. Jesus continually cleanses us of sin. As previously stated, the outpouring of the blood of Jesus effectively works to cleanse us of sin (1 Jn 1:7). If a third party is needed to “clean up” any remaining sins in our life at the time of our death, then the sufficiency of Jesus’ cleansing blood is questioned.

It must be remembered that the teaching of extreme unction is nowhere mentioned in the New Testament. It is not mentioned because the New Testament teaches that one must be prepared for death at all times. There is no encouragement in the Bible that one take the chance of procrastinating in his preparation for eternity. In view of the fact that all of us will personally give account of our sins before the judgment seat of Christ, then all of us will be held personally accountable for our sins. Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared person. Christians are a prepared people to meet God because of the sufficient work of Jesus on their behalf.

Chapter 6

Purgatory

This doctrine is the belief that when one dies he or she must be purged of sin by fire in a place that is called purgatory.^{1:38} At the Council of Florence in 1439 it was declared that there is an intermediate state of existence called pur-

gatory wherein the dead must reside under punishment until they are purified. It is taught “that the souls therein detained are helped by the suffrages of the faithful, but principally by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar.”^{2:315,316} In other words,

the living friends and family must pray and pay at the altar in order to have their dead loved ones delivered out of purgatory. Purgatory, therefore, is “the place and state in which souls suffer for a while and are purged after death, before they go to Heaven, on account of their sins. Venial sins ... and grave sins ... must be purged away after death by the pain of intense longing for God, whose blissful vision is delayed, and also, as is commonly taught, by some pain of sense, inflicted probably by material fire. It is of faith that those in Purgatory can be helped by the prayers and sacrifices of the faithful on earth and especially by the acceptable Sacrifice of the altar.”^{3:413} Prayers and sacrifices (financial contributions to the church) by those who are still living are able to hasten the release of those in purgatory.^{4:258} It is claimed that a soul, although in a state of grace and destined to heaven, must still “suffer for a time before being perfectly fit to enter upon the eternal bliss, to enjoy the vision of God.”^{5:165} In other words, after death it is supposed that all must be purged of sin by fire before entering into the presence of God. All have the second chance of salvation, depending on the financial sacrifices of friends and family on earth. Once enough prayers and financial sacrifices are made by friends and family at the altar, it is asserted that the occupant of purgatory is released into the presence of God. All such claims are contrary to biblical teaching.

A. There is no mention of purgatory in the Bible.

The Bible does not teach the concept of a second chance for salvation after death, and thus there is no teaching as purgatory mentioned in the Bible. This should be the first indication that the doctrine of purgatory is false.

The doctrine of purgatory originated many years after the writing of the New Testament. And in view of the financial gains the Catholic Church has received from friends and family making financial sacrifices from the living in order to have their friends released from purgatory, it is easy to understand why the doctrine was invented. There are great financial benefits to the church for the doctrine, and thus there is a great willingness to retain this “financial doctrine” as part of the teaching of the Catholic Church.

1. *Origin of the doctrine of purgatory:* K. R. Hagenback wrote, “Gregory the Great [590–604] may rightly be called the ‘inventor of the doctrine of purgatory’, if we may call it an invention He was the first writer who clearly propounded the idea of a deliverance from purgatory by intercessory prayer, by masses for the dead.”^{6:407,408} Joseph Faa Di Bruno, representing this Catholic Church belief, also stated that the teaching of purgatory was developed as a Catholic Church dogma after the close of the first century. He wrote,

The Catholic belief in purgatory rests on the authority of the [Catholic] Church and her apostolic traditions recorded in ancient liturgies and in the writings of an-

cient Fathers It rests also on the Fourth Council of Carthage, and on many other authorities of antiquity.”^{5:162}

Notice that there is no claim that the doctrine of purgatory rests on the authority of the word of God. This honest admission by the Catholic Church is the first argument against the teaching if one seeks to base his or her beliefs on the word of God. One cannot assume that a teaching is of God if it is not discovered in the word of God.

2. Lack of biblical authority: Those who teach the doctrine of purgatory readily admit that the teaching has no biblical authority. In the book, *Externals of the Catholic Church*, it is stated that this doctrine is “almost as old as the church.”^{7:351} It is “almost” as old, but not as old as the church.

The *Catholic Dictionary* states, “Belief in Purgatory lay dormant in the primitive church to a certain extent.”^{3:704} The teaching did not “lay dormant” in the first century church. If there are no New Testament teachings concerning the teaching, then it was not a dormant teaching. It would have been dormant only if the source for its teaching is outside the canon of New Testament Scripture. This “dormancy” would have been manifested in the fact that the New Testament writers would have ignored it as a true biblical concept.

Since the teaching is not mentioned

in the New Testament, then we must affirm that it did not “lay dormant”. It simply did not exist as a teaching of the early inspired writers. The *Catholic Dictionary* admits that “the doctrine was not fully established in the West till the time of Gregory the Great”^{3:706}

The preceding quotes from Catholic authorities are critical admissions by the Catholic Church concerning the origin of the doctrine of purgatory. Again, if anyone is serious about establishing his or her beliefs on the foundation of the word of God, then the doctrine of purgatory has to go. Since it has no biblical foundation, then certainly one cannot affirm the existence of purgatory on the basis of biblical authority.

B. The Bible teaches that death seals one’s destiny.

Many religions that are developed by man seek to establish a doctrine of a second chance. Since it is affirmed that our knowledge of eternal realities will be known only after we die, it is often affirmed that with this new knowledge our loved ones who have passed on will in some manner have a second chance for eternal bliss. But the Bible teaches that death seals our chances to change our destiny.

1. Sin against the Holy Spirit emphasizes man’s last chance. The Pharisees accused Jesus’ work to have originated from Beelzebub (Mt 12:24; see Mk 8:28,29). This was blasphemy. Since they were saying that Jesus’ work was



from Satan, they would not accept Him or the proof of His work because they believed that it originated from Satan. During His earthly ministry, they could make this blasphemy. However, when it came to the work of the Holy Spirit after Jesus' ascension, things would be different. Jesus said, "*But the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven*" (Mt 12:31). One could deny the word and work of Jesus during His earthly ministry, labeling it to be from Satan. They could do this and still have an opportunity to repent after the ascension and sending of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. However, when the work of the Holy Spirit began after His coming in Acts 2, they could not deny the Spirit's word and work and yet be saved.

Jesus' statement of Matthew 12:31 was stated at a time when the Pharisees had a chance to repent and accept Jesus. They could make their slanderous statements against the word and work of Jesus while Jesus was still alive. Jesus said, "*And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him*" (Mt 12:32). Jesus was thus giving a door for forgiveness for those who were alive and in His presence. But this door of opportunity would soon close. It would close when men rejected the work and word of the Holy Spirit through the apostles.

After the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2, many of the priests who at first rejected Jesus during His earthly min-

istry later repented and were obedient to the gospel (At 6:7). In other words, they initially rejected Jesus during His personal ministry, but later were forgiven because they believed on Him as the inspired apostles preached the gospel and worked miracles to confirm their message (See Mk 16:15-20). Their personal blasphemy against the Son of Man while He was alive was forgiven through their repentance and obedience to the gospel during the time the Holy Spirit worked through the early disciples.

But in the context of Matthew 12 Jesus also stated, "*But whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come*" (Mt 12:32). One could be forgiven of sins by Jesus during His personal ministry (Mt 9:6). After Jesus ascended into heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit to reveal all truth through the apostles (Jn 14:26; 16:13). After the coming of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2, therefore, God's final work on earth was through the authority of the inspired word of God (2 Tm 3:16,17). If one rejects this work of the Spirit, he has no chance of salvation (See At 4:12).

It is the present work of the Holy Spirit to bring all men to God through the preaching of the gospel (Mk 16:15). It is His plea that men "*receive with meekness the implanted word that is able to save your souls*" (Js 1:21). It is the work of the Spirit to bring men into conformity with the will of God by the direction of the word of God (2 Tm 3:16,17). But if one rejects the Spirit's plea through the gospel to be immersed



Sin Against The Holy Spirit Leaves No Room For A Second Chance.

for remission of sins, and the direction of the Spirit through the instruction of the inspired Scriptures, then there is no chance for salvation.

Blasphemy against the Spirit is to assign to Satan the work of the Spirit through the preaching of the gospel and the direction of the Scriptures. If one now blasphemes the work of the Spirit, he cannot be saved since he is rejecting that which is able to save, the gospel of Jesus. He thus cannot be saved because he refuses to repent and confess, and subsequently obey the gospel (See Mk 16:16; At 2:38). When the rebellious sinner dies, there remains no more opportunities for forgiveness and salvation. Jesus said, “*But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness ...*” (Mk 9:29; see Lk 12:10). He has no forgiveness if he dies without repentance and obedience to the gospel. After death, therefore, there is no forgiveness for the rebellious sinner who has rejected the work of the Holy Spirit. Death finalizes the destiny of the one who has blasphemed the redemptive work of Jesus that was been revealed to us through the Spirit-inspired word of God.

2. *The gospel is man’s last chance.*

Jesus came into the world in order to establish the last dispensation of God’s work with the world as it is. Through Jesus, God established “*the dispensation of the fullness of times*” in order that “*He might*

gather together in one all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth, in Him” (Ep 1:10). If anyone would now come to the Father, he must come through Jesus. Jesus reaffirmed this truth when He said, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through Me*” (Jn 14:6). The only way to salvation, therefore, is through Jesus, for “*there is salvation in no other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved*” (At 4:12).

One comes to the Father through Christ and **in Christ**, for salvation is only in Christ (2 Tm 2:10). Since one is immersed into Christ (Rm 6:3; Gl 3:26,27), we must conclude that those who are outside Christ have no chance of salvation. It is God’s plan that all men obey the gospel in order to be saved. If one rejects this plan of salvation in this dispensation of time, there remains no hope. This is what the Hebrew writer had in mind when he wrote, “*For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment and fiery indignation that will devour the adversaries*” (Hb 10:26,27). There is, therefore, no hope for those who reject salvation through Jesus. And if there is no hope for those who reject the gospel in this life, **then there is no second chance for salvation after death.**

3. *Death seals our destiny.* The significance of Hebrews 9:27 cannot be underestimated in the context of this discussion. The passage speaks of a final-



**If One Rejects
The Written Word
Of The Holy Spirit,
He Has No
Second chance.**



ity at the time of death. *“And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.”* At the time of death, one’s destiny is sealed. If there existed a purgatory after death, then certainly the Hebrew writer would have used the phrase, “but after this there is purgatory.” But he did not say this. He used the word “judgment”. The word “judgment” is used to denote finality, not a second chance.

The truth of Hebrews 9:27 is illustrated in the circumstances of the rich man and Lazarus of Luke 16. After death, the rich man found himself in torments, a place from which he sought deliverance. However, he could not pass from his state of torments to the place of comforts (Lk 16:26). His destiny was sealed (Lk 16:23,26). His judgment had been meted out. There was no changing from the place of torments to the place of comfort.

4. *Eternal destruction awaits the unrepentant.* Paul speaks of the final coming of Jesus in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9.

... and to give you who are afflicted rest with us when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who do not know God and who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These will be punished with everlasting destruction away from the presence of the Lord and away from the glory of His power.



**Death Seals
Our
Eternal Destiny.**



When Jesus comes, the unrighteous who are alive will have no second chance. This passage emphasizes the fact that the unrighteous will immediately suffer everlasting destruction. The doctrine of purgatory affirms that living friends and family can make sacrificial offerings at the altar of the church in order to give their dead loved ones a second chance. But who will make sacrificial offerings for the unrighteous at the time of Jesus’ final coming? There will be no time to make the offerings, and thus there will be no chance for the deliverance of the unrighteous at the time of His coming. It would certainly be unfair and unjust for the unrighteous at the time of Jesus’ final coming to have no second chance when all those before the final coming had a second chance to be delivered from purgatory by the contributions of living friends and family.

C. The Bible teaches a destiny of hell for the unrighteous.

Keep in mind that those who teach the doctrine of purgatory affirm that when the sinner dies he is temporarily tormented in purgatory. However, after sin is purged, he is

allowed to go into eternal bliss. But if this is true, the Bible teaching that there will be a resurrection of the righteous and unrighteous would be false. **It would be false since there would be no unrighteous**



**Both The Righteous
And The Unrighteous
Will Be Resurrected.**



teous to be resurrected at the time of Jesus' coming. The unrighteous who would be left in purgatory at the time of the final coming would be the only ones who had not yet had a chance for someone on earth to pray and pay for their deliverance from purgatory.

Jesus proclaimed, *“For the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who have done good to the resurrection of life and those who have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation”* (Jn 4:28,29). The unrighteous will be resurrected for judgment. Paul reaffirmed this concept in 2 Corinthians 5:10. *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”* At some time in the future of every person, he or she will be held accountable for his or her behavior on this earth.

In the context of speaking concerning the judgment of the destruction of Jerusalem in Matthew 24, Jesus eventually spoke of the final judgment in Matthew 24:46. *“And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”* The wicked will give account for their unrighteous deeds. They will suffer punishment. There is no escape for them after death. The point is that there exists in the world of the living those who will suffer eternal destruction from the presence of God. No prayers or payments will deliver them from this destiny. No twisted teaching of man concerning a second chance will

deliver the wicked from this punishment.

D. The Bible teaches that there is only one judge.

Those who teach the doctrine of purgatory are actually making friends and family the judges of eternal destinies of those who have already died. If one's destiny depends on the sacrifices and prayers of the living, then the living are the judges of those who have died. Add to this the fact that the priest is the one who determines if enough prayers and financial sacrifices have been made for the dead in order that they be released from purgatory. This makes the priest a judge of the eternal destiny of the dead.

1. There is only one Judge. The Bible teaches that in reference to the eternal destiny of all people, **there is only one judge.** This judge is God, not some priest on earth. To remind us of this fact, James wrote, *“There is only one lawgiver who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another”* (Jas 4:12). God is the lawgiver who is able to save and destroy. No man on earth has the authority to give divine law, nor the power to destroy the soul of the unrighteous. For this reason, we are to fear only God. Jesus said, *“And do not fear those who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell”* (Mt 10:28). A priest would be very presumptuous to assume the position of one who is able to save or destroy in hell.

2. Jesus is the only Judge. God has

“appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man [Jesus] whom He has ordained” (At 17:31). No other person, especially one on earth, has received this authority. God, the Father, has given all authority for judgment into the hands of Jesus (Jn 5:22). Only before Him will all be gathered in order to receive judgment concerning eternal destinies (Mt 25:31,32; see At 10:42; Rm 2:16; 2 Tm 4:1). God never ordained that others would take the place of judgment away from Jesus. Men on earth who would presume to have the authority to determine the eternal destiny of the dead have assumed the position and work of Jesus. They have assumed that they have the position to determine the eternal destiny of the death. They have stolen the work of judgment from Jesus. The doctrine of purgatory places the priest of the Catholic Church in this ungodly role before men.

E. The Bible teaches that our eternal destiny cannot be bought.

The concept that eternal destiny depends on material things is contrary to the spiritual nature of the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is not of this world (Jn 18:36). Though Christians are in the world, they are not of the world. The church does not depend on that which is physical in order to exist. To tie eternal destiny to that which is physical is to distort the spiritual nature of the church of Christ. It is for this reason that any doctrine that demands something material in order to inherit the spiritual

realm of heaven must be suspect. The rich, therefore, have no greater opportunity for heaven than the poor.

1. There is only one means of salvation. This means is to come unto the Father through Jesus (Jn 14:6). Only in the name of Jesus can one be saved (At 4:12). Apart from this plan of salvation, there is no salvation. Therefore, **any plan of salvation that depends on material things is contrary to the spiritual repentance and obedience of those who come to the Father through Jesus.** Peter had this in mind when he wrote, “... *knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold from your vain behavior received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot*” (1 Pt 1:18,19). No man’s salvation can ever depend on “corruptible” (material) things. Spiritual things cannot be purchased with gold and silver or anything that is material. Simon, the sorcerer, thought he could purchase spiritual things with gold or silver (At 8:18-24). But material things cannot purchase spiritual destinies. It takes blood, not bullion. No man can buy someone’s eternal destiny with gold or silver.

2. Prayer is for the affairs of our present lives. All examples of prayer in the Bible center around the lives of Christians while they are still alive on earth (See Mt 6:10-12; 9:38; Mk


**Jesus Only Is The
Judge Of The Living
And The Dead.**


11:24; At 4:24-31; 2 Th 3:1,2; 1 Tm 2:1,2; Js 1:5,6; 4:16). The Christian is to ask of God concerning things that affect his life and the lives of those around whom he lives. **There are no instructions in the Bible that one pray for the eternal destiny of the dead.** The reason the Holy Spirit did not give the living instructions in prayer for the dead is that our destiny is sealed at the time of our death. It cannot be changed. One cannot change through prayer a destiny that is sealed by death. It is for this reason that there are no examples in the Bible that one pray for the destiny of the dead.

3. Each person will be held accountable for his own works. In final judgment, each one of us will personally give account of our own behavior (2 Co 5:10). Paul wrote, **“So then every one of us will give account of himself to God”** (Rm 14:12; see Mt 12:36; 18:23; Lk 16:2). Our judgment does not depend on the prayers or payments of friends and family. No one will be held accountable for the destiny of someone else. The living will not be held accountable for the unfortunate destinies of others if they do not pray or pay to deliver the dead from purgatory. Neither can we blame someone else for not praying and paying enough to deliver us out of purgatory. No other person is responsible for our eternal destiny.

One’s eternal destiny will depend on his or her obedience to the word of Jesus.

Jesus said, **“He who rejects Me and does not receive My words, has one who judges him. The word that I have spoken, the same will judge him in the last day”** (Jn 12:48). Our obedience to the word of Jesus while living will determine our destiny (See Hb 5:9). The prayers of the living have nothing to do with the salvation of those who have already died.

F. The Bible teaches that Jesus’ sacrifice was sufficient.

The doctrine of purgatory attacks the sufficiency of the sacrifice of Jesus. Inherent in the teaching of purgatory is the assumption that the atoning sacrifice of Jesus must be subsidized by the prayers and payments of the living. If all must pass through purgatory on their way to glory, then our time in purgatory depends on the amount of sin for which we must personally suffer in order to be purged. If prayers and payments can speed up our purging, **the fact still remains that the Christian would have experienced an insufficient atoning sacrifice of Jesus upon obedience to the gospel if he has to spend just one second in something as purgatory.**

I believe that the greatest error of the doctrine of purgatory is its attack against the atoning sacrifice of Jesus for the sins of the believer. If the doctrine of purgatory is correct, then the Christian is doomed to anxiety over his or her sins while in life. One would never know if sins have truly been forgiven by God. One would thus question the grace of God. If purgatory is a true existence



through which Christians must pass after death, then God's grace is not sufficient. The continual cleansing blood of Jesus does not really purify the soul of the believer. It is for this reason that I firmly believe that the doctrine of purgatory destroys the Christian's confidence in the grace of God that was revealed through the atoning blood sacrifice of Jesus.

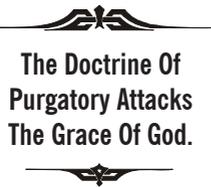
1. Jesus offered a sufficient sacrifice for our sins. Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man (1 Tm 2:5; see 1 Jn 2:1,2). The fact that there is only one mediator assumes that Jesus is a sufficient mediator. He is the one who *"bore our sins in His own body on the tree, so that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness; by whose wounds you were healed"* (1 Pt 2:24). In contrast to the blood of bulls and goats with the saving power of the blood of Jesus (Hb 10:4), the Hebrew writer affirmed the sufficiency of the sacrificial offering of Jesus. He wrote, *"By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all"* (Hb 10:10). Those who submit to obedience to the gospel come into contact with the sufficient sacrifice of Jesus that has eternal consequences. In other words, the redeemed need no other offering than the offering of the blood of Jesus. **When they die, no more offerings have to be made.** To assume that

the living must pray and pay for dead Christians, asserts that the sacrificial offering of Jesus was not "once for all time" sufficient for the forgiveness of our sins.

Once one has come into contact with the sacrificial blood of Jesus by obedience to the gospel, he has continual cleansing of sins by that blood through repentant confession. *"If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and **the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin**"* (1 Jn 1:7). When one dies who has been walking in the light, **he is without sin.** He has been continually cleansed by the blood of Jesus while living. **To teach that this person must pass through purgatory in order to be purged of sin is to deny the sufficiency of the continual cleansing by the blood of Jesus.**

2. Jesus offered a sufficient sacrifice for us for all time. What the Bible teaches on this matter is that Jesus offered a sacrifice that has eternal consequences. He offered His blood as a sacrifice "once for all time" (Hb 10:10). This is to say that there needs to be no more offering for those who are in contact with the blood of Jesus. Since Jesus *"offered one sacrifice for sins forever"*, **no more sacrifices need to be made** (Hb 10:12).

John reassured the believer on this point in 1 John 2:1,2. *"My little children, these things I write to you so that you do not sin. And if anyone sins, we have a Counselor with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours*



only, but also for the whole world.” Those who have been immersed into Christ are not under condemnation (Rm 6:3; 8:1). They are in contact with the sufficient and continual cleansing power of the blood of Jesus (1 Jn 1:7). When they die, they die in Christ, and thus in a redeemed state of salvation. It is for this reason that those who die in Christ are blessed (Rv 14:13).

If the Christian dies in condemnation, then God’s grace was insufficient. Jesus was not a sufficient advocate on the Christian’s behalf. Jesus failed in His mediatorship. His priesthood for the saint was inadequate. The doctrine of purgatory attacks some of the most precious teachings of the New Testament that give Christians confidence in the work of God in their lives.

Jesus said, *“He who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me, has everlasting life. And he will not come into condemnation, but has passed from*

death into life” (Jn 5:24). The saint will not come into condemnation when he dies. He will not suffer the condemnation of a supposed purgatory because he is in touch with the blood of Jesus. Once God forgives sin through the blood of Jesus, He remembers that sin no more (Hb 10:17; see Is 43:25). The sin is forgotten. It will not be brought up again in purgatory.

The point is that the Bible speaks of no other sufficient offering for sin than the atoning sacrifice of Jesus. To add to the sin problem of man the prayers and payments of friends and family is to deny the sufficiency of the atoning blood of Jesus. Any other requirement for forgiveness that men may place on the conscience of man is a denial of the sufficiency of the sacrificial offering of Jesus. This is what the doctrine of purgatory does. It is not simply a belief in a second chance. It is a doctrine that attacks the sacrificial offering of Jesus.

Chapter 7

Mariolatry

A few years ago there was an issue of *Time Magazine* that featured the rise of respect (worship) for the virgin Mary. The featured articles on the subject related to the rise among Protestant churches of those who thought we should give more worshipful respect to the earthly mother of our Lord. We might expect this from the Catholic Church, but this veneration of Mary was coming from Protestant churches.

Though we consider Mary blessed because she was chosen to be the birth mother of the Son of God, God never intended that Mary should be the object of our worship. But it seems that many in the religious world of Christendom have forgotten the One to whom all worship must go. That One is God.

There are a host of teachings in religious books today that exalt Mary above the blessedness that God intended her to

have. Some books state “that the Virgin [Mary] intercedes for us in heaven and that her intercession is so universal that every grace passes through her hands.”^{17:77} It is contended that we “may also pray to the Blessed Virgin, the angels and the Saints.”^{1:16} These teachings surround the belief that Mary is the “mother of God.”^{2:366}

The veneration of Mary in reference to man’s sin problem eventually led in history to the belief that Mary did not die, but was bodily taken into heaven. The Catholic Church teaches, “We pronounce, declare, and define to be a dogma revealed by God that the Immaculate Mother of God, Mary, ever virgin, when the course of her life upon the earth was finished, was taken up body and soul into heaven”¹⁸ This proclamation by Pope Pius XII supposedly sealed the perpetual virginity of Mary throughout her life.^{13:517}

It is paramount that we not misunderstand the worship that the Catholic Church assumes we must give to Mary. Notice carefully the statement of Abbe A. Boulenger in an official book of the Catholic Church entitled *La Doctrine Catholique*:

Let us render to the Holy Virgin, to the angels and the saints the worship which belongs to them. Let there always be a crucifix in our home, to give us a lesson and a model, and the image of the Virgin to preach to us confidence and virtue. Let us not separate, in our devotion, the Mother from the Son; it is by Mary that one goes to Jesus and that one is more certain to obtain the graces of which one has need.^{19:30,31}

Added to the preceding statement by Boulenger is a statement of Alphonse de Ligouri, an Italian Catholic, who wrote under the imprimatur of the Catholic Church the following:

The holy Virgin is the daughter of God the Father, the Mother of God the Son, the bride of the Holy Spirit. She is full of grace. She is preferred of all the saints and of all the angels. She is exempt from sin. She brought back the victory over the infernal serpent. She was our mother the day of the incarnation of the Word. She had the use of reason from the time of her conception She is the queen of the martyrs^{20:94}

Ligouri continued,

Mary is preferred of God above all the saints and angels together. She is the queen of the world, the queen of the saints. Her intercession is necessary for us. She is the restorer of the human family, the mediatrix of men. She received at Calvary the title of mother of the church and the mother of all men. She is a lovable and a loving mother. She is the mother of penitent sinners, the mother of orphans. Her credit before God is all-powerful.^{20:94,95}

The primary problem with all the exaltation given to Mary by the Catholic Church is the fact that worship of Mary cannot be found in the early writings of Christians after the close of the New Testament canon of Scriptures. The reason for this is obvious. There is no such teach-

ing in the New Testament. Throughout the second century and into the early fifth century there is nothing in Christian literature to indicate the Catholic Church's veneration of Mary. McClintock and Strong correctly stated,

There is certainly not a word in the Bible, nor in the creeds of the Apostolic Church, nor even in the writings of the Church fathers of the first five centuries, to warrant any Christian in assigning such a position to Mary, the mother of Jesus, as the Catholic Church, both Latin and Greek, has dared to bestow upon her.^{21:748}

It was not until the early part of the fifth century that men sought to place Mary in a position deserving of worship. In fact, once the practice started to creep into the church, church scholars from A.D. 350 to A.D. 400 sought to argue against the trend to exalt Mary to the position of a female god. During this period of confrontation, images of Mary began to appear in Constantinian church buildings. Mosheim wrote, "The magnificence of the temples had no bounds. Splendid images were placed in them; and among these, after the Nestorian contests, the image of the virgin Mary holding her infant in her arms, occupied the most conspicuous place."^{22:351}

By the end of the fourth century, the veneration of Mary became a common subject of theological debate. Mosheim wrote the following of the conflict between two different sects in the Christian community during this period.

Towards the close of this [fourth] century, Arabia and the adjacent countries were disturbed by two opposite sects, the 'Antidico Marianites' and the 'Collyridians.' The former (Antidico Marianites) contended that the virgin Mary did not remain always a virgin; but that she had intercourse with her husband, Joseph, after the birth of our Savior. The later (Collyridians), whom the ladies especially favoured, went to the opposite extreme: they worshipped St. Mary as a goddess, and thought she ought to be honoured and appeased with libations, sacrifices, and offerings of cakes.^{**22:311}

Needless to say, the worship of Mary is a doctrine that originated with man, not the Bible. Since there is no indication in the Bible of the teaching, then it would be wrong for Christians to divert worship from God to Mary. The veneration of Mary is strictly a doctrine of men that was based on the foundation of human speculation.

According to the teachings of the Catholic Church, there are at least five principal teachings concerning the person and present function of Mary: her intercession for Christians, the addressing of prayers to her, she is the mother of God, she bodily ascended into heaven, and her perpetual virginity while on earth. In the following points, we must examine these teachings in view of what the Scriptures actually teach. Since there is no scriptural evidence of any of these teachings, then our discussion of these subjects must be in view of how these teachings contradict the Bible.

A. The Bible teaches that Jesus is our only mediator with God.

As previously stated, some claim that Mary functions in the capacity of a mediator or intercessor between God and man. Through prayer one supposedly does not have direct access to God. All prayer, it is believed, must go through the mediatorship of Mary.

There is nothing in the Bible that would suggest that Mary is a mediator on behalf of Christians. What is emphasized in the New Testament is that Jesus has gone into heaven, “*now to appear in the presence of God for us*” (Hb 9:24). “*And if anyone sins, we have a Counselor with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous*” (1 Jn 2:1). The phrase “with the Father” in the Greek text of 1 John 2:1 indicates a “face to face” relationship the Son has with the Father. And since Jesus is “with the Father” on our behalf, then we have direct access to the Father through Jesus.

Paul wrote, “*For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*” (1 Tm 2:5; see Ep 2:16).

The phrase “one mediator” excludes any other mediator standing between the Christian and the Father. This would exclude Mary. It is Jesus who “*always lives to make intercession*” for us (Hb 7:25). He is making intercession for us at the right hand of God (Rm 8:34). It was upon the foundation of this fact that the Hebrew writer greatly encouraged Chris-

tians with the following statement:

Seeing then that we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all things tempted as we are, yet without sin. Therefore, let us come boldly to the throne of grace, so that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need (Hb 4:14-16).

Any assumption that Mary would be needed to take the place of Jesus on behalf of the Christian’s contact with God through Jesus, is to minimize the position and work of Jesus. Those who teach that Mary must perform a supposed intercessory work for the Christian in his or her relationship with Jesus, **places Jesus as a distant mediator for the Christian.**

All emphasis in Scripture in reference to the Christian’s relationship and contact with the Father, is through the Son. **If we suppose that Mary is a mediator between God and man, then we discount the mediatorship of Jesus.** The teaching that Mary intercedes on behalf of the Christian is a direct attack against the mediatorship of Jesus.

B. The Bible teaches that God alone is to be worshiped.

Only God is to be worshiped by man. Those who worship Mary, therefore, must place her in the same position and



nature as God. Doing such is certainly contrary to all teaching of the Bible in reference to our worship of God alone. It is for this reason that those who advocate worship of Mary contradict some clear teachings of Scripture concerning worship and the object of our worship.

When one is declared a “saint” by the Catholic Church, that one is venerated to the position of worship. All “saints”, therefore, are objects of worship. However, consider the following New Testament teachings:

1. Saints are living, not dead. The word “saints” is used in the New Testament to refer to living people. Paul addressed all the beloved of God “*in Rome, called to be saints*” (Rm 1:7). He addressed “*all the saints in Christ Jesus that are at Philippi ...*” (Ph 1:1; see At 9:13,32,41; 26:10,11; Rm 16:16; 1 Co 1:2; 2 Co 1:1). When Paul wrote these passages, the people to whom he wrote them were still living. They were living saints.

But as living saints, the early Christians would not allow themselves to be worshiped. Peter was a living saint, but when Cornelius fell down before him in order to worship him, he would not allow such to be done (At 10:25,26). When certain men sought to worship Paul and Barnabas, they forbade them to do such (At 14:12-16). The point is that saints are not to be worshiped. Only God is deserving of worship, and thus Mary must be excluded from worship since she

is a mortal, not a god.

2. Jesus did not venerate Mary to a position of worship. Jesus never intended that Mary, His mother, be the object of our worship. Since He was God in the flesh, He once corrected her thoughts when they were focused on the world during a wedding feast (See Jn 2:4). On this particular occasion, she subsequently realized her humble position and mortal nature in reference to her Son. She thus encouraged the disciples to listen to Jesus (Jn 2:5). However, if she was deity as Jesus, then this would seem strange. It would be strange in the fact that one deity would be reprimanding another deity.

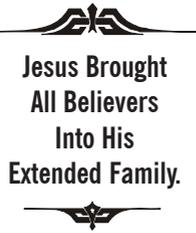
Jesus’ attitude toward Mary during His earthly ministry contradicts the teaching of those who believe that she should be worshiped. Jesus looked on Mary as a human being. Matthew 12:46-50 teaches that Mary had no special position or recognition among Jesus’ disciples. On the occasion of Matthew 12:46-50 the disciples said to Jesus, “*Behold, Your mother and Your brothers stand outside, desiring to speak with You*” (Mt 12:47). But Jesus stretched forth His hand to all those disciples who surrounded Him at that time and said, “*Behold, My mother and My brothers!*” (Mt 12:49). Jesus was not minimizing His mother in this statement. **He was bringing the other disciples into His extended family. He was bringing all disciples into a relationship with Him that He had with His earthly mother and brothers.** This did not mean that He was making gods out of everyone. He was



A Saint
Is A Living
Christian.



simply expanding the multitude of those with whom He sought to have a close relationship as the relationship one has with his or her physical family members.



On one occasion a certain woman lifted up her voice and proclaimed in reference to Jesus, “*Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts that nursed You!*” (Lk 11:27). What this woman said of Mary was certainly correct. But Jesus responded, “*On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it*” (Lk 11:28). Jesus’ emphasis was on discipleship, not position. Mary had the position of being His mother. But His focus was on those who would hear His word and be obedient. The one who heard and obeyed His word, therefore, was **more blessed** than Mary in her position of being His earthly mother. Mary was blessed because she was simply chosen to be the earthly mother of Jesus. On the other hand, obedient disciples are more blessed because they have made a choice to follow Jesus by faith, a choice that Mary did not have in becoming the earthly mother of Jesus.

3. Prayer is directed to God through Jesus. This point is one of the greatest challenges of the work and function of Jesus. If prayer is to go through Mary, then the mediatorship of Jesus is directly challenged.

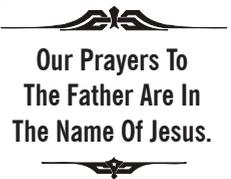
The concept that we must approach God through Mary is a teaching that is

entirely foreign to New Testament teaching. Prayer to Mary is nowhere found in the New Testament. There are no commands or examples in reference to this doctrine of men.

There is an array of biblical teachings that emphasize the centrality of Jesus as the one mediator between God and man. Jesus said, “*And whatever you will ask in My name, that I will do so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it*” (Jn 14:13,14). “*... whatever you ask of the Father in My name*”, Jesus said, the Father would give to the disciples (Jn 15:16). “*... whatever you will ask the Father in My name, He will give it to you*” (Jn 16:23).

Paul expanded the mediatorship of Jesus beyond prayer when he stated, “*And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him*” (Cl 3:17). Even in a salvational context, Paul wrote of the necessity of doing all things through Jesus.

“*For whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved*” (Rm



10:17). This statement reverberates the pronouncement of Peter. “*And there is salvation in no other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved*” (At 4:12). For the preceding reasons, therefore, Paul concluded that we should always give “*thanks for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*”

(Ep 5:20). There is no room in these teachings for the Catholic Church's assumed work of Mary to function as a mediator between God and man. There is no need for Mary to do anything in the prayer life of the Christian. Everything that God wanted to accomplish in mediatorship for the Christian is accomplished through Jesus.

Any teaching that would minimize the preceding truths concerning the work and function of Jesus must be absolutely repudiated. The worship and prayer to Mary falls into those unbiblical teachings that attack the work of Jesus. It is for this reason, therefore, that the doctrine of Mariolatry has no biblical foundation. In fact, it is a teaching that attacks fundamental truths concerning the present mediatorship of Jesus.

4. All worship is to be directed to God alone. Worship on the part of man is always to be directed to the Creator of man. Inherent in the concept of worship, is the truth that man recognizes and responds to the One who brought him into existence. Worship that is directed to anyone or anything other than one's Creator, is false.

One might argue that Mary was deified upon her supposed ascension to the Father. But such can never be true. There is only one God. We as humans can never be deified to be as God. Who would deify us? And since God alone is eternal, our eternality depends on being in His presence for eternity. Those who are outside the presence of God cannot exist for eternity, for eternal existence is unique only with God. And since God is the only

omnipotent, omniscience and omnipresent being, then it is only He who is to be worshiped by man.

It is for this reason that there is no teaching or example in the New Testament that worship is given to mortal Mary. To encourage such, would be encouraging worship of one who is not God, and thus not deserving of worship. Worship of Mary and any other dead saint is a direct attack against the Christian's responsibility to worship God alone.

Paul wrote of Jesus, "*For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers.*

All things were created through Him and for Him" (Cl 1:16). Because Jesus was the creator of all things in the beginning,

He is deserving of worship. As the creator of all things, He is now preeminent over all things (Cl 1:18). He is thus deserving of worship. Paul warned the Colossians, therefore, that they should not be deceived into worshipping anyone or anything other than Jesus, who is God. "*Let no man disqualify you of your reward by delighting in false humility and the worship of angels, intruding into those things that he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind*" (Cl 2:18).

It is the Lamb of God (Jesus) who is to receive worship because it was He who brought salvation to man. This is the concept of Revelation 5:9-13. The revelation to John was, "*You [Jesus] are wor-*



**Only God Is
To Be Worshiped
My All Men.**



thy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for You were slain and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation” (Rv 5:9). Mary is nowhere pictured in any of the heavenly scenes of Revelation. Though the book of Revelation was written at least thirty years after the ascension of Jesus, Mary is not pictured in any of the heavenly scenes as one who is to be worshiped. She is not so pictured because she does not deserve to be there in competition with Jesus. Only Jesus did that which brought salvation to man. Only Jesus has ascended to the right hand of the Father to function as a mediator between God and man (1 Tm 2:5). It is only to Him, therefore, that we must fall down and worship. We must worship God, not a mortal, and Mary was a mortal (See Rv 19:10).

Therefore, God also has highly exalted Him [Jesus] and given Him the name that is above every name, . . . that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven and those in earth and those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Ph 2:9-10).



**Every Knee
Should Bow
Before Jesus.**



The preceding passage should strike fear in our hearts in reference to our homage that should be given to Jesus. Any doctrine that would minimize our worship of Jesus, must be stricken from our think-

ing and behavior. Worship of Mary does not fit into the preceding statement of Philipians 2. It is a teaching, therefore, that must be rejected on the basis that it contradicts our worship and adoration that must be given exclusively to God.

C. The Bible does not teach that there is a “mother of God.”

During a century of conflict within church history between A.D. 400 and A.D. 500, the teaching that Mary was the “mother of God” developed. Mosheim wrote of this controversy,

The occasion for this controversy was given by Anastasius, a presbyter and the intimate friend of Nestorius. In a public discourse delivered A.D. 428, Anastasius opposed the use of the word *Theotokos*, or mother of God, which was now more frequently applied to the mother of Christ in discussions with the Arians than formerly, and to which the Apollinarists were exceedingly attached; alleging that the Holy Virgin could only be called *chrisotokos*, mother of Christ’, because God could neither be born nor die, so that only the son of man was born of Mary.”^{22:357}

Not only is the concept that Mary was the “mother of God” absurd, it has no biblical foundation. There are some serious problems with this teaching, problems that contradict some historical facts and biblical teaching in relation to Mary and Jesus.

1. *Jesus was the savior of Mary.*

Jesus came as the savior of all men. Surrounding the events of Mary's miraculous conception, she stated, "*My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior*" (Lk 2:46,47). Would the "mother of God" need a savior? Mary was human as all men. Since all have sinned (Rm 3:23), then she was in need of a savior as all men.

2. *Jesus was born of woman after the flesh.* God chose that through the process of human procreation He would bring Jesus into the world. Thus, Jesus was born "after the flesh" (Gl 4:4). He was "*of the seed of David according to the flesh*" (Rm 1:3). Therefore, **Mary was flesh**. She was not Deity, and thus deserving of worship. She was not Deity, and thus qualified to be the mother of Deity.

The thought that God needs a mother is absurd. Even if used in a metaphorical sense, the word "mother" has no symbolic meaning in reference to God. The word "mother" assumes that life originates from the mother. But God is eternal. God has no origin. He needs no "mother" from which He gains life. The absurdity of the phrase "mother of God" is in the fact that God is inherently eternal, without beginning or ending.

3. *Mary was the earthly mother of Jesus.*

The Scriptures refer to Mary as the "mother of Jesus" (Jn 2:1). She is also referred to as the "mother of my Lord" (Lk 1:43). But nowhere is Mary referred to



Jesus Was
The Savior
Of Mary.



as the "mother of God". Mary certainly was the earthly mother of Jesus, but she was not the mother of His divine nature. His divine nature originated from heaven (Jn 3:13; Ph 2:5,6). Mary was only the mother of His earthly body.

Through the human process of natural procreation, a human body was developed within the womb of Mary to produce a physical residence on earth in which the preexistent Son of God could dwell. John explained, "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God*" (Jn 1:1,2). When the time was fulfilled for the Word to come into the world, Mary was chosen as the human vehicle through whom the Word would become flesh. "*And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us*" (Jn 1:14).

D. The Bible teaches that Mary had other children.

The teaching of Mariolatry assumes that Mary was a perpetual virgin, that she had no other children because she had no sexual intercourse with Joseph. It is true that Jesus was the firstborn of Mary and Joseph. However, being the firstborn does not assume that there were no other children born in the family of Mary and Joseph.

1. *Joseph had sexual intercourse with Mary after the birth of Jesus.* Matthew recorded, "*And he [Joseph] did not know her until she had brought forth a son*" (Mt 1:25). A great deal of confu-

sion has been generated concerning what this statement actually says. The fact is that the word “know” refers to sexual intercourse. The word “until” means that Joseph did not have sexual intercourse with Mary until after Jesus was born. Reading the passage for what it clearly says proposes no difficulty for correct interpretation. Joseph did not have sexual intercourse with Mary until Jesus was born. However, because of the controversy that has been encouraged by the erroneous teaching of Mariolatry, there are those who claim that Joseph never had sexual intercourse with Mary. But this teaching does not recognize the clear facts that are stated in Matthew 1:25.

The word “know” (knew) is often used in the English text of the Bible to refer to sexual intercourse. When Adam “knew” Eve, she subsequently gave birth to a child (Gn 4:1). When Cain “knew” his wife, she conceived (Gn 4:17). When Adam “knew” his wife again, Eve gave birth to Seth (Gn 4:25). Lot had two daughters who had not “known” men, that is, they were virgins and had not had sexual intercourse with any man (Gn 19:8). Before Rebekah married Isaac, she was a virgin, and thus had not known a man (Gn 24:16). A woman is a virgin if she has not known a man. This was why Mary made the statement of Luke 1:34 where she said in reference to the statement of Gabriel that she would give birth to a son, “*How will this be, since I do not know a*

man?” She could not understand how she could have a child since she had not had sexual intercourse with any man. However, after the birth of Jesus, she had normal husband/wife sexual intercourse with Joseph. From that sexual intercourse, other children were born.

2. Mary and Joseph had other children. After Jesus was born, Mary and Joseph carried on with the normal sexual relationship between a husband and wife. Any objective understanding of the statement of Matthew 13:55,56 clearly manifests that there were other children born to Mary and Joseph because of their sexual relationship after the birth of Jesus. The people who knew the family stated, “*Is this not the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us?*” Jesus had four brothers and at least two sisters (See Mt 12:46; Mk 6:3). These brothers and sisters were born of Mary as a result of the normal sexual intercourse between Mary and Joseph after the birth of Jesus.

The Greek work *adelphoi* (brothers) is used in Acts 1:14 and John 7:5 in order to identify the physical brothers of Jesus. Both Luke and John did not want us to misunderstand their narratives. They did not want us to confuse the identity of Jesus’ physical brothers with the larger fellowship of spiritual brothers who were with Him. It is for this reason that Matthew also used



**Mary Was The
Source For The
Body In Which
Deity Dwelt.**



**Mary Did Not
“Know” Joseph
Until Jesus
Was Born.**



adelphoi in Matthew 13:55,56 in order that we understand that physical brothers are to be understood, and not spiritual brothers.

3. Jesus was the firstborn of many children. In Luke 2:7 Jesus is referred to as the *protokon* (“firstborn”) son. The Eerdman’s *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* states in reference to the use of this word in this context, “This is the only instance in the NT where, through the paronomastic use of *tiktein*, *protokos* refers unequivocally to the process of birth, and this is the natural sense.”^{23:876}

The word *protokos* means that Jesus was the first child born to Mary and Joseph. Jesus was the firstborn, but this does not assume that there were no other children born to Mary and Joseph. The fact is that the word is commonly used where other children were born into the family. In view of the clear statements that Jesus had other brothers and sisters, the meaning of the word would be that Jesus was the firstborn among his brothers and sisters.

Jesus was the *monogenes* (only begotten) Son of God. He was not the only son of Mary and Joseph. The Greek word *monogenes* refers to one being “one of its kind”. Jesus was the *monogenes* of God (Jn 3:16; 1 Jn 4:9). He was the only Son of God, but He was not the only son of Mary and Joseph. The expression “only begotten” refers to Jesus’ relationship with the Father. It does not refer to His relationship with Mary and Joseph.

Monogenes is also used in reference to the only child that was born of a fa-

ther and mother. Isaac was the *monogenes* son of Abraham (Hb 1:17). He was “one of a kind” in that he was the only son of promise. The word is used in other situations in reference to the uniqueness of a son or daughter who was born into a family (See Lk 7:12; 8:42; 9:38). In each case, however, emphasis is on the uniqueness of the offspring, not necessarily on the singularity of the offspring. And such is the understanding we must attach to the birth of Jesus. Jesus was the only begotten Son of God. He was the only one of His kind. He was not the only begotten of Mary and Joseph. He was the only begotten of God.



**Jesus Was The Only
Son Of God, Not
The Only Son Of
Mary & Joseph.**



E. The Bible does not teach that Mary ascended into heaven.

The assumption, or bodily ascension of Mary, dates back to the fourth century. Beliefs that laid the foundation for the teaching find their origins in the middle of the second century. Philip Schaff wrote,

The development of the orthodox Catholic Mariology and Mariolatry originated as early as the second century in an allegorical interpretation of the history of the fall, and in the assumption of an antithetic relation of Eve and Mary, according to which the mother of Christ occupies the same position in the history

of the redemption as the wife of Adam in the history of sin and death.^{24:414}

Though the teaching was not held as Catholic dogma in its early development, it was believed among some Catholics. From the sixteenth century on, the belief was held by most Catholics. As it gained popularity, a letter was sent out in November 1950 by the pope to Catholic bishops throughout the world. It was asked in the letter if it would be “wise, prudent and desirable” to declare officially the assumption of Mary. By this time, the belief had moved from tradition to dogma, and subsequently those who did not believe in the assumption of Mary were to be excommunicated from the church.

Needless to say, the belief in and development of the doctrine of the assumption of Mary does not have biblical foundation. There are no biblical texts that even hints to the fact that Mary ascended into heaven.

The words of Jesus that John recorded in John 3:13 were recorded approximately thirty years after the

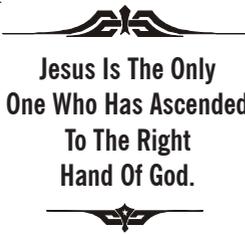
actual death and resurrection of Jesus. In the passage, John records Jesus as saying, “*And no one has ascended to heaven except He who came down from heaven, even the Son of Man.*” This was true at the time Jesus made the statement as a prophecy in reference to His own ascension. It was still true when

John recorded the statement about thirty years after Jesus’ ascension. The point is that Jesus ascended into heaven (At 1:9,10). Mary did not.

In reference to the teachings surrounding the doctrine of Mariolatry, the words of Philip Schaff in his monumental *History of the Christian Church* are appropriate as a conclusion to this study.

To this day the worship of Mary is one of the principal points of separation between the Graeco-Roman Catholicism and Evangelical Protestantism. It is one of the strongest expressions of the fundamental Romish error of unduly exalting the human factors or instruments of redemption, and obstructing, or rendering needless, the immediate access of believers of Christ, by thrusting in subordinate mediators. Nor can we but agree with nearly all unbiased historians in regarding the worship of Mary as an echo of ancient heathenism. It brings plainly to mind the worship of Ceres, of Isis, and of other ancient mothers of the gods; as the worship of saints and angels recalls the hero-worship of Greece and Rome. Polytheism was so deeply rooted among the people, that it reproduced itself in Christian forms. The popular religious want had accustomed itself even to female deities, and very naturally betook itself first of all to Mary, the highly favored and blessed mother of the divine-human Redeemer, as the worthiest object of adoration.^{24:411}

Add to the above statement the follow-



**Jesus Is The Only
One Who Has Ascended
To The Right
Hand Of God.**

ing quote by McClintock and Strong of the research of E. Tyler:

We cannot do better than sum up this portion of our subject in the words of the Rev. E. Tyler, to whose conscientious labors every student of Christian antiquities is so much indebted: “We have examined to the utmost of our ability and means the remains of Christian antiquity. Especially have we searched into the writings of those whose works (A.D. 492) received the approbation of the pope and his coun-

cil at Rome; we have also diligently sought to evidence

in the records of the early councils; and we find all the genuine and unsuspected works of Christian writers – not for a few years, or in a portion of Christendom, but to the end of the first five hundred years and more, and in every country in the Eastern and the Western empire, in Europe, in Africa, and in Asia-testifying as with one voice that the writers and their



**The Doctrine Of Mariolatry
Originated From
The Legends Of An
Apostate Church.**



contemporaries know of no belief in the present power of the Virgin, and her influence with God; no practice, in public or private, of prayer to God through her mediation, or of invoking her for her good offices of intercession, and advocacy, and patronage; no offering of thanks and praise made to her; no ascription of divine honor and glory to her name. On the contrary, all the writers through those ages testify that to the early Christians’ God was the only object of prayer, and Christ the only heavenly Mediator and Intercessor in whom they put their trust.^{**21:571}

McClintock and Strong concluded the preceding statement with the words.

There is not a shadow of doubt that the origin of the worship of Mary is to be traced to the apocryphal legends of her birth and of her death, which, in the course of time, decorated the life of Mary with fantastic fables and wonders of every kind, and thus furnished a pseudo-historical foundation for an unscriptural Mariology and Mariolatry.^{21:571}

Chapter 8

Transubstantiation – Consubstantiation

Transubstantiation is one of those teachings of the Catholic Church that seems somewhat difficult to understand. By way of introduction to aid our understanding, Catholic theologians teach that there is a difference between “substance”

and “accidents”. “Substance” is the unchanging reality of a physical object. In our discussing in this point, reference would be to the existing emblems of the Lord’s Supper. However, “accidents” are the physical characteristics of the object

that are detectable by the five senses. In reference to the Supper, therefore, Catholics teach that the invisible substance is what actually changes into the body and blood of Christ. The actual bread and wine, therefore, seems not to have changed as far as our senses are concerned, but the substance of the elements have changed.

Now take the preceding thoughts with you when reading some quotes from Catholic authorities on the subject of transubstantiation. It is stated that “priests exercise their power to change bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ.”^{25:209} It is claimed that “it is the living Christ who is present, that is His Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity are present both under the appearance of wine.”^{1:76,78 (see 2:180)} “... in the Eucharist [the Lord’s Supper] are contained truly, really, and substantially the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and consequently the whole Christ.”^{26:session XIII, canon 1} It is affirmed, therefore, that “the whole substance of the bread is converted into the body, and the whole substance of the wine into the blood.”^{26:session XIII, canon 2}

There is a variation to the teaching of transubstantiation that is called consubstantiation. Those who teach this doctrine believe “that the body and blood of Christ are truly present, and are distributed to those who eat in the supper of the Lord.”^{27:article 4} This is the belief that the real body and blood of Jesus are present in the form of the bread and fruit of the vine. The belief is often illustrated by saying that if one places iron in a fire,

the heat, or fire, comes into the iron. The iron remains, but the heat may go in or out. In a similar manner, it is believed that the presence of Jesus’ blood and body go in and out of the emblems of the Supper.

There are variations concerning these two views of the emblems of the Lord’s Supper. Each view is based on some common misunderstandings of what the Lord signified when He instituted the Supper. In the theologians’ misunderstanding of some simple metaphorical statements of Jesus, some interesting teachings have been constructed. What I have found to be the best hermeneutic in understanding the significance of the Supper is simply to resort to the principle that “it means what it says and says what it means.” Unfortunately, theologians have sought to woo the laity into believing some fantastic doctrines of something that was to be a simple reminder of the blood and body of Jesus. I think Jesus is amazed at how His statements have been used to construct some incredible doctrines.

A. The Bible teaches that the Supper emphasizes spiritual truths.

The elements (emblems, or whatever you want to call them) of the Lord’s Supper are symbolic. They are symbolic of great spiritual truths. It is on these truths that believers must focus their attention. In our enthusiasm to make something out of the elements, we forget the spiritual truths Jesus wanted us to remember when partaking of the Supper.

I have found that this is a phenomenon of the human mind. We seek something tangible, something concrete. We seem to have this urge to miss the point when it comes to understanding those things in the Bible that have spiritual significance. There is no other area of Christian behavior where this point is illustrated better than in the events and elements that surround the Supper. Churches have been split over the events and elements of the Supper. Debates and arguments have torn fellowships asunder. We have fussed over whether there is one cup or many, the wine or fruit of the vine, cup before bread, upper room or evening meal, unleavened or leavened bread, and a host of other aspects that surround the elements and events of the Lord's Supper. In all this debate, our attention has been drawn away from the spiritual in order to focus on the physical. Our humanity has made the Supper a ceremonial sacrament that is carried out with precision lest in some small area our performance may be flawed. We have become carnal with that which is to signify something that is spiritual.

Therefore, in order to bring us back to the spiritual importance of the Supper, consider the following points that "mean what they say and say what they mean".

1. *The Lord's Supper is a memo-*



That Which Is To Be Remembered In The Supper Is Greater Than The Supper.



rial. Jesus said at the time He instituted the Supper, "*This do in remembrance of Me*" (Mk 14:25; Lk 22:19,20; 1 Co 11:24). There is nothing difficult about understanding this. The "doing" is physical. The "remembrance" is spiritual, emotional and mental. In taking the Supper we remember the sacrificial death and glorious resurrection of Jesus. We think about these things. We remember. It is not that we remember the night, the bread, the feast of the disciples, the upper room or fruit of the vine. Jesus said to remember **Him**. It seems we seek to remember everything that is physical surrounding the Supper, and forget Jesus.

I would add that the remembrance is not just of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus. Jesus said to remember "Me." I would assume that means all of Him. This would be His life and ministry, including His character, His behavior, and His teachings. Remembering Jesus is to remember all of Him, not just the final hours of His life on earth. And when we remember Jesus, too often we forget the resurrection. Without the resurrection, nothing else is worth remembering.

2. *The Lord's Supper is a proclamation.* Paul wrote, "*For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do proclaim the Lord's death until He comes*" (1 Co 11:26). In remembrance we look back to Jesus, His ministry and His atoning sacrifice. However, in the Supper Paul urges us to look into the future. The Supper preaches the death of Jesus every time it is observed. Since we continue to observe the Supper even to this day, then we continue to proclaim

the death of Jesus. Paul affirms that Jesus is coming again. We thus preach Jesus through the Supper in anticipation of His coming in the future. The next time you partake of the Supper, think of the final coming of Jesus. Celebrate the resurrected Jesus who is coming again.

By present observance in reference to a future event, the Supper brings into the Christian dispensation the significance of the Passover. The Passover was instituted in Israel in order to be a continual reminder to every generation of Israel that God delivered them out of the bondage of Egyptian captivity (Ex 13:7-10). It was thus a celebration meal. They celebrated their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt.

Everything surrounding Israel's deliverance from captivity finds meaning in the Supper. The paschal lamb was a symbol of God's deliverance of His people from Egyptian bondage. Jesus

was God's paschal lamb of offering at Calvary. Through Jesus, God's spiritual Israel has been delivered from the bondage of

sin. When the Israelites observed the Passover, they looked to the past and thought of what God did. They also knew they had a future if they did not forget the bondage from which they were delivered by God. It was because of our deliverance from the bondage of sin that we have hope of a future. In partaking of the Supper, therefore, we celebrate our

future because of our deliverance from bondage. Partaking of the Supper is a time of celebration, not sadness.

3. The Lord's Supper is a fellowship. Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 10:16,17 is significant, but often ignored. *"The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not the fellowship of the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not the fellowship of the body of Christ? For though we are many, we are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread."*

The word "fellowship" comes from the diversely defined Greek word, *koinonia*. One of the central definitions of this word emphasizes joint participation. Our English word "fellowship" is weak in defining *koinonia*. Fellowship is often understood to be simple chatter over a meal. But the Spirit wants us to understand that more is involved in the *koinonia* of the Christian. Our *koinonia* is partnership, companionship, sharing, participation and burden bearing. Meals and chatter are involved in this *koinonia*, however, they are only the serendipity of the relationship we have with one another in our brotherhood.

a. Koinonia with the blood: Paul stated that we have "*koinonia* with the blood of Christ". There is tremendous spiritual significance to this statement. The Christian's participation in the blood is real and actual in reference to our forgiveness. The continual cleansing by the blood keeps us in God's presence. It keeps us in *koinonia* with one another. *"But if we walk in the light as*

**The Supper Was
Instituted To**

**Remember Jesus,
Not The Supper Itself.**

He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 Jn 1:7). *Koinonia* with the blood goes hand in hand with *koinonia* with the body.

b. *Koinonia* with the body: The second blessing about which Paul spoke was “*koinonia of the body of Christ*”. The context of 1 Corinthians 10 focuses on us as a body of believers. Paul’s use of the word “body” in this context is metaphorical. The real and actual body of Jesus was nailed on the cross. But that body is not the one about which Paul speaks in this context. It is the spiritual body. It is the universal organism of Jesus’ body of believers. When we eat of the bread of the Supper, we are to remember the spiritual body of Christ, that it is one, and being one, is universal. Inherent within the oneness of the body is the universality of the body. There is no parcelled out body scattered in locations with addresses. The body is one, and thus functions globally as an organism of redeemed believers in order to accomplish the work of its Head.

When we eat of the bread, we must remember that we *koinonia* with this one body. For this reason, we cannot proclaim our autonomy from one another as the one body. Though we are many free members in Christ, we are still one universal body of Christ (See 1 Co 12:12).

In the prayer of Jesus in John 17:20,21, I believe Jesus knew that those who believed on Him would have a ten-

dency to gather in groups and then declare their autonomy from one another as groups. For this reason He prayed that we all remain one body. When we partake of the one bread, therefore, we reaffirm our oneness, and thus answer again the prayer of Jesus that all members remain as one body.

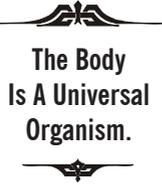
4. *In the Lord’s Supper we examine ourselves.* Paul wrote, “*But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup*” (1 Co 11:28). Self-examination is a part of the Supper. The spiritual significance of this point is imperative. The Supper is not for those who cannot examine themselves. It is not for children. It is for those who can reflect on their character, their motives and attitudes.

The context of this statement illustrates at least some attitudes upon which one must contemplate in partaking of the Supper. The Corinthians were arrogant in reference to one another. They were inconsiderate of the less fortunate. They turned the love feast of the saints into a gluttonous and drunken event. It is for this reason that one must examine his or her own behavior and attitudes in reference to his or her *koinonia* with his or her fellow believer. If one does not seriously consider his relationship with other members of the body, then he eats judgment to himself. “*For he who eats and drinks not discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment to himself*” (1 Co 11:29).

The spiritual significance of the Sup-



per far outweighs the physical and ceremonial performance of the event. We have sometimes been in danger of sacrificing our focus on the spiritual because of our debate over the physical and a system of function we suppose should take place during the Supper. In fact, some would partake of the Supper after they have had a feud with others over the physical elements and function of the Supper. Our hypocrisy is thus manifested in that we do not discern the body of believers because we have divided over some point concerning the elements and ceremony of the event.



**The Body
Is A Universal
Organism.**

B. The Bible teaches that the elements were meant to represent spiritual things.

The elements, or emblems, of the Supper were meant to be representative of that which is greater than the elements themselves. The emphasis was not on the elements becoming something, but that something greater than the elements must be considered.

Those who teach the doctrine of transubstantiation misunderstand the purpose of Supper. They focus on the elements themselves, while Jesus wanted us to focus on something greater than the elements. The unfortunate thinking that the doctrine of transubstantiation produces is thinking that is earthly. By focusing on the elements themselves, the higher spiritual significance of the Supper is lost.

By thinking about a transubstantiated piece of bread and cup of wine, the participant's mind is not focused primarily on Jesus, but on the elements and ceremony surrounding the event.

Physical memorials are established in order to focus our minds on remembrances. We stand and look at the tombstone of a departed friend, not in order to think about the tombstone, but on memories we have of our loved one. Jesus wants no less. Instead of trying to somehow bring His literal body and blood back into existence, He wants us to focus on who He is now and His coming again in His present form. Paul had this in mind when he wrote, "*Therefore, from now on we know now man according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no more*" (2 Co 5:16). Consider closely the Holy Spirit's written description of those things by which we remember Jesus.

1. "This is My body." Jesus made this statement while holding a piece of bread in His hand (Mt 26:26; Mk 14:22; Lk 22:19). Reference could not have been made in this statement to His literal body. He was standing there in body in their presence when He made the statement. How could He have been there personally in body and at the same time declare that the bread was His literal body?

In another context Jesus referred to the church as "His body" (Ep 5:29,30). But in making this statement, He did not mean that the church was His literal

physical body. We must understand that the word “body” was being used metaphorically when used in reference to the bread and the church. On occasions Jesus said that He was the “door” (Jn 10:7), the “vine” (Jn 15:1,5) and the “rock” (1 Co 10:4). But in all these references He was not speaking literally. He was using the words “body”, “door”, “vine” and “rock” in a metaphorical figure of speech. This is all the significance we must place on the phrase “This is My body”. To say that He wants us to understand that there is a transubstantiated essence of the body in the bread would be missing the metaphorical and spiritual meaning of the statement. It is not the bread that is important. It is His body.

2. *“This is My blood.”* The same thoughts of the preceding point must be used to understand what Jesus meant in this statement. He took the cup and said, “This is My blood” (Mt 26:27; Mk 14:23,25; Lk 22:20). The fruit of the vine that He held in His hand was not His literal blood which flowed through His veins at the time He made the statement. There was something greater and spiritual in His metaphorical use of the word “blood”. The fruit of the vine in the cup was only to remind us of that which is greater and spiritual. Emphasis, therefore, must be placed on what was signified.

3. *“You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons.”* In the context of 1 Corinthians 10:14-22 Paul is commanding the Corinthians to “flee from idolatry” (1 Co 10:14). He makes a contrast between the feasts of idolatrous

worship and the communion Christians have with one another and Christ through their joint participation in the Lord’s Supper. Paul exhorted, *“But I say that the things that the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. And I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the Lord’s table and of the table of demons”* (1 Co 10:20,21).

Partaking of the table of demons is **communing** with demons. In the same manner, when we partake of the Supper we are **communing** with the Lord. It is not that we commune with literal demons who are present with us if we eat at the table of foods that have been sacrificed to idols. Paul’s point is a figure of speech. When the Corinthian Christian knowingly ate sacrificed foods, he was condoning that to which the foods had been sacrificed. In this way, therefore, he was communing with the doctrines of demons.

When the Christian eats and drinks in the Supper, he is communing with Jesus. It is not that the actual and literal blood of Jesus is present in the bread and fruit of the vine. What Paul meant in 1 Corinthians 10 was that when we eat and drink at the table of the Lord, we are spiritually communing with Jesus. He is presently in heaven. Nevertheless, when we partake of the Supper we commune with Him.

There is no biblical authority or scientific evidence for the concept that the bread and fruit of the vine actually turn into the literal blood and body tissue of

Jesus in the act of partaking of the Supper. When Jesus instituted the Supper, He had no intention of leaving on earth something physical of His body and blood. Our attention in partaking of the physical bread and fruit of the vine is to connect spiritually with the global organism of His body which is the church of believers. We are to remember the sacrificial blood by which that church of believers was redeemed from sin.

C. The doctrine of transubstantiation and consubstantiation are without biblical authority.

In order to prove that a teaching is false, it is best to go straight to those passages that are used to support the teaching. Without exception, when passages are used to support a false teaching, the passages themselves are misunderstood in their context. It is imperative, therefore, that the honest interpreter understand specific “prooftexts” for any teaching within the context of the prooftexts.

When considering the teachings of transubstantiation and the sister teaching of consubstantiation, it is imperative that the texts that are used to support the teachings be understood in their original context. When this simple hermeneutical principle is exercised, it is not difficult to determine the erroneous nature of the doctrines. The following are some of the key passages that are used to support these teachings:

1. **Matthew 26:26:** In Matthew 26:26 Matthew recorded, “*Jesus took*

bread and blessed it.” It is asserted that Jesus worked a miracle on this occasion when this event took place. It is assumed that the miracle He worked was that He changed the bread He took into His literal body. But on the same occasion He took the cup. However, He did not bless the cup in order to change its contents into His literal blood.

Luke 22:19 is Luke’s parallel account of what took place on the same occa-

sion that was recorded by Matthew. Luke recorded, “*And He took bread and gave thanks. And He broke it and gave to them ...*” (Lk 22:19).

Luke thus interprets the “blessing” of the Matthew account. The “blessing” (Matthew) was simply that Jesus “gave thanks” (Luke) for the bread. No miracle was worked.

2. **John 6:53:** Many Bible interpreters get themselves into trouble by not understanding figurative language that is used in the Bible in order to express spiritual thoughts. This is particularly true in reference to the use of metaphors. In a metaphor something that is earthly and literal is used to teach something that is spiritual and greater than the earthly and literal metaphor itself. In an almost naive understanding of what the Bible says in many places, some interpreters fail to understand the simple principles of figures of speech, and thus develop some very interesting interpretations of bibli-

False Teachers Are Proved To Be Such By The Content Of Their Supposed Prooftexts.

cal text. I believe the Catholics' understanding of John 6:53 originated out of an inability to understand figures of speech in the text of the Bible.

In John 6:53 Jesus said, *“Truly, truly, I say to you, except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.”* This passage is used to teach that one must literally eat of Jesus' body and drink of His blood in order to have life. Sometimes common sense is the best principle of hermeneutics. If what is asserted about the literal interpretation of this passage is true, then we have certainly developed a morbid doctrine. There is no common sense rule that Jesus would have us understand from this passage that we must literally eat and drink from His literal body and blood. There is something repulsive about this interpretation that leans toward making God do foolish things among men.

One of the first points to answer the Catholic's literal understanding of this passage, is the misunderstanding of the statement by those who initially heard Jesus. They understood the statement as Catholics today would interpret the passage. Some of those in the presence of Jesus, in their childish understanding of what Jesus said, literally understood the statement to mean that Jesus wanted His disciples to eat literally of His body and drink of His blood. John 6:60 states, *“Therefore, many of His disciples, when they had heard this, said, ‘This is a hard saying. Who can hear it?’”* The fact that the immediate disciples misunderstood the statement to be literal is proof that Jesus was not speaking of something

that was literal.

I do not believe the context of John 6:53 is a direct discussion of the observance of the Lord's Supper. The Supper is something that is done by Christians in order to **remember the life one already has because he or she has eaten of the “bread of life”**. Eating and drinking of the body and blood of Jesus refers to **receiving** that life. The context of John 6 is conversion, not observance.

Follow the context of John 6 and see if this is not true. Jesus first referred to the “manna” that was given to the children of Israel in the wilderness (vs 31). By accepting and eating of that manna, they lived. The manna was life from heaven in the desert. Jesus then made application to Himself. *“My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world”* (vss 32,33). And unless they misunderstood this, Jesus said, *“I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me will never hunger. And He who believes in Me will never thirst”* (vss 35). If we eat of this bread, there is the promise of everlasting life. *“And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes on Him, may have everlasting life”* (vs 40). Jesus plainly stated, *“I am the bread that came down from heaven”* (vs 41,48). He is *“the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die”* (vs 50). *“If anyone eats of this bread, He will live forever”* (vs 51).

Then in verse 53 Jesus transitioned His metaphor of “bread” to represent the giving of His body and blood for the sal-

vation of man. “*I say to you, except 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. And I will raise Him up in the last day*” (vss 53,54). The meaning is simple. Jesus is the life-giving “manna” (bread) that was sent from heaven for the salvation of man. Those who believe on Jesus have the eternal life that His bread gives. Those who salvationally eat of the body of Jesus and drink of His blood in order to be saved, are those who eat the Supper in order to remember what they have done in order to be saved. John 6, therefore, is not a context about eating and drinking the Lord’s Supper. It is about conversion. It is about what unbelievers must do in order to be saved, not something that the saved do to remember their means by which they were saved.

We must remind ourselves that the teaching that the elements of the Supper literally turn into the body and blood of Jesus is found nowhere in the Bible. It is a teaching that was developed out of a misunderstanding of various statements in the New Testament in reference to the body and blood of Jesus.

By instituting the Supper, Jesus did not want us to focus on the elements themselves, but on what they represented. In our often innocent and mostly legalistic approach to the observance of the Lord’s Supper, we entangle ourselves in a host of legalities in order that we do everything just right. We thus develop arguments over the performance while missing the point of what is to be remem-

bered. I do not think Jesus meant for such to exist among His fellow heirs. What is to be remembered is what is important. After all, Jesus said, “***This do in remembrance of Me.***” We do not do it in remembrance of the ceremony. We do not do it in remembrance of the elements. We eat of the Supper in remembrance of **Jesus** who gave Himself for us. Let’s not forget this.

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