

CHAPTER 8

Catholics and Protestants

In the last chapter we talked about RELIGION. Most religious people that claim to be Christians will either be Catholic or Protestant. If we are going to help these people to come to know Christ as their Saviour, then we should try to understand both of these religious systems. Let us first consider the Catholic faith:

CATHOLICS

Correct Teachings

Not everything that the Roman Catholic Church teaches is wrong. There are many things that Catholic people believe and teach that are correct and that agree with what the Bible says. Here is a list of important teachings that most Catholics believe. Please **MATCH** each one with the correct Bible verse which shows that these beliefs are based on Scripture:

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| 1. _____ God is the Creator. | A. John 1:1 |
| 2. _____ God is a Trinity--there is only One God, but this One God makes Himself known in three Persons--Father, Son and Holy Spirit. | B. Romans 3:23 |
| 3. _____ Jesus Christ is God. | C. 1 Corinthians 15:3 |
| 4. _____ Jesus Christ was born of a virgin and became a man. | D. 1 Corinthians 15:4 |
| 5. _____ Men are sinful. | E. Genesis 1:1 |
| 6. _____ There is a real hell. | F. 1 Peter 1:25 |
| 7. _____ Christ died for man's sins. | G. 1 Peter 2:22 |
| 8. _____ Jesus Christ is sinless (He lived a perfect life). | H. 2 Corinthians 13:14 |

9. _____ Christ arose from the dead on the third day after His crucifixion. I. Mark 9:43
10. _____ The Bible is God's Word. J. Matthew 1:18,20,23

When we share with a Catholic person, it might help if we point out some of the areas where we both agree. For example, instead of saying, "Everything you teach about salvation is WRONG!" it might be better to say something like this: "We both agree that the Bible is God's Word. Let's open the Bible and see what God says about salvation" or "We both agree that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and everything He says is true. Let's open the Bible and see what Jesus has said about how a person can be saved (John 3:16; 5:24; 6:35-37; etc.)."

Incorrect Teachings

The devil loves to mix error with truth. As we have seen, Catholics believe many things that are true. The problem is that they also believe many things that are not taught in the Bible. This is the danger. If you take a glass of milk and add just a little poison, the drink could kill you (even though the glass was filled with lots of good milk)! Good teaching mixed with a little false teaching can be deadly!

Here are some of the false things that the Roman Catholic Church teaches:

Under each of these sections we will quote from official Roman Catholic documents to see what they teach in their own words. These sections will appear in red.

1) Man must earn his salvation by good works.

Getting into heaven is the only thing that matters. What is absolutely necessary to get to Heaven? You have to have Sanctifying Grace in your soul when you die. Sanctifying Grace is God's life in the soul. How do you obtain Sanctifying Grace? One of the chief ways of obtaining Sanctifying Grace is by receiving the Sacraments (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist or the Mass, Penance (confession), Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, Matrimony). The Sacraments not only **tell** you that you have Grace in your soul, but they actually **put** the Grace into it (*A Brief Catechism for Adults*, by Fr. William J. Cogan, page 65-68).

How to be a good Catholic: 1. Always attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days, and during the week as often as possible. 2. Go to Confession every week if possible, but at least once a month. 3. Receive Holy Communion in the state of grace every time you attend Mass. 4. Be sure to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. 5. Say your morning and evening prayers and your Rosary every day. 6. Stay away from any person, place or thing which easily leads you into sin. 6. Stay married and faithful to your spouse if you are married. 8. Accept all the children God wants to send you. 9. Raise your children to be good Catholics. 10. Devote some time every day to reading your Catholic Bible and/or sound Catholic books, to reinforce your Catholic values and the Catholic view of life. Give generously to the Church and practice charity toward your neighbor. Always stay in the state of grace, continually preparing for your death, remembering that death may come suddenly (*A Brief Catechism for Adults*, by Fr. William J. Cogan, page 176).

As we have seen in **Chapter 7**, all RELIGION is based on the idea that man must somehow work his way to heaven. The Bible says that we are **not** saved by _____ of righteousness which we have _____ (Titus 3:5) but we are saved only by God's mercy and grace.

The Catholic church believes that people must earn their way to heaven by doing good works. They say that a person must **WORK FOR HIS SALVATION** by observing the sacraments, by baptism, by going to the mass, by keeping the law, by saying certain prayers, by confessing sins, by honoring the virgin Mary, etc.

2) Christ's work on the cross is not finished.

The Mass continues the Sacrifice of the Cross. Each time Mass is offered, the Sacrifice of Christ is repeated. A new sacrifice is not offered, but by divine power, one and the same sacrifice is repeated...In the Mass Christ continues to offer Himself to the Father as He did on the Cross (*The New Saint Joseph Baltimore Catechism*, p. 171). Did Jesus intend that His sacrifice be continued? Yes, because He instituted the Mass, which is the re-presentation of His sacrifice on the cross. Is the sacrifice of the Mass the same as the sacrifice of the Cross? Yes, they are the same in that the victim and the priest are the same, Jesus Christ. What is the difference between the two sacrifices? The difference is that the Sacrifice of the Cross was a bloody sacrifice; whereas, the Sacrifice of the Mass is an unbloody one (*A Brief Catechism for Adults*, by Fr. William J. Cogan, pages 84-85).

When Jesus died on the cross He cried out, "It is _____" (John 19:30). He completed the work of salvation and He fully paid the penalty for man's sin (the death penalty). Does Jesus need to die any more (Romans 6:9; Revelation 1:18)? _____ According to the Bible, how many times did Jesus die for sin (1 Peter 3:18; Hebrews 9:28; 10:10)? _____

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that the sacrifice of Christ takes place again and again. They believe that this sacrifice is repeated every time there is a MASS (communion service or Eucharist). They believe that the bread is actually changed into the body of Christ and the wine is actually changed into the blood of Christ. They say that Christ is being sacrificed every time there is a MASS (communion service). This would mean that Christ's work is never done. His work is never finished because He must die again and again and again. Is this true?

3) After death, many people go to a place called PURGATORY.

What is Purgatory? A place and state of temporary punishment in the next world. Purgatory is a place where the soul is cleansed of unforgiven venial sin. Only people with mortal sin go to Hell, and on the other hand, no one can enter Heaven with even the smallest sin. Therefore there must be a place in the next world where lesser sins can be taken off the soul. Even though God forgives your sins, He still requires that you be punished for them (i.e., "pay" for them), either in this life or in the next. Souls in Purgatory suffer a great deal. You can shorten the stay of souls in purgatory by having Masses said for them, by praying for them and by doing good works for them (*A Brief Catechism for Adults*, by Fr. William J. Cogan, pages 36-38).

The Catholic church teaches that there is a place for people to go after death that is neither Heaven nor Hell. This place they call PURGATORY. Purgatory is for those who are not bad enough for Hell and not good enough for Heaven.

Does the Bible speak of three places where the dead go (heaven, hell and purgatory) or only two places (heaven and hell)--see Matthew 25:46; Matthew 13:41-43; John 5:29?

_____ When a believer dies, where does he go (Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:8; Philippians 1:23)? _____ The time to have our sins cleansed and purged is in **this life**. If we wait until the next life, it will be too late (see **Hebrews 1:3**; Hebrews 9:27; 10:14,17).

4) Man's tradition must be added to God's truth.

How can we know the true meaning of the Bible? We can know the true meaning of the Bible from the teaching authority of the Catholic Church, which has received from Jesus Christ the right and the duty to teach and to explain all that God has revealed. The Church helps us to understand the Bible

and to be sure of what God meant in each part of it. What is Divine Tradition? Divine Tradition is the unwritten word of God--that is, truths revealed by God, though not written in the Bible, and given to the Church through word of mouth by Jesus Christ or by the apostles. Has Divine Tradition the same force as the Bible? Yes; Divine Tradition has the same force as the Bible, since it too contains God's revelation to men (*The New Saint Joseph Baltimore Catechism*, p. 19-20). What is Tradition? The Unwritten Word of God: these "other things Jesus did" were handed down by word of mouth by the Apostles and other close followers of Jesus. Do you have to believe in Tradition? Yes, because it is the Word of God and has equal authority with the Bible. Are you free to believe whatever you want? No, you have to believe everything in the Bible and Tradition--all the doctrines which the Catholic Church teaches (*A Brief Catechism for Adults*, by Fr. William J. Cogan, pages 4-5).

The Catholic Church has the same Bible that we have, but they have added many things to the Bible. For example, they have extra books in the Bible known as the Apocrypha. These are helpful books with historical value, but they are not on a par with Holy Scripture. They also accept what the Pope says as true. In other words, THE BIBLE IS NOT ENOUGH. Catholics have taken man's words and added them to God's Word.

The Pharisees who lived during the time of Christ did the same thing. Notice what Jesus said to them in Mark 7:1-13. Whenever we add man's words to God's Word we have ruined God's Word (Mark 7:9,13). In the same way, whenever we add poison to a glass of milk, we have ruined the glass of milk!

5) To get to God you must go through men.

Who gives you the Sacraments? The priest gives you Baptism, Holy Communion, Penance (Confession) and Extreme Unction (*A Brief Catechism for Adults*, by Fr. William J. Cogan, page 68).

Who has the power to forgive sin today? All bishops and priests of the Catholic Church can forgive sin. What do you have to do to have your sins forgiven? You have to be truly sorry for them and confess them to a Catholic priest. The priest, by the power given to him, actually takes the sins off your soul (called "absolution")--(*A Brief Catechism for Adults*, by Fr. William J. Cogan, pages 89-90). What is a priest? A man who offers sacrifice to God for the sins of the people (*A Brief Catechism for Adults*, by Fr. William J. Cogan, page 103).

The Rosary: special prayers to the Blessed Virgin (Mary) which are said with the use of Rosary beads (*The New Saint Joseph Baltimore Catechism*, p. 250).

The Catholic church teaches that a person cannot go directly to God. A Catholic must confess his sins to a man (a priest). A Catholic must pray to men (to saints) and to Mary. The Bible teaches that there is only ONE PERSON who comes between God and man. Who is this (1 Timothy 2:5)? _____ To get to God we must go through Him (John 14:6). He is the only way to get to the Father. Other men do not get us closer to God, only Christ can do that! Only Christ can bring a person to _____ (1 Peter 3:18).

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Because of these teachings, Catholic people do not have assurance of their salvation. They are not sure that they are living well enough to get to heaven. They are afraid of death and of purgatory and of future punishment for their sins. They do not have the joy of knowing that God has forgiven all of their sins--past, present and future. They are not resting on the finished work which Christ accomplished on the cross. These people need to understand the good news of salvation as taught on the pages of the Bible. May God help us to help them!

PROTESTANTS

The Early Protestants

The Protestant movement started about 500 years ago as the Lord worked in the heart of a German man by the name of Martin Luther. Luther began to see that what the Bible taught was VERY DIFFERENT from what the Roman Catholic Church taught (even concerning the five points listed above). The Protestant Reformation was really a “Back to the Bible” movement. The early Protestants believe the following three great truths:

1) THE SUPREME AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE

The early Protestants did not want man's words added to God's Word. They wanted THE BIBLE, THE WHOLE BIBLE AND NOTHING BUT THE BIBLE. They rejected “tradition” (that which men have believed and taught and practiced for years) and they held on to “TRUTH” (that which God says in His Word). The early Protestants were Bible believers.

2) JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

The early Protestants believed that salvation was not by works but by faith. They taught that faith in Christ was the only way a person could be saved and justified: “Therefore being _____ by _____ we have peace with God” (Romans 5:1).

3) EVERY BELIEVER IS A PRIEST

The early Protestants believed that every saved person was a priest and could go directly to God in prayer. Also, the believer could confess his sins to God directly without going through any other man. They also taught that every Christian should be able to read and study the Bible for himself, trusting God to be his Teacher.

Modern Day Protestants

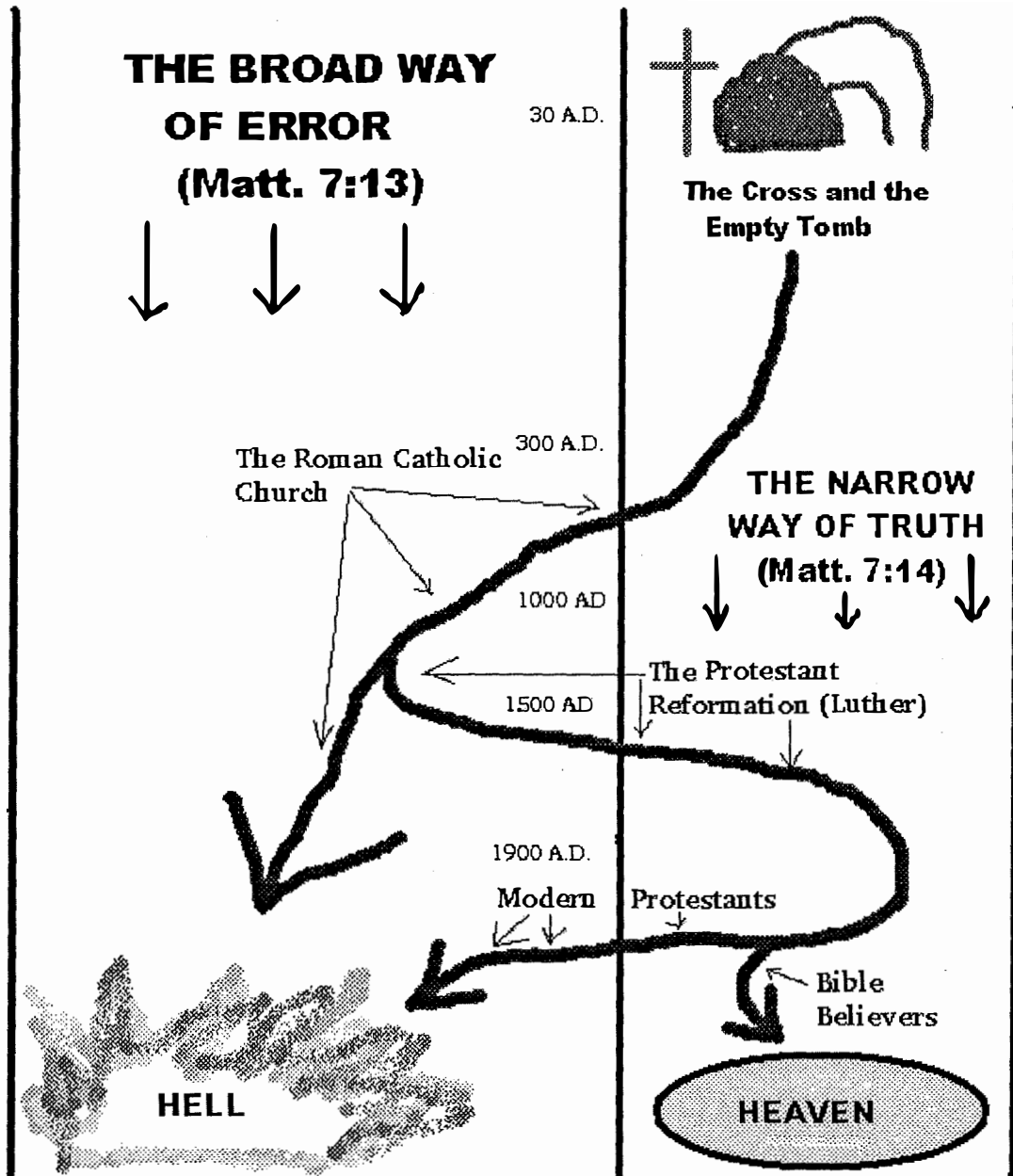
Today many “Protestant” churches (such as Baptist, Congregational, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Episcopal, etc.) no longer believe the great truths that the early Protestants believed. Today many Protestants no longer believe the Bible. Here are some of the false things that many Protestants believe and teach today:

- 1) **The Bible is not God's Word.**
- 2) **Jesus Christ was not born of a virgin.**
- 3) **Jesus Christ was a good man but He was not God.**
- 4) **All men will someday be saved.**
- 5) **The miracles in the Bible did not really happen.**
- 6) **Jesus Christ will not really come again.**
- 7) **Man was not created by God but he evolved from ape-like creatures.**
- 8) **The most important thing is not to tell people about salvation but to try to improve society and help the poor.**
- 9) **God is too loving to send anyone to hell.**
- 10) **Jesus Christ died as our example not as our Substitute.**

Are You A Protestant?

There is a big difference between the early Protestants (like Martin Luther) and the modern day Protestants, many of whom no longer believe the Bible.

The following diagram might help us to better understand the Catholic and Protestant movements as they developed in history:



If you were living in the days of Martin Luther, would it be good to say, "I AM A PROTESTANT!?" _____ Would this be a good thing to say today? _____

Often people will ask, "Are you a Catholic or Protestant?" What would be the best thing to say? What would be the best way to explain to them that you believe the Bible and know Christ as your Saviour?