

10 Ways Catholics View their Salvation

By Pastor Kelly Sensenig

In 1517, Martin Luther, a Roman Catholic scholar and professor, protested the errors of Roman Catholic teachings. In the early 1500s, one of the ways the Pope made money for the Catholic church was by selling indulgences. These were pieces of paper that could cancel the sin of the person who purchased them. Luther's protest was evidenced, when he nailed 95 points of disagreement with the dogma of the Catholic Church, on the door of a Church in Wittenberg, Germany. The words in essence said, "I protest, I disagree, I dissent." With these 95 points of disagreement, the Reformation was born. It spread from the steps of this church across Europe and eventually to the known world. The protests involved many things. This study focuses on the protest that was made regarding the Catholic view of salvation. We must conclude that we cannot climb to God; we cannot even meet him halfway (Rom. 3:10-23). Therefore, we must still protest the Catholic view of salvation today and seek to demonstrate a loving concern for Catholics who need to see that salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

There are ten ways that a Catholic views his salvation. These ten ways or steps to salvation bypass faith in Christ ALONE to be one's Savior. They actually confuse Catholics regarding the only true way of salvation and become a barrier in keeping Catholics from trusting in Jesus Christ ALONE for their salvation. These steps to a Catholic salvation get in the way of a Gospel salvation. They form a legalistic wall which keeps Catholics trusting in Church sacraments and their own good works to eventually and ultimately get them to Heaven.

It is important to remember that individual Catholics are not our enemies; rather, they are precious souls whom God loves and for whom He commands us to reach with the Gospel of His Grace (Mark 16:15). If you are a Catholic reading these pages, I want you to realize that through Jesus Christ alone, you can know that you are saved from hell, that you are eternally forgiven by God, justified (declared righteous in God's presence forever) and that you have eternal life. Consider these ten steps I am going to introduce to you. I might seem firm at times while presenting them, I might say some things that challenge you. But just remember that my sincere desire is to show you from the Bible how you can know that you are eternally saved, forgiven, and righteous in God's presence through Jesus Christ alone.

The purpose of this study is not to belittle Catholics, ridicule them, or to make them an object of humor for some of the things they believe. Of course, I realize that not everybody in the Catholic Church believes everything that the church teaches. Many times they don't know what it actually teaches. Ignorance has always been a premium in Roman Catholicism. Many people are part of the Catholic Church but are not practicing Catholics. Many people involved in Roman Catholicism have no idea what the Church's dogma is all about. They are simply going through the religious routine. Nevertheless, what I am teaching is the official teaching of the Catholic Church. If you are a practicing Roman Catholic, you probably know some of the basic teachings that I will unravel in this study.

Catholic Theologians and other practicing Catholics who follow the traditions of Roman Catholicism will often say to a person, who is countering their faith and religion, "You just don't understand what the Catholic Theologians are really saying. You don't understand the true message behind the Canons and Catechisms." My response is normally something like this. "If words mean something and the beliefs of Roman Catholicism are clearly written down and revealed in a series of Catholic Canons and Catechisms, then any able person can systematically research them, interpret them according to what Roman Catholic teachings actually say, and arrive at proper conclusions about the kind of salvation presented in the Roman Catholic Church."

In short, the Catholic Theologians say what they mean and mean what they say. I've taken the time to document exactly what the Catholic Church teaches about salvation with the intent of steering Catholics, even those who might be sincere about their church, to see only the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the WAY of a person's salvation and justification before God. My goal is to remind everyone in the Catholic Church that salvation is only by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. In order to do this, I will sometimes reveal how Catholics assign different meanings to the words grace, justification, Gospel, and faith which are in opposition to the Biblical and true meaning or understanding of these words.

I also realize that some Catholics will say that they believe in the Gospel of Christ's death and resurrection and the basic tenants of Christianity (the Nicene Creed). "...Thou doest well: the devils also believe..." (James 2:19). The demons also believe in evangelical doctrine but are not saved. This is because they have not actually repented and placed faith in Christ to be their Savior. To academically believe in a

creed does not mean a person is saved. The issue is not an outward compliance to some specific creed but an inward compliance of repentance and faith in Jesus Christ alone to be one's Savior (1 Thess. 1:9-10). And actually, the Nicene Creed states that "We affirm one baptism for the forgiveness of sins." This is not Biblical Christianity. Forgiveness only comes through Jesus Christ – not the medium or administration of baptism. Nevertheless, believing in and reciting a creed (maybe the Apostles Creed) does not guarantee a person's salvation. A person must embrace Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and only way to Heaven (John 14:6). The understanding of the Gospel and application of the Gospel to a person's life (through faith alone in Christ) is totally distorted in Catholic Theology. Peter declares that people who "are unlearned and unstable wrest (twist), as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction" (2 Pet. 3:16). Therefore, it is necessary to expose a false gospel (Gal. 1:6-7; 2 Cor. 11:4; Eph. 5:11) while declaring and turning on the lights of the true Gospel (1 Cor. 15:3-4). If I am going to curse the darkness, I will need to light a candle!

Roman Catholicism is a mix of mostly paganism with a little Christianity sprinkled into it, with a lot of Christian terminology that is designed to deceive and delude precious souls. *It is a pagan religion disguised or masquerading as Christianity.* There is a recreation and re-sacrifice of Christ's death in the Mass, prayers to another intercessor (Mary - the Queen of Heaven), prayers directed to other canonized saints, praying to angels, worshipping Mary, and honoring statues made after their likeness, confessing sins to a sinful and fallen priest, getting indulgences to satisfy or appease God's wrath against the sinner (this is making a comeback in the Catholic Church), and going to a mythical place called Purgatory to be purged of one's sins after death. If this is not pagan – I don't know what is!

Some Catholics will tell you, "I don't believe all of the things the Catholic Church teaches." That might be true, but remember that your experience may not be the experience of many others within the Catholic Church. What about millions of Catholics who are looking only to their baptism, confirmation, sacraments, priestly forgiveness, and good works to save them from hell? If you are truly saved, you should be concerned about their salvation. You need to know that many Catholics are not looking past the sacraments and Catholic Church for their salvation. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is hidden behind a maze of traditions which get in the way of a person understanding what Jesus Christ did to save them and how faith alone in Christ can save them forever.

Here is a testimony of a former Roman Catholic: "I'm a former Roman Catholic now for 17 years and can surely testify about the lies I was taught as a Roman Catholic, comfortable and appealing lies. Hard for those not raised Catholic to grasp how anybody with common sense can really place any faith in the traditions and rituals of Rome. The average Roman Catholic is downright ignorant about the roots of Catholicism and what it teaches in writing, not to mention Biblically ignorant! I say that charitably but honestly, it's just plain willful ignorance and laziness and refusal to move from that comfort zone.

"My own family is still primarily Catholic, and I've shown them time and again factual secular writing (and catholic writing) and history about their beloved Catholic church that doesn't even faze them; they just refuse to believe the truth and sputter and get mad... Myth and tradition have a terrible hold on people, and God help you when you attempt to get through that to show someone the truth."

Charles Berry was a Roman Catholic priest. He entered the Order of Hermits of St. Augustine and became a priest after 17 years. He was given orders to continue studying until he achieved a Ph.D. in chemistry and was then transferred to the headquarters of the Augustinian order in the United States. This is what he writes regarding Roman Catholic superstition. "In the United States the Roman Catholic Church is on its best behavior, putting its best foot forward because of its critics and opponents. In a Roman Catholic country, where it has few opponents or critics, it is a very different matter. Ignorance and superstition and idolatry are everywhere, and little effort, if any, is made to change the situation. Instead of following the Christianity taught in the Bible the people concentrate on the worship of statues and their local patron saints" (p. 59).

Here are his comments on statues: "When I met in Cuba a genuine pagan who worshiped idols (a religion transplanted from Africa by his ancestors), I asked how he could believe that a plaster idol could help him. He replied that the idol was not expected to help him; it only represented the power in heaven which could. What horrified me about his reply was that it was almost word for word the explanation Roman Catholics give for rendering honor to the statues of the saints" (p. 59).

Alexander Carson was baptized into the Roman Catholic Church as an infant. He also was a former Roman Catholic priest. His priesthood studies were at St. John's seminary, Brighton, Massachusetts. He was ordained by Bishop Lawrence Shehan

of Bridgeport, Connecticut in 1955 and was a priest in Alexandria, Louisiana. Also, he was pastor of Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Rayville, Louisiana. Regarding Bible or Tradition he writes". . . the Holy Spirit led me to judge Roman Catholic theology by the standard of the Bible. Previously, I had always judged the Bible by Roman Catholic doctrine and theology" (p. 53).

On the Mass he writes: "In my letter of resignation from the Roman Catholic Church and Ministry, I stated to the bishop that I was leaving the priesthood because I could no longer offer the Mass, as it was contrary to the Word of God and to my conscience" (pp. 54-55).

Of course, there are some evangelicals who seem to think that Catholics cannot be saved when exposing the doctrinal errors of the Catholic Church. It will only lead to offence and not salvation. But this is not necessarily always the case. To arrive at this conclusion is to presume upon the sovereignty of God in salvation (Acts 16:14; John 3:8; 12:32). A person must be stripped of the error of their ways before they can legitimately repent (Luke 24:47; 2 Peter 3:9) and believe in the truth of the Gospel (Acts 15:7; 20:21). Preaching against sin and exposing false doctrine is the gateway to a person's repentance and salvation (Acts 17:22-30). Friend, Jesus taught that if you embrace the truth, then the truth will set you free forever from the penalty or judgment that God requires for your sins and also the power of sin which controls your life (John 8:32, 36).

One Catholic, who embraced the truth that salvation, forgiveness, and justification before God was only through faith ALONE in Jesus Christ ALONE (Acts 16:31), wrote these lovely words: "It was an overwhelming realization that none of my past sins had ever been dealt with, even though I had confessed them to the priest and performed the prescribed penance! Going to confession had given me a *counterfeit peace and security* that my sins had been forgiven by the words of the priest plus the doing of penance. The time had come for me to make a decision. Acting on the Bible, as my sole, absolute, and final authority of faith, I received Christ as my Savior in May of 1973. I wanted to shout from the roof tops so all the world could hear what Jesus has done for them by His substitutionary atonement and shed blood. 'And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free' (John 8:32)."

Dear friend, you too can be free from the fear of God's wrath and condemnation, or wondering whether or not you are saved from hell and that God will accept you,

when you believe or express faith in Jesus Christ alone. In believing in Christ alone, you are acknowledging that He paid the full penalty for your sins in your place, you are committing your trust or faith to Him alone for your salvation, and by doing so, understand that you can do nothing to earn or merit your salvation, forgiveness, eternal life, and justification (legal righteousness and acceptance) before God. Do you want to experience the freedom of knowing that you are eternally forgiven and saved, that God accepts you through Jesus Christ, and that you are going to Heaven? It's my prayer that this study will bring this spiritual salvation and freedom to your own heart and life which can only come through Jesus Christ alone.

“I'm free from the fear of tomorrow,
I'm free from the guilt of the past,
For I've traded all my shackles,
For a glorious song,
I'm free, praise the Lord, free at last!”

This can be your song as well, if you will place your faith in Christ alone for your salvation. He will erase all of your sins forever and declare you fully acquitted and righteous in God's presence forever. This is amazing grace!

1. Catholic salvation is understood to be a process instead of occurring at a specific point in time.

The theological differences between Catholics and Protestants were once considered to be so great that millions died as martyrs rather than compromise with them. In fact, the Catholic executioners were equally convinced of the importance of such differences. How can these differences no longer be important today? What has happened to cause leading evangelicals to declare that Catholicism's gospel, which the Reformers denounced as heretical, is now Biblical? Catholicism's gospel hasn't changed. Today conviction, which is based upon the truth, has been compromised, to create a huge coalition among conservatives for social and political action.

How do Catholics view their salvation? For the average Catholic, salvation does not come through personally receiving Christ as Savior. Instead, it is a lengthy process that begins with baptism and thereafter depends upon one's continued relationship to the Catholic Church. Salvation comes through participation in the sacraments, penance, good works, suffering for one's sins and the sins of others here and/or in

purgatory, indulgences to reduce time in purgatory, and almost endless masses and Rosaries said on one's behalf even after one's death. Catholic "evangelism" is by works, the very opposite of "the Gospel of the grace of God" which alone saves, without sacraments and good works (Acts:20:24).

Catholics believe in gradual salvation and acceptance (justification) before God which occurs over an entire lifetime through the Catholic Church. Catholic salvation which includes justification before God is like an installment program. It can be compared to paying for a home or car loan which is something that occur over a process of many years. For the Catholic, it takes a lifetime and even some time in the afterlife (Purgatory), the next life, to finally obtain salvation.

For Catholics, salvation is a PROCESS whereby a person is gradually saved or maintains his salvation before God. Salvation is in the Catholic Church. It begins by being introduced in the Catholic Church by BAPTISM and CONFIRMATION (resulting in regeneration). This "first grace" of regeneration is then continually applied to one's life through God's "sanctifying grace" which allows a Catholic to faithfully follow the traditions and teachings of the Catholic Church instead of depending in Christ alone for salvation (Mark 7:1-13; 1 Peter 1:18). Also, the continual reapplication of the Mass, the unfinished and unbloody sacrifice of Christ to the lives of Catholics, is designed to only provide partial and incomplete forgiveness for their sins, but never gives them total pardon in God's presence forever. This becomes another part of the ongoing process of Catholic salvation.

The Bible teaches that we receive salvation at one specific point of time (Acts 16:31), and from that point on, we are saved forever because we possess "everlasting life" (John 3:16; 6:47). But the Catholic views their salvation and justification before God as a PROCESS and JOURNEY (a justifying journey) instead of a once-and-for-all completed transaction of salvation (deliverance from hell – Acts 16:31; Eph. 2:8; 2 Tim. 1:9; 2:4 Titus 3:5), justification before God (Rom. 4:5; 5:1, 18; Phil. 3:9), total and complete forgiveness (Eph. 1:7; 2:12; Col. 1:14), and receiving the free gift of eternal life (Rom. 6:23; 2 Cor. 9:15). This is transferred into a person's life when they trust in Christ alone and the free expression of His grace, which comes to us through Christ's death and resurrection (Rom. 3:24) – nothing else added!

One Catholic apologist gives the Catholic view of salvation:

“It is entirely correct to say that Christ accomplished all of our salvation for us on the cross. But that does not settle the question of how this redemption is applied to us. Scripture reveals that it is applied to us over the course of time through, among other things, the process of sanctification through which the Christian is made holy.”

This is the core belief system of the Catholic Church. While they say Christ’s paid the penalty for their sins, they do not actually believe it. This is because they must earn God’s forgiveness through sanctification, holy living, following and adhering to the teachings of the Catholic church (Sacraments and Penance), and finally go to Purgatory to get their sins completely purged or forgiven. To say on one hand that Jesus paid for our salvation through His death on the cross and then turn around and say that the merits of Christ’s death is applied to us through sanctifying obedience within the Catholic Church is erroneous and blasphemy.

Catholics do not view salvation, justification, and redemption as a finished transaction in spite of what they say. However, we discover that Jesus viewed His sacrifice as finishing the necessary payment for sin. He said, “It is finished” (John 19:30) which means that nothing else is required either by Christ or the sinner to be saved. Everything is finished. There are no legalistic requirements that are necessary to bring a person into a right relationship with God.

Jesus spoke of receiving eternal life at the very moment a person believes on Him (John 3:16, 5:24; 6:47). The writers of Scripture confirm the truth of Christ’s FINISHED sacrifice (Heb. 9:26; 10:10-14; 1 Peter 3:18) and the FREE gift of eternal life through faith alone in Christ alone (Rom. 6:23). Simple faith in Christ’s sacrifice saves and justifies a person forever in the sight of God (Rom. 5:1).

Since Catholics do not consider Christ’s work on the cross to be finished, providing everything a person needs to be saved and justified before God, they create a meritorious system of salvation, which is actually a process. It involves receiving many installments of grace, throughout one’s lifetime, by faithfully following all the teachings and instructions within the Catholic Church (the sacraments), so much so, that the Catholic Church is seen to be the salvation of the Roman Catholic. There is no salvation outside the Catholic Church. Period.

Catholics cannot trust in Christ ALONE for their salvation, since they view salvation as a life-long process of seeking grace and forgiveness through rituals and sacraments, which are discovered only in the Roman Catholic Church. This is why Catholics view their salvation as being connected with their Confirmation in the Catholic Church. Without the Mother Church there is no salvation.

Vatican Council II in the 1960's Declared:

“The sacred synod teaches that the Church is *necessary* for salvation. Whoever, therefore, knowing the Catholic Church was made *necessary* by God through Jesus Christ, would refuse to enter her, or remain in her, could not be saved. For it is through the Catholic Church alone, which is the all-embracing means of salvation, that the fullness of the means of salvation can be obtained.”

Bottom Line: This never-ending cycle and search for salvation and justification before God through the Catholic Church becomes a barrier that keeps a Catholic from trusting ONLY in Christ for personal salvation.

Romans 3:22 declares:

“Even the righteousness of God (the imputed and imparted perfect righteousness that God gives) which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe (which God gives to those who place faith in Jesus Christ): for there is no difference.”

Galatians 3:26 adds:

“For ye are all the children of God by faith (faith alone) in Christ Jesus.”

It's faith in Jesus Christ alone, minus Catholic Church sacraments, which are viewed as bringing salvation and justification into a person's life. For most Catholics a person's faith means they must be confirmed in the Catholic Church, follow the church teachings, comply with the church sacraments, and live a righteous life, so Christ will save them in the end. For most Catholics, faith consists of following the Church sacraments and instructions, which are considered to be vehicles, or the prescribed means and agents, through which they *allegedly* express faith in Christ. However, this is not true faith in Christ; it is faith in manmade dogmas and ceremonies. To most Catholics, faith is an obedient step that adheres to church teachings and participates with the church sacraments; it is not a faith that trusts in Christ alone for one's justification and salvation.

A one-time expression of faith alone in Jesus Christ is all that is needed to grant eternal forgiveness and justification before God (John 6:47; Acts 16:31). The faith of many Catholics is a *misplaced, misguided, and misdirected* faith that is centered upon one's need to seek repeated forgiveness through the reimplementation of sacraments instead of only through Christ. The vehicles and agents related to a Catholic's salvation (the good works of sanctifying grace, the sacraments of baptism, Mass, Reconciliation/Penance, Last Rites, Mary, Indulgences, Purgatorial purging) become the basis of a Catholic's faith instead of Christ.

Believing that salvation gradually comes into a person's life through a lifetime of eating, seeking forgiveness through priests, and participation with all of the sacraments is not trusting in Christ for one's salvation. Sacraments keep Catholics from actually getting to Christ and believing only in Him for their salvation. A person must remove all the religious obstacles and hindrances that are keeping him from trusting only Christ, as his Savior and Justifier before God.

John 3:14-15 says:

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

In these verses looking is compared to believing. As the children of Israel looked upon the serpent upon the pole, they were physically saved from death. In a similar way, as we look only to Christ, who was high and lifted up on the cross, we can be spiritually saved from hell and the second death (Rev. 20:11-15). Jesus declared that a person must only look to the cross of Jesus Christ for salvation. They need not look anywhere else, such as the Catholic Church, or their human deeds and good works. Doing good deeds cannot save any person since everyone fails and falls woefully short of God's perfect, righteous standard (“There is none righteous” - Rom. 3:10) and our good deeds are seen as putrefying “flighty rags” in God's site (Isa. 64:6). This means that a faith expressed in an ecclesiastical church system and one's own meritorious works is not a faith expressed in Christ. Faith in Christ and good works are opposites in Scripture (Eph. 2:8-9). They are separated as far as the East is from the West.

Romans 11:6 gives another clear record:

“And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.”

A “grace salvation” and “works salvation” are opposing Biblical principles. Like onions and ice-cream, they cannot and should not be mixed! A person must only look to the Lamb of God (John 1:29) for salvation - not to sacraments and the Catholic Church. A faith that is expressed through sacraments or in sacraments is not a faith expressed in Christ.

Isaiah 45:22 declares:

“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I *am* God, and *there is none else.*”

Instead of looking to the Catholic Church, sacraments, forgiveness through priests, Mary, penance, and other human works which are designed to satisfy God, we must only look to Christ for our salvation since salvation is only found in Christ.

Acts 4:12

“Neither is there salvation in any other (no other person, no other manmade system of requirements, no Catholic Church, no sacraments): for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

It's Christ plus nothing! Jesus does not save you through your baptism. He does not save you through sacraments. He saves you DIRECTLY and FOREVER through His sacrifice and resurrection. Nothing else is required. The Catholic view of faith is faith in Christ which is relegated to receiving the benefits of Christ's sacrifice through Baptism, Mass, Penitence and good works, Priests, Absolution, Mary, and Purgatory. This become a misdirected faith. Sadly, the benefits of Christ's death are NEVER dispensed through any of these means, which become the ground or basis of a Catholic's salvation – not Christ.

Think of it this way. If I need anything else, any other experience, or any other person, other than Jesus Christ to bring salvation to my soul (Baptism, Mass, Penitence, Priests, Absolution, Mary, and Purgatory), then I cannot be trusting in Jesus Christ ALONE to be my Savior. I am substituting religious ceremonies, sacraments, priests, penitence, Mary and Absolution as necessary steps to bring

justification into my life. Faith in Christ alone is what saves a person, not faith in Christ through the administering of the sacraments. If anything else or any other person gets in the way of Jesus Christ alone for salvation, then a person's faith is not rooted in Christ alone for salvation.

Once again, Catholic salvation is comparable to an installment program, whereby faithful Catholics receive the saving merits of the sacraments on a piecemeal basis and live a life of good works to gradually earn their justification wings, which after a time of final purging in Purgatory will safely take them into Heaven. Catholics see themselves as "being saved" (salvation is a process) while Christians view themselves as "having been saved" (salvation is a finished transaction).

Acts 16:31

"And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

The Bible does not say "thou shalt keep being saved" but "thou shalt be saved." Salvation from God's wrath and judgment to is always viewed as an accomplished salvation – not an ongoing salvation. The Bible says "ye are saved" (Eph. 2:8), "Who hath saved us" (2 Tim. 1:9), and that God wills "all men to be saved" (1 Pet. 2:4). It tells us that "he saved us" (Titus 3:5) and speaks of "them which are saved" (Rev. 21:24). Again, salvation is always viewed as a finished transaction – not an ongoing process.

One Catholic writing states it like this: "The truth is, it is the grace of Christ alone that saves us by our cooperating with that grace in fulfilling the law of Christ. St. Paul teaches that through good works, or continuing to "sow to the Spirit," we will be rewarded with eternal life, but only if we persevere. Are we saved by faith alone? No way! There is more to this justification thing than faith alone."

When a Catholic commits a mortal sin this will erase sanctifying grace from his soul or the ability to cooperate with God's grace and do what is necessary to merit eternal life with God.

Another Catholic writer states it like this: "If sanctifying grace dwells in your soul when you die, then you have the equipment you need, and you can live in heaven (though you may need to be purified first in purgatory; cf. 1 Cor. 3:12–16). If it doesn't dwell in your soul when you die—in other words, if your soul is spiritually

dead by being in the state of mortal sin (Gal. 5:19-21)— you cannot live in heaven. You then have to face an eternity of spiritual death: the utter separation of your spirit from God (Eph. 2:1, 2:5, 4:18).”

According to Catholic Theology, there is an “if” or question mark about one’s salvation, if a person’s mortal sins are not totally forgiven before they die. This is because when a mortal sin is committed a Catholic must find forgiveness through a priest and then do Penance (some good works) to appease God’s wrath for that sin. The concerned Catholic must do penance and find reconciliation through a priest’s forgiveness in order to once again restore the Catholic in the lifelong process of salvation through sanctifying grace, as they continue to strive to make themselves righteous and accepted in God’s presence.

According to Catholic teaching, salvation does involve grace, faith, and justification but the terms are given different meanings than what the Bible teaches about grace, faith, and justification. Grace for the average Catholic means that God gives a person sanctifying grace to live a good Catholic life and faith is a type of faith that is rooted in the Catholic Church’s teachings (baptismal salvation, good works, Mass, priestly forgiveness, penance, last rites) which results in a person’s salvation. It is not a faith that is rooted in Christ alone for one’s salvation. Furthermore, justification is viewed as a process which begins when one’s original sin in Adam is removed and it’s viewed as something that is a gradual process whereby a person makes themselves righteous before God through the sacraments of the Catholic Church and meritorious acts of good deeds as they follow the teachings and practices of the Roman Catholic Church.

The Bible teaches that a person’s salvation is rooted in their justification before God (Romans 5:9 – “being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him”). The Bible teaches that justification (legal righteousness before God) is the result of an instantaneous work of God which involves two matters:

- God transferring or imputing legal forgiveness (acquittal) and righteousness to the life of a believer.
- God declaring the believing sinner legally righteous and accepted in His presence forever.

The Biblical word and teaching on “justification” means that a person is “declared righteous” in God’s presence through the saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Justification does not mean a person MAKES themselves righteous in God’s presence but that God DECLARES them righteous through faith alone in Christ. The Bible teaches that every true believer in Jesus Christ has been declared legally acquitted of all their sins before God and therefore possesses a standing of righteousness and acceptance before God through the complete and final forgiveness found in Jesus Christ.

Biblical justification is an instantaneous declaration of a believer's accepted position before God (1 Cor. 6:11 - “ye are justified”), through Christ alone (Rom. 3:26 - “the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus”), and it lasts forever (Rom. 5:21 - “righteousness unto eternal life”).

Justification is once-and-for-all and is given to us entirely by God’s free gift of grace (“justified freely by his grace” - Rom. 3:24), through faith alone in Christ (Phil. 3:8 - “the righteousness which is of God by faith”), without sacraments or human works (“Rom. 4:6 - “whom God imputeth righteousness without works”). This means that the very righteousness of Jesus Christ is recorded on your account and you have a clear record and standing in Heaven.

Romans 1:16-17 reveals the same truth:

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ (this is not the gospel of sacraments in the Roman Catholic Church but the Gospel of Christ’s death and resurrection): **for it is the power of God unto salvation** (the Gospel ALONE saves a person without sacraments and the meritorious good deeds of Roman Catholics) **to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek** (salvation from hell is given to everyone who ONLY believes in the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ). **For therein** (looking back to the Gospel – Romans 1:16) **is the righteousness of God revealed** (As a result of Christ’s death, God’s imputed and imparted righteousness is given freely and forever to the sinner that believes only in Jesus to justify them) **from faith to faith** (our entire life should be a continuing expression of faith in Christ ALONE for salvation and justification before God - from start to finish – from salvation to death): **as it is written, The just** (those declared legally righteous before God’s presence) **shall live** (be made spiritually alive) **by faith”** (on the basis of faith ALONE in Christ - not works).

In other words, it's faith alone in Christ that regenerates a person, giving them God's life, and this brings a person into a righteous standing before God forever. This was the verse that God used to save Martin Luther. By reading this verse, he came to realize that salvation and justification before God came through Christ alone – not through the forgiveness of priests and the good works of Penance and Indulgences. This verse gave birth to the Protestant Reformation which was a movement that protested against the errant teachings in the Roman Catholic Church regarding salvation.

One of the key errors of Roman Catholicism is that justification is viewed as “making” oneself righteous before God through a lifelong process that is based upon receiving manmade sacraments and living a life of good works. However, justification does not mean MAKING oneself righteous through Catholic Church sacraments, penance, good works, and indulgences. This is strictly condemned in the Bible. Bible justification is the DECLARATION of a person's righteousness before God (Rom. 5:1; 1 Cor. 6:11; Gal. 2:16; 3:24; Titus 3:7).

Trent disagrees with the Bible on justification. CANON 12 says: "If any one shall say that justifying faith is nothing else than confidence in the divine mercy pardoning sins for Christ's sake, or that it is that confidence alone by which we are justified...let him be accursed" (damned to hell).

This is what the Catholic Church teaches about justification before God.

- Justification is a transformation of the soul in which original sin is removed and sanctifying grace infused which enables them to live a good life and starts a person on a lifelong journey to eventually merit justification in God's presence through being a good Catholic and participating with the sacraments of the Catholic Church.
- Initial justification is by means of baptism which is when original sin in Adam is removed but not the sins that a person commits during their lifetime.
- A person must gradually earn justification through faith and good works.
- Justification is furthered along by sacraments and good works.
- Justification can be lost through mortal sin.
- Catholics guilty of mortal sin are justified again through the sacrament of penance which is the process of sinners confessing their sins to a priest in

order to *regain* their initial sanctifying grace and be placed back on the road to earning and meriting their salvation or justification before God.

- Salvation from the eternal consequences of sin is a lifelong process.
- Salvation is attained by cooperating with grace, good works, and participation in the sacraments.
- The sacraments are necessary channels for the continual infusion of grace.
- Grace is dispensed through the sacraments and also merited by good works.
- No one can know if he will attain eternal life.
- Eternal life is a merited reward.
- The Roman Catholic Church is necessary for salvation.

Since the Catholic Church teaches the exact opposite of what the Bible does regarding justification, we must ask this question. Is Roman Catholicism and Christianity the same thing? No. This is because Christianity is properly defined by certain doctrines that are revealed in the Bible (Acts 2:42; Jude 3). Even though Roman Catholicism claims to be Christian and that it is the one true church, it violates some of the essentials of the Christian faith. It goes beyond what is written in God's word (Romans 4:3). It denies justification by faith alone in Christ alone. Also, it denies the individual sovereignty of the living God (Deut. 4:35; Isa. 46:9) by making Mary to be like God in her abilities and powers, by promoting prayer to and the worship of Mary, and elevating her to a goddess status. No, Roman Catholicism is not a true Christian church because of the denial of these key doctrines related to salvation and God.

Jesus taught something very wonderful about salvation and eternal life in John 6:47: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." Jesus did not say that we believe on him when being baptized, through receiving rituals, through the Mass, through repeated and endless religious ceremonies, or by being confirmed in the Catholic Church. Jesus did not say believing on Him is a justifying process that takes place through a lifetime of receiving sacraments which transfers grace into one's life. Jesus asks us to believe on Him ALONE to be our Savior. Have you believed on Christ alone to be your Savior?

No one can say whether a Roman Catholic is truly a Christian or not since we cannot know people's hearts ("The Lord knoweth them that are his" - 2 Tim. 2:19). Catholics who are saved are saved because they only believe in Jesus to be their Savior – not because they are part of the Roman Catholic Church and its elaborate

system of sacraments. Some are saved in spite of the error that surrounds them - not because of it. However, if anyone, Catholic included, openly denies essential doctrines (including the doctrine of justification by faith alone in Christ), by believing they must in some measure merit their own salvation before God, then they are not saved; and this is the problem. The Roman Catholic Church is denying the essential doctrine of justification by faith. The theologians will tell you that Roman Catholicism believes in justification by faith but not justification by faith ALONE in Christ. Furthermore, their understanding of justification is flawed since it is viewed only as a starting point of one's salvation and is something that ultimately must be earned.

"If any one saith, that by faith alone the impious is justified; in such wise as to mean, that nothing else is required to co-operate in order to the obtaining the grace of Justification, and that it is not in any way necessary, that he be prepared and disposed by the movement of his own will; let him be anathema" (Dammed to Hell - Canon 9, Council of Trent).

"If any one saith, that man is truly absolved from his sins and justified, because he assuredly believed himself absolved and justified; or, that no one is truly justified but he who believes himself justified; and that, by this faith alone, absolution and justification are effected; let him be anathema" (damned to Hell - Canon 14, Council of Trent).

Notice that justification by faith alone is denied, and Heaven is the reward for doing good works. This is the problem. The Roman Catholic Church does not teach the biblical doctrine of justification by faith alone. It teaches justification by faith and works. In fact, anyone who does not believe in justification by works will be damned to hell according to Catholic Theology. Catholics will tell you that they believe in justification by faith. But not justification by faith alone. This is the fly in the ointment.

The Bible teaches the exact opposite. We are justified by faith alone which comes into our life directly and only through the saving work of Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:21 declares: "**For he hath made him** (Jesus Christ) **to be sin for us** (becoming our sacrifice for sin – paying the full penalty of God's wrath and judgment for me), **who knew no sin** (Jesus was the perfect, the sinless sacrifice on

the cross); **that we might be made the righteousness of God in him**” (that through Christ’s saving work – paying God’s full penalty of judgment for your own sins – you can be fully and forever acquitted and righteous in God’s presence forever).

This is exactly what the Bible teaches regarding your salvation and acceptance before God. Dear Catholic friend, are you really saved? If you think that you *need* to be baptized, that you *need* the sacraments, that you *need* to do works of penance, indulgences, confess to a priest, pray to Mary and the saints, and seek to gradually justify yourself before God throughout your lifetime on earth, then you cannot be saved or delivered from the wrath of God (Romans 5:9). This is because you are not expressing faith ALONE in Christ. Why not believe only in Jesus Christ to be your Savior right now? “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (not in anything else or anyone else) and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31). We receive salvation DIRECTLY and ETERNALLY through Jesus Christ alone. Here is the spiritual equation. Jesus Christ – sacraments = eternal salvation. How simple. How wonderful!

But Roman Catholicism has totally abandoned the beauty of grace alone, by faith alone, in Christ alone for salvation by inventing an elaborate religious system of *attaining* and *maintaining* one’s salvation. The **Roman Catholic Church Catechisms** clearly reveal this. “Salvation in Roman Catholicism is a process. To begin, God grants actual grace to a person which enables him to believe in Christ (CCC 2000) and also believe in the truth of the Catholic Church (CCC 1814). After belief, the person must be baptized, which is necessary for salvation (CCC 1257). This baptism erases original sin (CCC 405), unites the person with Christ (CCC 977), infuses grace into the person (CCC 1999), and grants justification (CCC 1992, 2020).

“After baptism, he is saved. But, to maintain his salvation, it is necessary for him to perform good works (CCC 2010, 2068, 2080) and participate in the sacraments (CCC 1129) which provide grace that is “proper to each sacrament” (CCC 1129, 2003). This is necessary in order to maintain infused grace (CCC 987, 1468). However, grace can be lessened by venial sins or completely lost by mortal sins. Venial sins (CCC 1862) remove part of the infused grace but not the saving grace known as sanctifying grace (CCC 1863).

“To remedy the problem of venial sins, the Catholic is to take the Eucharist which the Church teaches forgives venial sins (CCC 1416). He must also perform various penance which must be done in concert with perfect contrition (CCC 1452). But

there is a problem. Sins require punishment. Even though sins are absolved by a priest (CCC 1463, 1495) the punishment due to a person because of his sin can remain. To deal with that remaining punishment, indulgences are administered to deal with the punishment due to the guilt of the sins already forgiven (CCC 1471, 1498). These indulgences draw upon the "good works of the Blessed Virgin Mary" (CCC 1477) and "of Christ and the saints" so as to obtain "the remission of the temporal punishment due for their sins" (CCC 1478).

"Furthermore, the indulgences can be applied to themselves or the dead (CCC 1471) who are in purgatory (CCC 1498). Now, in case the Catholic has committed a mortal sin, then all his infused grace is lost. To regain this grace, he must partake of special penance (CCC 980) since it helps restore grace that was lost (CCC 1468, 1496). To conclude, the Roman Catholic must have faith, participate in the sacraments, take the Eucharist, keep the commandments, perform penance, and do indulgences in order to attain, maintain, and regain his salvation as well as reduce the punishment due to him for the sins of which he has already been forgiven" (prepared by Matt Slick).

Catholic Questions: Do you know about the wonderful truth that you can be forgiven of all your sins in the presence of God finally and forever through the finished work of Jesus Christ? If the Bible declares this to be true, then why do you need to partake of the Mass (a recreation of Christ's literal sacrifice) to provide you with forgiveness? Why do you need to confess your sins to a priest if all of your sins (even the so-called mortal sins) are already forgiven in the presence of God through Christ's death? Why must you go to Purgatory for further cleansing if Christ has promised to give you total cleansing from all of your sins forever?

Bottom Line: The continual process of justification and piecemeal salvation that is gained through a lifetime of observance to sacraments and rituals becomes a barrier to Christ and keeps Catholics from placing faith alone in Christ alone for their salvation.

2. Catholic salvation begins with baptism.

Here is a testimony of a former Roman Catholic Sister (Mary Ann Pakiz) of the Order of St. Benedict. She states: "The Roman Catholic believes that salvation is based on water and works. Baptismal regeneration is the cornerstone of the Catholic system.

The Church teaches that no one can enter the kingdom of heaven unless he or she is baptized. I came under Catholic authority in 1948 when I was re-baptized and converted to Catholicism.”

Catholic Church Catechism 1213 says: “Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit (*vitae spiritualis ianua*), and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. **Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God**; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission: “Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through water in the word.”

Catechism 1257 states: “The Church does not know of any means other than Baptism that assures entry into eternal beatitude; this is why she takes care not to neglect the mission she has received from the Lord to see that all who can be baptized are ‘reborn of water and the Spirit.’ God has bound salvation to the sacrament of Baptism, but he himself is not bound by his sacraments.”

In Catholic Theology, infant baptism is important to wash away original sin. “We didn't choose to be born into humanity but we nevertheless received the grace of human life. Similarly, Catholics don't think babies have to consciously choose Baptism in order to receive its grace. Infant circumcision was the sign of Old Covenant. Baptism is the sign of the New Covenant. It makes sense that Baptism includes infants.”

"[W]hoever says that infants fresh from their mothers' wombs ought not to be baptized, or say that they are indeed baptized unto the remission of sins, but that they draw nothing of the original sin of Adam, which is expiated in the bath of regeneration . . . let him be anathema (damned to hell) - Canon 3 A.D. 416.

Canon 867 declares: “Parents are obliged to take care that infants are baptized in the first few weeks; as soon as possible after the birth or even before it, they are to go to the pastor to request the sacrament for their child and to be prepared properly for it.” “An infant in danger of death is to be baptized without delay.” In other cases, as soon as possible — if need be, even before the child is born, the parents should be in touch with the parish priest (pastor) concerning the baptism, so that proper preparation may be made for the celebration. Canon 871, “If aborted fetuses are alive, they are to be baptized insofar as possible.”

Catholic Church Catechism 1261 tries to deal with children who die in a state of “limbo” (a child who dies without being baptized) in this way. “As regards children who have died without Baptism, the Church can only entrust them to the mercy of God, as she does in her funeral rites for them. Indeed, the great mercy of God who desires that all men should be saved, and Jesus' tenderness toward children which caused him to say: “Let the children come to me, do not hinder them, allow us to hope that there is a way of salvation for children who have died without Baptism. **All the more urgent is the Church's call not to prevent little children coming to Christ through the gift of holy Baptism.**”

In other words, we cannot be sure that babies who die without being baptized go to Heaven and not to hell. This is how serious and important baptism is in Catholic Theology.

Here is the testimony of Bob Bush, a former Roman Catholic priest. “It took me many years to realize that I was compromising by staying in the Roman Catholic Church. Throughout all those years I continued to stress that salvation is only in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross and not in the infant baptism; that there is only one source of authority which is the Bible, the word of God; and that there is no purgatory but rather that when we die to either go to heaven or hell.” (p. 69)

Catholics believe that their salvation journey begins through baptism. By being baptized and confirmed in the Catholic Church, they receive God’s life. Baptism allegedly washes away the original inherited sin of Adam and those sins that were personally committed before baptism, but not the sins that will be committed throughout a Catholics post-baptism life. The claim is made by Catholic teachers that the New Birth is non-meritorious (CCC 2010). However, this same birth is said to infuse God’s sanctifying grace in a Catholic which enables them to perform good deeds to merit their salvation and justification before God (CCC 1266, 2003).

Catholic Church Catechism 2027 states: “**we can merit for ourselves and for others all the graces needed to attain eternal life**, as well as necessary temporal goods.” The Catholic Church Catechism 1257 also states: “The Lord himself affirms that **Baptism is necessary for salvation**” CCC 985: “**Baptism is the first and chief sacrament of the forgiveness of sins**: it unites us to Christ, who died and rose, and gives us the Holy Spirit.” CCC 980: “It is through the sacrament of Penance that the baptized can be reconciled with God and with the Church...This sacrament of

Penance is necessary for salvation for those who have fallen after Baptism, just as Baptism is necessary for salvation for those who have not yet been reborn.”

None of this sounds non-meritorious as Catholic theologians suggest! How can something be “necessary for salvation” but at the same time be considered non-meritorious. This sounds like “vain jangling” (1 Tim. 1:6) or a bunch of random, empty, and senseless talk!

Whenever a person must *do* something, *perform* something, *become* something, or *follow* a procedure in order to be saved or maintain their salvation, it becomes a works/meritorious/legalistic salvation. Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone (Eph. 2:8-9). Period. Adding sacraments like baptism to the Gospel distorts the Gospel and creates “another gospel” (2 Cor. 11:4) that detracts from the death and resurrection of Christ – the only “necessary” message and means of one’s salvation (“the gospel of your salvation” - Eph. 1:13).

Many people will tell you that they need something tangible, something they can see or experience, like baptism or the sacraments, in order to express faith in Christ. But this kind of reasoning does not demonstrate faith alone in Christ. It actually becomes a faith that is centered upon baptism and sacraments instead of ONLY on Christ. Nowhere in Scripture do we find the Gospel being presented through sacraments which in some way convey grace to a person and cause a person to have faith in Christ. The Bible says the opposite, “Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God” (Romans 10:17) – not sacraments. Hebrews 11:1 declares: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” We don’t need to see something, eat something, feel something, or pass through some experience to express faith in Christ. Just the opposite is true, we need to only look to Christ (“Looking unto Jesus” - Heb. 12:2).

It is shameful to conclude that you need something other than Jesus Christ to promote faith in your heart. This is really saying that you need something other than the Gospel of Jesus Christ and Christ ALONE to save you. And this is exactly what Roman Catholicism teaches. Christ is not enough. The Gospel of Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection is not enough. There must be something else. Faith alone in Christ is not enough. There must be something else to channel one’s faith to Christ, such as the sacrament of baptism, and other ecclesiastical sacraments. This is the great lie and delusion of Roman Catholicism. Sacraments, including the

sacrament of baptism for salvation, keeps people's faith from being centered upon Christ ALONE. It is a diversion from the Gospel and expressing genuine faith in Christ. It keeps people bound to sacraments instead of Jesus Christ.

A person being baptized in the Catholic Church is expected to dress in white to symbolize purity of faith and the cleansing power of baptism. Catholicism teaches that baptism cleanses a person from the original sin inherited from Adam but it does not cleanse that person from all the sins of his life. Baptism is said to remove original sin and start a Roman Catholic on the road to justification which consists of earning their salvation and receiving forgiveness for sins through confession to priests, the Mass, and works of penance.

Catholic Church Catechism 980, "This sacrament of Penance is necessary for salvation for those who have fallen after Baptism, just as Baptism is necessary for salvation for those who have not yet been reborn."

One Catholic website has this to say:

"Have you been born again, my friend?" Thousands of Catholics have been asked this question by well-meaning Fundamentalists or Evangelicals. Of course, by "born again" the Protestant usually means: "Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior through the recitation of 'the sinner's prayer?'" How is a Catholic to respond? The simple Catholic response is: "**Yes, I have been born again - when I was baptized.**"

Another Catholic writes states:

"When a Catholic says that he has been "born again," he refers to the transformation that God's grace accomplished in him during baptism."

This is the general Catholic view of the new birth. It involves being baptized, confirmed in the Catholic Church, taking the Mass and seeking forgiveness throughout one's life through all the Catholic sacraments. A Catholic faith is not faith in Christ alone for salvation, but faith that begins in one's baptismal experience, which initially brings God's life and grace into a person's life, and in return enables a Catholic to live according to the church teachings and remain in God's favor within the Catholic Church. This journey of faith all begins at baptism and baptism becomes the center of one's faith which places them in the Catholic Church.

Some Catholics will tell you that they are born again but their concept of the new birth means that they were baptized as infants and confirmed in the Catholic Church. They do not view the new birth as conveying everlasting life to someone that receives Christ as Savior through faith alone at one point in his or her life (John 6:47). Catholics understand salvation as initially coming into their life through baptism which is said to erase the original sin of Adam from one's record. However, the Bible teaches we are condemned in Adam's sin and only Jesus Christ can erase this inherited sin (Romans 5:12-21; Heb. 9:26). Jesus Christ never said that He would erase this particular sin through the means and disguise of baptism (John 3:16). Baptism and all the sacraments become a religious trap and barrier that distracts a Catholic from expressing faith alone in Christ alone for one's forgiveness and salvation from hell.

The Catholic view of the Gospel is that Christ died for our sins and rose again in order to gradually erase our sins over many years of existence on earth. It begins with baptism which erases the original sin of Adam. Forgiveness then continues through Mass, Confession, priestly forgiveness, works of Penance, and Last Rites. The final purging from all of our sins occurs after spending an undetermined period of time in Purgatory, while others pray for you and perform good deeds on your behalf, in order to satisfy God's wrath against you, so you might be purged from all of your sins and be prepared for Heaven. However, the Biblical Gospel declares that Christ died and paid the penalty for all of our sins (1 Cor. 15:3-4), and that His death erases all of our sins forever, the moment a person places faith in Christ (Heb. 9:26).

The Bible teaches that it's the Gospel of Jesus Christ ALONE that saves us without our baptism (Rom. 1:16 – "the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" and Eph. 1:13 – "the gospel of your salvation: in whom after ye believed"). The Gospel is not Christ plus baptism but Christ plus nothing! Furthermore, it's our faith in Christ ALONE that is the vehicle or instrument that brings, regeneration, salvation, and eternal life into our life (John 1:12; 3:16; 5:24; 6:47; Acts 16:31) – not baptism.

Baptism only makes a person wet. Baptism is not the means or vehicle and instrument that God uses to transfer grace into a person's life. It's grace plus nothing! It's Jesus Christ plus nothing that transfers saving grace into a person's life. Catholics look to their baptism as the way God infuses people with saving grace and miss the beauty of coming to Christ without any rituals and traditions.

Here is another testimony of an ex-Roman Catholic: “I was baptized into the Roman Catholic Church in 1963. Like some of you here today and so many of our friends and loved ones I was taught to believe that salvation was not sufficient through Jesus Christ only but came only through the church of Rome, it’s traditions, and my own efforts to do good works also. I taught the catechism for 5 years to 5th grade children while in my late 20’s. My goal was to try and make up for any of the past sins that I had committed. It was a commendable goal but an impossible task because what I did not know then was the doctrine of saving grace and that ‘Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men, by which we must be saved.’”

The Bible clearly teaches that baptism does not save any person or bring new life into their spirit. Here are a few Biblical facts regarding baptism.

- A person is born again through personal faith in Jesus Christ – not baptism (John 3:1-5; Titus 3:5). There are dozens of New Testament passages where salvation is said to be by faith ALONE in Christ (John 1:12, 3:16, 36, 6:47; Acts 16:31; 20:21; Romans 10:9; Gal. 3:26; Eph. 2:8). It’s not faith in one’s baptism (or the transferal of grace into one life through baptism) but faith in Christ alone that brings salvation into our heart and life.
- Baptism is never said to be part of a person’s salvation (Acts 16:31; John 1:12, 3:15-16, 36, 5:24, 6:47; Romans 10:9; Eph. 2:8-9). This means baptism is not the instrument of a person’s salvation or a sacrament through which the grace of God is transferred or channeled into one’s life. A sacrament implies something that saves a person and Catholics look at the sacrament of baptism as the instrument of their justification/salvation and not to Christ.
- There are about 150 passages in the NT which teach that salvation is by faith alone. A few passages that seemingly contradict salvation by grace alone through faith alone cannot be overturned by two or three verses that allegedly seem to teach that baptism is necessary for salvation.
- Baptism follows salvation (Acts 2:41, 8:35-38, 10:44-48, 16:14-15; 18:8, 12). Since faith precedes salvation this would mean that faith and baptism should never be construed together to bring salvation into a person’s life.

- Baptism is for those who are already believers (Acts 8:12-13, 36-37, 16:14-15, 18:8, 19:5).
- Baptism is an outward testimony of a believer's faith that he has already placed in Christ for salvation (Acts 2:41; 8:35-38, 9:18, 10:47-48, 16:15, 18:8, 19:5; I Cor. 1:12-17). Baptism is intended to be an initial act of obedience to Christ, a public declaration of one's faith in Christ, a step of identification with Him, and a proclamation or desire to follow Him (Matt. 28:19-20).
- Baptism is the *evidence* and *confirmation* of one's salvation and forgiveness – not the means of it (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16). Baptism is a figure or *illustration* of Christ's death and judgment on our behalf (1 Pet. 3:20-21; Luke 12:50) – not the way of salvation.
- Peter was not teaching in 1 Peter 3:21 that the ritual of water baptism saves a person but that the baptism of Christ's death is what saves us. Baptism is a *picture* ("the like figure") of what Christ's passed through in order to save us (1 Peter 3:18). Therefore, when we read in 1 Peter 3:21, "Baptism doth also now saves us," it does not mean our baptism in literal water, but Christ's baptism unto death upon the cross (Luke 12:50; Ps. 42:7) and our identification with Him in this baptism is what saves us. Baptism is a picture of Christ's baptism for us. The verse cannot mean that we are saved by ritual baptism in water for the following reasons: **1)** That would make water the savior, instead of the Lord Jesus. But He said, "I am the way" (John 14:6). **2)** It would imply that Christ died in vain (Gal. 2:21). If people can be saved by water, then why did the Lord Jesus have to die? **3)** Neither can this verse mean that we are saved by faith plus baptism. This would mean that the Savior's work on the cross was not sufficient. When He cried, "It is finished" (John 19:30) it wasn't really so, according to this sacramental view, because baptism must be added to Christ's work to bring about a person's salvation. **4)** Salvation by baptism doesn't save anyone. Many who have been baptized have proved by their subsequent lives that they were never truly born again (John 8:44).
- Jesus was not speaking about baptism when referencing the "water" in John 3:5, since Christian baptism, as outlined in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20), was not yet instituted by Christ. The "water" refers to the Old

Testament picture of spiritual cleansing (Isa. 44:3; Ezek. 36:25). In John 3:5, Jesus was teaching that a person can only be born again through being spiritually cleansed of all his sins, which occurs through the saving work of the Spirit. It should be noted that the above verses have been notoriously misconstrued and misrepresented by Catholic theologians to teach baptismal salvation.

- The thief on the cross had the assurance of salvation apart from baptism (Luke 23:43). Likewise, Cornelius and his household, as well as Martha, all had the assurance of salvation apart from baptism (Acts 10:43-48; John 11:25-27).
- Jesus is not stated to have baptized anyone, a strange omission if baptism is essential to salvation!
- The apostle Paul was thankful that he baptized only a few of the Corinthians. This is a strange cause for thankfulness if baptism is to be an expression of our faith in Christ or if baptism has saving merit (I Cor. 1:14-17).
- To include baptism as part of salvation would contradict the Gospel (I Cor. 15:3-4) and would make “another gospel” (Gal. 1:6-9).
- There is no mention of baptism in the clear statement about the Gospel. The Gospel is what saves a person. The Gospel message is free from the sacramental waters of baptism (1 Cor. 1:17). There is no water in the Gospel message; there is only the mention of the death of Christ (“Christ died for our sins” – 1 Cor. 15:3).
- It’s the blood of Jesus Christ that washes away our sins – not baptism (1 John 1:7).
- If baptism saves, then a man on his deathbed, taking his last few breaths of air, could not be saved.

Catholic Questions: The Bible says it’s Christ’s blood that cleanses us from all of our sins (1 John 1:7; Rev. 1:5) – not baptism. Since this is true, how can your baptism provide you with the forgiveness of sin? Are you basing your salvation from hell on

your baptism and confirmation in the Catholic Church? Can you be saved outside the Catholic Church and its baptism? These questions will help you to see whether or not your faith is rooted in Jesus Christ alone for your salvation.

Bottom Line: Baptism and confirmation into the Catholic Church becomes a barrier which keeps Catholics from trusting ONLY in Christ for their salvation. You cannot trust in Christ to save you through your baptism and confirmation in the Catholic Church. You cannot trust in your baptism and Christ at the same time. It's one or the other. What will it be for you?

3. Catholic salvation is received through sacraments.

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, “The sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us” (CCC 1131). Sacraments are viewed by Roman Catholicism as the means of transferring God’s grace into one’s life. They are seen as the vehicles or channels that transfer God’s grace, forgiveness, and salvation into one’s life. The word “efficacious” in the catechism means that the sacraments effectively channel God’s grace into the life of the Catholic. In other words, to get to Christ one needs sacraments. To experience Christ’s saving work a person needs to partake and participate with sacraments.

“In the forgiveness of sins, both priests and sacraments are instruments which our Lord Jesus Christ, the only author and liberal giver of salvation, wills to use in order to efface our sins and give us the grace of justification” (Catholic Church Catechism, par. 987). Catholic Church Catechism 1129 also states: “**The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are necessary for salvation ...**”

Where does the Bible actually teach this? The truth is this; it’s not taught anywhere in the Bible. Sacramental salvation is invented by religious legalizers who are seeking to keep people bound to a system of religious works.

Acts 15:1

“And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, *and said*, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.”

The same thing is said today with a different twist: “Except ye receive the sacraments of Baptism, Mass, Penance & Reconciliation, and Last Rites, ye cannot be saved.” Here is the point. Instead of finding total and eternal forgiveness before God through faith alone in Jesus Christ’s sacrificial death (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14), Catholics seek partial and temporary forgiveness through sacraments such as Baptism, Mass, priests, and Last Rites. Each sacrament is designed to provide forgiveness for certain kinds of sins (venial or mortal sins). However, there is always a need for more sacraments to keep providing forgiveness for more sins that are committed and these sacraments are necessary to keep preparing a Catholic for eternity. In fact, even after death there is still need for more forgiveness in Purgatory before one can enter Heaven. For a Catholic, salvation and forgiveness is temporary, ongoing, and never fully experienced until the last vestiges of sin are wiped away after suffering in Purgatory.

Are sacraments presented in the Bible as necessary means or channels to provide salvation and forgiveness for people? This question can be easily answered by answering four basic questions. In answering these four questions, we will discover if sacraments are necessary to transfer the grace of God’s forgiveness and salvation into a person’s life.

What is the Gospel? Christ died for our sins (paying the full and final penalty of judgment for our sin), was buried (proving He had died and paid the sinner’s debt before God), and rose again the third day (providing the evidence that the Father accepted His sacrifice and that He can give us eternal life through His victory over death (1 Cor. 15:3-4). Since Jesus paid the penalty of judgment for our sins in full and rose from the dead we can possess eternal salvation, forgiveness, and acceptance in the presence of God forever.

Notice that there are no sacraments found in the original Gospel message. To add sacraments such as baptism, Mass, Confession to priests, Penance/Reconciliation, and Last Rites to the Gospel message which are deemed as necessary to provide forgiveness is to change the Gospel message and create “another gospel” (Galatians 1:6). Sacraments add something to the original evangel or message that God gave. Sacraments also detract and divert a person away from the original message of the

Gospel. They distort the Gospel message and take a person's eyes off of Christ and puts them on religious ceremonies and replacements for Christ.

What saves a person? The Gospel is what saves a person. It is called "the gospel of your salvation" (Eph. 1:13) and it is "the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). The Gospel message does not contain sacraments (finding Christ's forgiveness and salvation through ceremonies). This means that sacramental forgiveness is not Gospel forgiveness and salvation. *You cannot receive Gospel forgiveness through the means of sacraments since sacraments have nothing to do with the Gospel that saves a person.* Forgiveness is not transferred to us through the sacraments of baptism, Mass, Confession to priests or any other means. When a person senses their need to participate in sacraments in order to receive forgiveness and salvation, then the Gospel message has been distorted and masqueraded in religious disguise. In short, you don't get to grace or receive the benefits of the Gospel message through the medium or way of the sacraments. You get to the Gospel through Jesus Christ alone who said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

Where is grace found? Is God's grace found in the sacraments? There is nothing revealed in the Bible that says the expression of God's grace is found in sacraments and transferred to us through the sacraments. John 1:17 says, "For the law was given by Moses, but **grace and truth came by Jesus Christ**" (not by the sacraments). God's full and final expression of grace was revealed directly and only through Jesus Christ (Acts 15:11; Eph. 2:8-9; 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 2:11; 1 Pet. 5:10). Never once do we see the word grace related to the sacraments. Salvation and forgiveness was never intended to be conveyed through tangible objects that would act as channels of grace.

Yes, faith must have something to believe and cling to which is the promise given in God's Word of salvation through Jesus Christ (John 3:16; 6:47; 1 John 5:13). True faith does not need tangible objects to cling to for it is the "evidence (conviction) of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). True faith clings only to Christ for salvation. There is no visible and tangible element on earth that God uses to transfer grace into our life. God never promised to participate with baptism or any other sacrament to manifest His presence and transfer His grace into the lives of people. For instance,

the ordinance of baptism was the *testimony* of a person's salvation (Acts 2:41, 8:35-38, 10:44-48, 16:14-15; 18:8, 12) and the Lord's Table was a *remembrance* of a person's salvation (1 Cor. 11:24-25). God's presence is never promised to be experienced in the sacraments and God's grace was never promised to be transferred through the sacraments.

The issue is the Son of God – not baptism (“What think ye of Christ” - Matt. 22:46). God looks at the supreme and final sacrifice of His Son or the shed blood of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 1:18-19; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14) as the only *means* to bring forgiveness and salvation into the lost sinner - not baptism. We are justified by means of His blood (Rom. 5:9) and not by the means or agency of baptism. God also participates in convicting and drawing people to salvation (John 6:44: 12:32) through the agency of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8-11) – not through baptism. There is no instance or teaching found in the Bible that says God participates in a person's baptism to bring them to faith and salvation in Christ. There is no place in Scripture where we see God promising to transfer grace into a person's life through baptism. Any verse that is used to teach this is a reckless handling of the Word of God (2 Cor. 4:2) and presumes upon the grace of God which is only seen and expressed through the death of Jesus Christ (Romans 3:24).

What does it mean to believe on Jesus Christ or how does a person believe on Christ? Is faith really expressed in Christ when receiving the sacraments? Does a person actually believe that Jesus Christ alone saves them when they are baptized, when they need repeated Masses, the continual forgiveness of priests, when they work to earn or merit their salvation through Penance, and when they need Last Rites and Purgatory fires to finally cleanse them from all of their sins? Is this what is means to believe on Jesus Christ. A thousand times – no! Belief in Jesus Christ is a one-time expression of trust or reliance upon the Son of God (Jesus Christ) to satisfy the wrath of God on your behalf, to freely provide you with total and complete forgiveness and justification (legal righteousness) in God's presence forever, and grant you eternal life without sacramental works. Anything less than this is not belief in Christ (Acts 16:31).

Belief in Jesus Christ means to express faith in Christ ALONE without the use or need of sacraments (John 3:16; 6:47; Gal. 3:26; Eph. 2:8-9). Sacramental salvation (the

transferring of grace into a person's life through sacraments) is not the same as expressing faith in Jesus Christ. *It is actually expressing faith in something else that is necessary for one's salvation other than Christ.* People will tell you that they are expressing faith in Christ while they take the sacraments or participate with the sacraments. However, this is a deceptive, counterfeit faith that is not genuine faith in Christ (Heb. 4:2). We are never told to place faith in Christ through sacraments but to place our faith directly in Christ alone to be our Savior.

In order to get to Christ people are told that they must go through something else (the sacraments) or someone else (Mary). But the Bible says we receive God's grace for salvation and eternal life by DIRECTLY and ONLY expressing faith in Christ (John 1:12) who is the only way to Heaven (John 14:6). Therefore, believing in the need to receive forgiveness through sacraments is not the same thing as believing in Jesus Christ and Him alone for salvation. Faith in sacraments is not faith in Christ. Seeking forgiveness through the waters of baptism, continued forgiveness through Mass and the absolution of priests, or Last Rites is not an expression of faith in Christ ALONE and ONLY to be one's Savior from hell.

If sacraments are "necessary for salvation" (CCC 1129) then we must add something else to the Gospel message (1 Cor. 15:3), add something else to the content of our faith, other than faith alone in Jesus Christ (John 6:47), and we must also add something to grace as seen in the death of Christ for one's salvation (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 2:11). The need to receive sacraments for forgiveness and salvation has deceived great masses of religious people. If a person *needs* something else outside of Jesus Christ to grant them forgiveness and salvation, if a person must *receive* something other than Jesus Christ (John 1:12) for salvation and forgiveness, and if a person must *repeat* their participation in sacraments to find acceptance before God, then that person's faith is not rooted in Jesus Christ alone for his or her salvation.

We are called upon to look ONLY to Jesus Christ for our forgiveness and salvation once-and-for-all and forever (John 3:14-15). Believing that the ceremonies of baptism, Mass, Confession, the Absolution of priests, or Last Rites convey grace into your life is believing that you need Someone else (priests) or something else (ceremonies) other than Jesus Christ to save you and make you right before God.

Your faith is not rooted in Christ but in the need for sacraments. Grace, forgiveness, and salvation is not channeled to us gradually throughout the years of our lifetime through sacraments, but is given to us once and for all through Jesus Christ, when we express faith in Him for salvation. Acts 16:31 says, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.” This means we are delivered from God’s wrath forever through faith alone in Jesus Christ. We believe and we receive salvation freely, fully, finally, and forever.

1 John 5:13

“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”

We can know that we have eternal life by simply believing on the Lord Jesus Christ to be our Savior. This means we don’t need the transferal of grace into our lives through Mass, priests, Mary, or Last Rites. Jesus Christ DIRECTLY and COMPLETELY and ETERNALLY provides us with the grace and salvation we need through His death and resurrection. Ephesians 2:8 says, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” Yes, God’s grace saves us and it comes directly and only from Jesus Christ without any ceremonies, sacraments, and traditions. Don’t allow your faith to be diverted away from Christ by sacraments, Penance, Indulgences, Mary, Saints, good works, or anything else, or anyone else. The assurance that we are saved and going to Heaven comes to us directly and only through Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:9 declares:

“Much more then, being now justified by his blood (declared legally and eternally righteous in God’s presence through the death of Jesus Christ alone), we shall be saved from wrath (the wrath of God – hell’s eternal judgment) through him” (Jesus Christ alone).

The need for sacraments and sacramental salvation is a *masquerade* and *barrier* to believing on Christ ALONE for one’s salvation (Acts 16:31) and falls woefully short of what it means to believe ONLY on Jesus Christ for one’s salvation. The alleged need to participate in visible, external sacraments to introduce a person to God’s forgiveness and salvation is actually a *smokescreen* that hides the true Gospel of a person’s salvation (“by which ye are saved” – 1 Cor. 15:2) and the only way of

salvation through Christ (John 14:6). No person needs to partake of sacraments to transfer grace, forgiveness, and salvation into their life since this *mocks* the sufficiency of Christ's death (John 19:30) and since it is Christ's death ALONE that saves a person without sacraments and meritorious works (Rom. 1:16).

The sacraments are additions to the work of Jesus Christ. We must reiterate something very important. To add anything else, including sacramental requirements to the Gospel message of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, actually creates "**another gospel**" (Gal. 1:6). This is because the need for sacraments is an additional part to the original evangel or Gospel message. It creates a different message than the original Gospel message given by Christ to the apostles. Sacraments have nothing to do with the Gospel. Sacraments have nothing to do with the Gospel or faith in Jesus Christ. Neither the Gospel message or the way to receive the Gospel message through faith in Christ includes sacraments.

From a Biblical viewpoint, sacraments are not part of the Gospel message (1 Cor. 15:3-4), sacraments are not part of the expression of a person's faith (Gal. 3:26), and sacraments have no ability to transfer grace into one's life, since grace and salvation is only channeled into our life through Jesus Christ alone (John 10:9; 14:6; 1 Tim. 2:5). Taking external sacraments for one's salvation is also a DIVERSION from genuine faith in Christ which is ONLY trusting in the finished work of Jesus Christ to save you (Christ died for you and rose again – 1 Cor. 15:3-4). Making sacraments (baptism, Mass, Confession, Penance, Last Rites), as a NECESSARY part or expression of one's faith in Christ, is actually not faith in Christ at all – it's unbelief.

Think of it this way; if Christ cannot save you without sacraments, then you are not placing your faith ALONE in Christ for your salvation. For many Catholics their faith is rooted in sacraments only which are supposedly designed to transfer all the graces of salvation into a person's life, help them live a good Catholic life, and finally be purged in Purgatory after their death. Let us set the record straight. *Faith in sacraments is not faith in Christ and faith in Christ is not faith in sacraments.* Friend, is your faith only resting in the finished work of Jesus Christ, who paid the full and final penalty for your sins, and who rose again from the dead to give you everlasting life and acceptance in God's presence forever?

As stated previously, any prescribed pattern or religious ceremony that is NECESSARY to follow in order to receive the benefits of the Gospel becomes a

meritorious system that gets in the way of “the gospel of your salvation” (Eph. 1:13). It becomes a *stumbling block* that keeps a person from expressing faith ALONE in the good news of the Gospel or in believing in Jesus Christ ALONE for one’s salvation and eternal life (John 3:36; 4:14; 6:40). In short, the need to receive and follow sacraments is not only a **different gospel** (Gal. 1:6-7); it’s also a **diversion** from genuine faith in Christ ALONE for one’s salvation (“through faith which is in Christ Jesus” – 2 Tim. 3:15).

You lose everything, both the Gospel and the true expression of faith in Christ, when you view the sacraments as “necessary” for your salvation. Sadly, Jesus taught that you will also lose your soul in hell, if you refuse to believe on Jesus Christ for the salvation of your soul (John 3:36). Don’t be deceived by this false sacramental gospel and don’t think you are expressing faith in Christ to save you, by participating in the sacraments. Don’t bypass faith alone in Christ for this is the only faith that brings salvation into one’s life (“faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” – Acts 20:21 and “faith in Christ Jesus” – Gal. 3:26).

William Pettingill used to say:

“Salvation is by grace, through faith, plus nothing!”

He was right. What does the Catholic Church say about all of this? Let’s reconfirm what their catechisms teach. “In the forgiveness of sins, both priests and sacraments are instruments which our Lord Jesus Christ, the only author and liberal giver of salvation, wills to use in order to efface our sins and give us the grace of justification” (Catholic Church Catechism, par. 987). Catholic Church Catechism 1129 also states: “The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are necessary for salvation ...”

Catholic Catechism 1127, “Celebrated worthily in faith, the sacraments confer the grace that they signify. They are *efficacious* because in them Christ himself is at work: it is he who baptizes, he who acts in his sacraments in order to communicate the grace that each sacrament signifies.”

This is the false gospel according to Rome; it is not the true Gospel according to the Bible (1 Cor. 15:3-4). For Catholics, it’s the Catholic Church that becomes the real instrument of a person’s salvation - not Christ. The Catholic Church (not Christ) is viewed to administer forgiveness and salvation to faithful Catholics through the

application of the sacraments and this takes place throughout their entire lives. But Catholics need to remind themselves that nowhere in the Bible does it state the Catholic Church is the dispenser of salvation sacraments. Where does the Bible actually teach this? The Holy Spirit is the One who dispenses salvation to us DIRECTLY through the saving work of Jesus Christ on our behalf (2 Thess. 2:13). We must place our faith DIRECTLY and ONLY in Jesus Christ for our salvation. “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name” (John 1:12). If you really want salvation and eternal life, you must bypass the Catholic Church, the sacraments, and all your meritorious deeds which you think will make you fit for Heaven, since Jesus Christ said He was the only way to Heaven (John 14:6) – not the Catholic Church and its sacramental salvation.

In a general way, Catholics view their salvation as receiving sacraments instead of receiving Christ ALONE as Savior or expressing faith in Christ alone (John 1:12; Rom. 10:13). Their salvation is viewed as an installment program of endless sacraments in which Jesus is dispensing His salvation to faithful followers. However, the Bible teaches that we do not PARTICIPATE in something to be saved – we BELIEVE in Someone - Jesus Christ (Acts 16:31; John 3:15-16). Christ is not in the sacraments. His presence and salvation is not found in the sacraments. Where do you find this in the Bible? The Bible teaches this nowhere. *Receiving sacraments is not believing on Christ – it’s bypassing Christ.* Christ never promised that His mystical and saving presence would be in sacraments or pass through the sacraments.

John 14:6 is worth repeating:

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way (not the sacraments), the truth (not the sacraments), and the life (not the sacraments): no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (only through Christ – minus the sacraments).

Here is a testimony of a man who was saved as a Catholic by reading the truth:

“I determined that I would go to Mass everyday. I prayed for countless hours. I knelt before numerous statues of Saints every morning and paid homage to them with money even though I didn’t know whom half of them were or did. I then bought a copy of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and studied the thousands of man-made doctrines. Life seemed great. All my plans were fitting into place again. But then I did something that I never did before. I began to read the Bible. I realized that I really didn’t know Jesus. I never heard these words before. I didn’t know that

He was the "light that shines in the darkness." I didn't know that He was the Word. No one told me that He was 'the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Him.'"

Here is the simple truth. Salvation of Jesus Christ is not transferred to one via the sacraments. The Bible is unmistakably clear on this matter. Salvation comes STRAIGHT from Jesus Christ, without sacraments, without Mary, without priests, and without the Catholic Church, or any other church. Roman Catholics view the Catholic Church and the sacraments it offers as the way of salvation and acceptance before God. "For it is only through Christ's Catholic Church, which is "the all-embracing means of salvation," that they can benefit fully from the means of salvation," (Vatican 2, Decree on Ecumenism, 3).

The Catholic sacraments can be viewed as a container or bucket which is filled with God's grace and this grace gets infused gradually and periodically into believers when they are participating in the sacraments. Sacraments channel God's grace into one's life instead of simply believing in Christ to provide a person with God's saving grace. For Catholics it's the sacraments which convey grace to one's life and it's the sacraments which become the instrument of a person's salvation - not Christ ALONE. Catholics view their salvation as receiving Christ's merits on the cross (what He did for the sinner) as they merit their own salvation, by gradually receiving and obeying the sacraments, doing as many good deeds as they can. They are in one sense, meriting (earning) the merits of Jesus Christ (what He did to keep them out of hell). How ridiculous and heretical.

In general, instead of placing faith alone in Christ for salvation, Catholics place their faith in the sacraments, which are designed to transfer God's grace into their lives, and which enables them to be forgiven and follow the Lord in obedience to earn their justification. This means that grace is not received through Christ but through the Catholic Church sacraments. Again, belief in Jesus Christ is not the belief that Jesus saves us through the sacraments. Belief in Jesus Christ is that He saves us from hell and gives us the promise of eternal life ONLY through His death and resurrection (John 3:36 - "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life").

Henry Gregory Adams was born in Saskatchewan, Canada. He entered the Basilian Order of monks and adopted the monastic name of "Saint Hilarion the Great." He was ordained as a priest and served five parishes in the Lemont, Alberta area. He

writes as ex-Roman Catholic who is now saved. "The monastic life and the sacraments prescribed by the Roman Catholic Church did not help me to come to know Christ personally and find salvation . . . I realized that the man-made sacraments of my church and my good works were in vain for salvation. They lead to a false security" (p. 3).

Catholic Question: How many sacraments must a Catholic receive or participate with in order to be saved and forgiven? How many Masses? How many confessions, Hail Mary's and works of penance does it take to know that you are forgiven? What if you die with a mortal sin? Would you end up in hell? Why not express faith alone in Jesus Christ for your salvation and find complete forgiveness before God through Him?

Bottom Line: Sacraments become a barrier which keeps Catholics from trusting ONLY in Christ for their salvation. You cannot trust in sacraments to save you and Christ at the same time. It's one or the other.

4. Catholic salvation is experienced by piecemeal and temporary forgiveness.

One Catholic writes states: "We know from Scripture that Christ's work is applied to us over time and not in one big lump." This is the Catholic understanding of forgiveness and salvation before God. It takes place over the course of entire lifetime. Catholic salvation is viewed as experiencing the temporary forgiveness of *venial* sins through Mass (which help a person to get out of Purgatory faster) and the temporary forgiveness that comes through confessing individual *mortal* sins to a priest (to save their soul from damnation in hell).

Instead of finding total and eternal forgiveness before God through faith alone in Jesus Christ's sacrificial death (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14), Catholics seek partial and temporary forgiveness through sacraments such as Baptism, Mass, priests, and Last Rites. Each sacrament is designed to provide forgiveness for certain kinds of sins (venial or mortal sins). However, there is always a need for more sacraments to keep providing forgiveness for more sins that are committed and these sacraments are needed to keep preparing a Catholic for eternity. In fact, even after death there is still need for more forgiveness in Purgatory before one can enter Heaven. For a Catholic, salvation and forgiveness is temporary, ongoing, and never fully experienced until the last vestiges of sin are wiped away after suffering in Purgatory.

When reading the Bible, we never find any of the apostles declaring that forgiveness and salvation are dispensed through Roman Catholic sacraments. Where do we find grace being channeled into the lives of people through the use of sacraments? The New Testament Scriptures clearly reveal that grace and salvation only come into a person's life DIRECTLY through Christ (John 14:6), as people place their faith ALONE in Jesus Christ for their salvation (Eph. 2:8-9). Ephesians 1:13 says, "In whom (Christ) ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation (Christ died, was buried, and rose again): in whom (Christ) also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise (never to lose your salvation!)"

As far as sins are concerned, the Bible makes no Catholic distinction between venial sins (lesser sins that do not damn people to hell) and mortal sins (greater sins that damn people to hell). It simply declares that "all have sinned" (Rom. 3:23) and that the "wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23) which is spiritual death or separation from God in hell forever. Catholics actually believe that Adam's inherited sin is not as bad as other sins (Rom. 5:12). Original sin has little or no effect on a person's nature, since he did not give consent to Adam's sin. Therefore, Catholicism teaches that human nature is basically good and able to do good deeds, which can bring that person into a justified state before God. However, the Bible teaches that human nature is wicked and vile (Jer. 17:9) and that we are sinners from the crown of our head to the soul of our foot (Rom. 3:10).

From a Biblical perspective, the concepts of mortal and venial sin present several problems. First, these concepts present an unbiblical picture of how God views sin. The Bible states that from a salvation perspective that "all unrighteousness is sin" (1 John 5:17), all sin is the transgression of the law (1 John 3:4), and every sin is worthy of God's condemnation and judgment (Romans 6:23). The Bible does not state that some sins are worthy of eternal death whereas others are not (Eph. 2:1, 5; Col. 2:13). This is why Christ had to die for all of all of our sins (1 Cor. 15:3; 1 Pet. 3:18). All of them, every one of them brought a condemning sentence against us. In regard to the salvation of the soul, all sins are viewed as mortal sins in that even one sin makes the offender worthy of eternal separation from God.

James 2:10 says: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. It doesn't matter if a person throws a very small pebble

through the window or several large boulders. The result is the same - the window is broken. In the same way, it doesn't matter if a person commits one small sin or several huge ones. The result is the same - the person is guilty of breaking God's law, since it is a unit or whole, and must be punished for that sin.

Second, the concept of different types of sin (venial and mortal) presents an unbiblical picture of God's payment for sin. This is because Jesus Christ paid the full penalty for all of our sins when dying on the cross (Gal. 3:13). Third, the concept of mortal sin teaches that a person can lose his salvation through personal sin but the Bible teaches that God's love and favor will never be removed from His children no matter what kind of sin they might commit (Rom. 8:35-39).

When we believe on Jesus Christ to be our Savior, He provides total and eternal forgiveness for all of our sins.

1 John 2:12 declares:

"I write unto you, little children, because your sins (all of them) are forgiven you for his name's sake."

Revelation 1:5 adds:

"And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins (all of them forever through faith in Christ!) in his own blood."

Colossians 2:13

"And you, being dead in your sins (spiritually dead) and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him (made alive with Jesus Christ), having forgiven you all trespasses" (every one of them that you have committed and will commit in the future).

The Bible knows nothing about partial forgiveness. In the Catholic view of salvation, Mass and Confession are something that is constantly needed to provide ongoing forgiveness for sins which pertain to a person's gradual salvation and standing (acceptance) before God. Catholics do not believe God grants them with total forgiveness for all their sins forever – past, present, and future sins. In Catholic Theology, the forgiveness that is related to salvation is temporary which means that it can be lost and regained again and again after Confession, and doing works of

Penance. Forgiveness is also needed through Mass to lessen one's stay in Purgatory. For Catholics, there is no such thing as complete, final, and eternal forgiveness that is related to salvation and justification before God. This is why no Catholic will ever tell you that they are going directly to Heaven when they die. They cannot know they are going to Heaven because they know that their sins are not totally forgiven through Christ.

I need to reiterate that the Bible knows nothing of partial or piecemeal forgiveness but only permanent and total forgiveness through Jesus Christ alone (Rev. 1:5; 1 John 1:7). However, Catholics believe in only progressive or ongoing forgiveness that is related to their salvation which comes through Mass, priests, and doing works of penance to appease God. Catholics are never finished seeking forgiveness before God since they do not believe Christ's work on the cross is finished (John 19:30) and therefore it cannot forgive them of all their sins fully, finally, and forever.

When Christ died on the cross, some 2,000 years ago, all of our sins were in the future. This means when Christ died to pay the necessary penalty and purging for every one of our sins (Gal. 3:13). Christ died to purge us (cleanse and forgive us) from all our sins, which would include past, present, and future sins. The wonderful truth is that we receive complete forgiveness of all our sins through Christ's one-time death and never again do we need to be forgiven or purged of any sins.

Romans 4:6-7

"Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness (the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ credited to our account) without works, *Saying*, Blessed *are* they whose iniquities are forgiven (all of them finally and forever!), and whose sins are covered."

The Catholic Canon 30 denies this wonderful truth: "If any one saith, that, after the grace of Justification has been received, to every penitent sinner the guilt is remitted, and the debt of eternal punishment is blotted out in such wise, that there remains not any debt of temporal punishment to be discharged either in this world, or in the next in Purgatory, before the entrance to the kingdom of heaven can be opened (to him); let him be anathema" (damned to hell).

God's Word declares something altogether different than Catholic Theology.

Colossians 1:14

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (all of them forever!).

Ephesians 1:7

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins (all of them forever!), according to the riches of his grace.”

You ask me why I'm happy, so I'll just tell you why,
‘Because my sins are gone.’
And when I meet the scoffers, who ask me where they are,
I say, ‘My sins are gone.’

Biblical forgiveness erases all of our sins forever and we are eternally forgiven before the presence of God. The debt of judgment which we had before God because of our sins is taken away forever. The Lord pardons us and we will never be judged for our sins! This promise of forgiveness comes to us through faith alone in Jesus Christ and His sacrifice on the cross. Friend, Jesus does not forgive and gradually erase your sins through the implementation of sacraments (Mass, Confession, Penance, Last Rites, Purgatory) but through faith ALONE in Jesus Christ's death on one's behalf. A genuine and saving faith that takes one to Heaven is a faith that only rests in the finished work of Jesus Christ which provides total and eternal forgiveness. It is a faith that is not rooted in the sacraments, rituals, or human works of any kind.

Catholic Questions: Can you, as a Catholic, pray directly to Jesus, not going through Mary, and ask Jesus to forgive you of all of your sins and save you from hell? Jesus said in John 14:14 that "If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." If you did ask Jesus to forgive you of all your sins, would you be forgiven of all your sins? If you were DIRECTLY forgiven by Jesus, then do you need all the rituals and sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church in order to be forgiven? If you're not forgiven by Jesus when you pray to him and ask him to forgive you, then why is Jesus not enough to save and forgive you?

Bottom Line: Temporary forgiveness and the constant need to find repeated forgiveness through Mass, priests, absolution, sacraments, Mary, Last Rites, and suffering in Purgatory becomes a barrier that keeps Catholics from trusting ONLY in Christ for his salvation.

5. Catholic salvation can be lost and regained through penance (good works).

Catholic Church Catechism 1446 says: “Christ instituted the sacrament of Penance for all sinful members of his Church: above all for those who, since Baptism, have fallen into grave sin, and have thus lost their baptismal grace and wounded ecclesial communion. It is to them that the sacrament of Penance offers a new possibility to convert and to recover the grace of justification. The Fathers of the Church present this sacrament as the second plank [of salvation] after the shipwreck which is the loss of grace.”

One Catholic writer said this:

“The question of a man’s eternal destiny comes down to this: If he should die in the state of grace, with the divine life present in his soul, he will live eternally in heaven. If he should die in mortal sin, without the divine life present in his soul through grace, he will die eternally in hell.”

In Catholic Theology, the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation is important. It involves confessing to a priest so one can be forgiven of their mortal sin, performing good works to satisfy God’s wrath against this sin, in order to be reconciled to God and the Catholic Church. Penance and Reconciliation is designed to secure forgiveness for mortal sins, the sins that bring spiritual death to God’s grace and damn a person to hell, which are committed after baptism. The Roman Catholic believes that salvation is based on water (baptism) and the process of Penance and Reconciliation through Catholic priests. Since Catholic salvation is based upon human works, a Catholic can lose the salvation that they have tried to maintain throughout their lifetime. Committing a mortal sins damns a person to hell.

But Jesus said in John 10:27-28:

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand.”

Jesus was teaching the security and safety of His children. No person would be lost from Him who places simple faith in His saving work and becomes His sheep. We will never perish! Do you believe this? This is what Jesus said. He gives the repeated promises that we have “everlasting life” (John 3:15-16; 5:25; 6:47). However, Roman Catholicism does not believe in the promise that Jesus gave to His children. Roman Catholicism teaches that a Catholic can be damned to hell for mortal sins.

“Mortal sin is a radical possibility of human freedom, as is love itself. It results in the loss of charity and the privation of sanctifying grace, that is, of the state of grace. If it is not redeemed by repentance and God's forgiveness, it causes exclusion from Christ's kingdom and the eternal death of hell,” (Catechism of Catholic Church, CCC par. 1861). “To die in mortal sin without repenting and accepting God's merciful love means remaining separated from him forever by our own free choice. This state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed is called ‘hell’” (CCC, par. 1033).

In Catholic Theology, salvation, or the state of being in sanctifying grace (infused grace that makes a person holy and acceptable to God), can be entirely lost if a mortal sin is committed. Mortal sins are extremely serious sins such as lying, stealing, murder, adultery, and homosexuality. However, there is a difference of opinion within the Catholic Church on what is actually considered to be a mortal sin. This is because the Bible does not make any distinction between mortal (damning) and venial (non-damning) sins (Romans 3:23). Catholicism teaches that venial sins do not remove the sanctifying grace needed to earn one’s salvation and can be forgiven through Mass and lessen a person’s stay in Purgatory. However, a mortal sin results in the complete loss of all grace (the grace received by Baptism and sanctifying grace which helps a person to earn or merit their salvation). The person’s relationship with God is severed when a mortal sin is committed. Mortal sins damn a person. If the person dies in a state of mortal sin, he goes to hell and will never escape.

Catholic Church Catechism 980 then states, “This sacrament of Penance is necessary for salvation for those who have fallen after Baptism, just as Baptism is necessary for salvation for those who have not yet been reborn.”

Catholics often speak of “doing penance” for their sins. At the end of confession to a priest, the confessor is given certain things to do (such as certain prayers to pray,

fasting, almsgiving) that are a part of “doing penance.” Part of the purpose of this penance is to bring about one’s disposition away from sin and back toward God. But another purpose in Roman Catholic literature is that of paying or atoning for one’s sins and spending which results in less time in Purgatory. Penance restores a Catholic to God's grace and reconciles them to God: "The whole power of the sacrament of Penance consists in restoring us to God's grace and joining us with him in an intimate friendship." Reconciliation with God is thus the purpose and effect of this sacrament," (CCC 1468). "The spiritual effects of the sacrament of Penance are: reconciliation with God by which the penitent recovers grace" (CCC 1496).

When the Catholic becomes lost after committing a mortal sin, the person must once again receive God’s life and the sanctifying grace needed to begin the process of earning and maintaining one’s salvation through contrition (CCC 1452), penance (CCC 1468) and participation with the Mass (CCC 1416). For a Catholic, Confession, Penance, and Reconciliation means that they can be reinstated, become in good standing with the Catholic Church, and placed back on their salvation’s journey, when doing “works of penance.” These are instructions given by a priest, which pertain to doing certain good deeds that are destined to satisfy God’s wrath against the sinner.

Hugh Farrell was born in Denver, Colorado. He entered the Order of our Lady of Mount Carmel, commonly called the Discalced Carmelite Fathers. He was Ordained as a priest. He says this regarding penances. "These penances consist of standing with the arms outstretched to form a cross, kissing the sandaled feet of the monks, receiving a blow upon the face from the monks, and, at the end of the meal, lying prostrate before the entrance to the refectory so that the departing monks must step over one's body. These, and other penances, are supposed to gain one merit in heaven and increase one's 'spiritual bank account'" ("Far from Rome, Near to God: Testimonies of 50 Converted Roman Catholic Priests," p. 36).

Romans 4:6

“Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness (God’s righteousness is given to us through Jesus and God accepts us forever through Jesus) without works.”

Penance teaches a Catholic that salvation is by good works. Penance involves some type of good works that must be performed to completely satisfy God's wrath toward the sinner. A penance may be to do something nice for your enemy every day for a week. It may be to visit a nursing home or hospital one day a week for a month. It may be to donate time to a rescue mission or some other work. Sometimes a penance might simply be praying ten "Our Father's" or repeating ten "Hail Mary's, or by performing some other meaningless works to restore them to God.

Prayers, fastings, and alms are done by faithful practicing Catholics in order to pay their "debt of temporal punishment" (in Purgatory) for the sins they have committed. In other words, they satisfy God's wrath in some measure by their works of penance. Giving up certain pleasurable activities during "Lent" is a common practice among many Catholics which are actually viewed as works of penance to gain God's favor.

Here is what Roman Catholics say about Lent: "For many Catholics, Lent involves giving up coffee, chocolate or other guilty pleasures. Others forgo television or commit to attending daily Mass. The 40 days that stretch between Ash Wednesday and the onset of the Easter Triduum on Holy Thursday are set aside each year as a way for the faithful to draw closer to God through prayer, fasting, almsgiving and acts of penance."

For a Catholic, Confession, Penance, and Reconciliation means that they can be reinstated, become in good standing with the Catholic Church, and placed back on their salvation's journey, when doing "works of penance." These are instructions given by a priest, which pertain to doing certain good deeds that are destined to satisfy God's wrath against the sinner. This is because in Catholic Theology salvation, eternal life, and justification are not freely given to the sinner. A faithful Catholic must in some measure earn his salvation through good deeds in order to satisfy God's wrath against the sinner.

Pope John Paul II taught: "It would, therefore, be foolish, as well as presumptuous, to wish arbitrarily to disregard the means of grace and salvation which the Lord has provided and, in the specific case, to claim to receive forgiveness while doing without the sacrament which was instituted by Christ precisely for forgiveness" (On Reconciliation and Penance, No. 31).

It's very clear that Roman Catholicism teaches salvation by law-keeping and good works (penance). Catechism of the Catholic Church 1821 states: "In every circumstance, each one of us should hope, with the grace of God, to persevere 'to the end' and to obtain the joy of heaven, as God's eternal reward for the good works accomplished with the grace of Christ." Catholic Church Catechism 2036 says, "The specific precepts of the natural law, (Ten Commandments) because their observance, demanded by the creator, is necessary for salvation." CCC 2068 states, "so that all men may attain salvation through faith, Baptism and the observance of the Commandments." ". . . the Second Vatican Council confirms: 'The bishops, successors of the apostles, receive from the Lord . . . the mission of teaching all peoples, and of preaching the Gospel to every creature, so that all men may attain salvation through faith, Baptism and the observance of the Commandments'" (CCC, par. 2068).

Roman Catholicism teaches that Heaven is a reward for good works (CCC 1821) and that salvation is obtained through observing the commandments (CCC 2068; 2070, 2036). This is a clear rejection of the teaching of salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone without the meritorious works of man.

Here is what the Bible says about earning one's salvation.

Titus 3:5 authoritatively confirms:

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done (penance, praying the rosary, obedience, taking the sacraments), **but according to his mercy he saved us** (once and for all and forever!), **by the washing of regeneration** (the washing away of all our sins and our new birth), **and renewing of the Holy Ghost"** (the work of the Holy Spirit in our heart).

Ephesians 2:8-9 authoritatively declares:

"For by grace are ye saved (grace as revealed in the death of Christ) **through faith** (only faith!); **and that not of yourselves** (not anything you have done): **it is the gift of God** (salvation is free!); **Not of works** (not by the good deeds performed in your life), **lest any man should boast."**

Grace is God's undeserved, unearned, and unmerited favor being bestowed upon a believing sinner without any human works or good deeds. Grace is opposed to human works. In the Catholic system, grace is merited by needing to repeatedly

receive and observe the sacraments through the Catholic Church and live a good life filled with penitential works. But Roman Catholicism teaches otherwise!

- “The Lord himself affirms that Baptism is necessary for salvation,” (CCC 1257).
- “Basing itself on Scripture and Tradition, the Council teaches that the Church, a pilgrim now on earth, is necessary for salvation,” (CCC 846).
- “This sacrament of Penance is necessary for salvation for those who have fallen after Baptism, just as Baptism is necessary for salvation for those who have not yet been reborn,” (CCC 980).
- “The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are necessary for salvation, (CCC 1129).
- “Service of and witness to the faith are necessary for salvation,” (CCC 1816).
- “The authority of the Magisterium extends also to the specific precepts of the natural law [i.e., 10 Commandments, CCC 2070], because their observance, demanded by the Creator, is necessary for salvation,” (CCC 2036).
- "No one can MERIT the initial grace which is at the origin of conversion. Moved by the Holy Spirit, **we can MERIT for ourselves and for others all the graces needed to attain eternal life**, as well as necessary temporal goods," (CCC 2027). This sounds like a bunch of mumbo jumbo!

One ex-Catholic says: “The bondage of the Catholic church is something that is hard to explain, other than it is like going through life dragging a ball and chain with you. You are never good enough, God is angry and scary and not merciful and loving; you doubt your salvation at all times and fear drives you to baptize your infant children ‘so they will go to heaven’ - probably.”

Mother Teresa’s humanitarian efforts were respectable and commendable, but when it comes to entering Heaven, her sincere good works could never get her to Heaven. This is because we are all sinners and need God’s grace to save us.

Mother Teresa once wrote in a letter to a confidant:

“Where is my faith? Even deep down . . . there is nothing but emptiness and darkness. . . . If there be God—please forgive me.”

And, eight years later she wrote:

“Such deep longing for God . . . Repulsed, empty, no faith, no love, no zeal” (Mother Teresa: Come Be My Light, Doubleday, 2007).

According to the letters compiled by the Vatican, Mother Teresa’s doubts continued until her death. Friend, we don’t have to doubt our salvation when we are trusting in Christ alone to be our Savior. He can save us by His grace alone and give us hope!

Are you, as a Catholic, able to keep all the requirements that the Roman Catholic Church says are necessary for salvation? We both know you can't. This is why we need to look only to Jesus Christ for our salvation. Friend, you cannot try to save yourself and trust in Christ at the same time. This is impossible. The Bible says that you must place your faith in Christ ALONE to be your Savior.

Romans 5:8-9 once again teaches:

“But God commendeth (demonstrates) his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (bearing sin’s full penalty in our place). Much more then, being now justified (declared legally righteous in God’s presence) by his blood (Christ’s death alone), we shall be saved from wrath (God’s wrath) through him” (Jesus Christ).

Our salvation comes to us only through Christ – not through the observance of sacraments. In other words, we don’t receive the benefits of Christ death through the sacraments or our good deeds; we receive the blessing of salvation directly through Christ alone!

Now think of this. If you go to confession, this means you are not keeping God’s law (Ten Commandments) perfectly; otherwise, you would not need to go to confession. So, the very fact that you go to confession demonstrates you're not able to live up to the standard of God's requirement. But since the Roman Catholic Church says you are to keep the Law to be saved, please consider what happens when you don’t follow the God’s Law (Ten Commandments) perfectly. James 2:10 reveals, "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all." Galatians 3:10 then warns: “For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” God's standard is perfect. We are not (Romans 3:10-19, 23).

Romans 3:19 declares: “Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law (those who follow the moral law of God as the way of salvation): that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God” (we are all seen as transgressors and breakers of God’s perfect moral code). Therefore, since we have broken God’s moral law we are cursed or condemned to die the sinner’s death in hell. This is why we need to trust Jesus alone to be our Savior, so that we can be justified or acquitted of all our sins and declared righteous in God’s presence.

Since we all break God’s Law, Romans 3:28 reveals: “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (our good works of meritorious deeds). Romans 4:5 adds: “But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith (not works) is counted for righteousness.” Romans 4:3 concludes: “For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.” In other words, God gave to Abraham His own perfect righteousness and made him acceptable in God’s presence forever.

Justification is represented as a done deal! The Bible nowhere states that a person can be unjustified in God’s presence after God the Father has approved and accepted the righteousness of His son on behalf of the believing sinner. The Bible speaks only of eternal justification or the “righteousness unto eternal life” (Rom. 5:21). In fact, salvation from the eternal consequences of sin is an instantaneous and securing act of God (Rom. 6:23) coinciding with justification.

Catholic Theology teaches that a person’s state of sanctifying grace and earning their justification before God can be lost. In short, they can step outside the blessing of Catholic Church, sanctifying grace, and no longer be able to maintain their justification process before God. Therefore, they need to go to a Catholic priest to be reinstated back into a state of grace over and over again. However, the Bible teaches that we are eternally saved from God’s wrath and never must fear losing the salvation that Jesus gives to us (Titus 1:2).

Again, the Catholic Church Catechism says, “In every circumstance, each one of us should hope, with the grace of God, to persevere 'to the end' and to obtain the joy of heaven, as God's eternal reward for the good works accomplished with the grace of Christ” (paragraph 1821). Let me to pose a few questions to Roman Catholics.

Are you doing what is necessary to be saved? In Roman Catholicism that which is necessary for salvation includes the church (CCC 846), baptism (CCC 1257), penance (CCC 980), sacraments (CCC 1129), service and witness to the faith (CCC 1816), keeping the ten commandments (CCC 2036 and 2070), and detachment from riches ("Detachment from riches is necessary for entering the Kingdom of heaven" - CCC 2556).

Since it is possible for you to lose your salvation in Roman Catholicism, are you doing enough good works to keep yourself saved? How can you know this? What percentage of good works must you do in order to meet Gods' approval? Where is the line? How can you really know for sure that your sin is not a mortal sin before God that will damn you to hell? What if you don't receive forgiveness for this sin through a Roman Catholic priest? Won't you spend eternity in hell? How can you ever be sure that you won't go to hell?

Joseph Tremblay was born in Quebec, Canada, 1924. He was ordained a priest in Rome, Italy and was sent to Bolivia, Chile where he served for 13 years "as a missionary in the congregation of the Oblate Fathers of Mary Immaculate." He wrote this after being saved by Jesus Christ alone. "My theology has taught me that salvation is by works and sacrifices . . . my theology gives me no assurance of salvation; the Bible offers me that assurance . . . I had been trying to save myself on my works . . . I was stifled in a setting in which I was pushed to do good works to merit my salvation." ("Far from Rome, Near to God: Testimonies of 50 Converted Roman Catholic Priests," pp. 9, 11-12)

Catholic Questions: Jesus promised to give us eternal life upon simple faith in Him alone to be our Savior (John 3:15-16; 6:47). How can you lose something that is eternal? Why don't you believe in the promise of Jesus? If your salvation is dependent upon good works how many good works are enough? How many works of penance are enough? What percentage of good deeds must you perform in order for God to be satisfied with you? Is it 30, 40, 50, 75 or 99.9% It's wonderful to realize that salvation and eternal life through Jesus Christ is a free gift to receive (Rom. 6:23). It has nothing to do with our human works ("not by works of righteousness which we have done" – Titus 3:5).

Bottom Line: The fear of losing one's salvation, coupled with the ongoing works of penance, good works, and following all the sacraments to maintain a person's salvation, keeps Catholics from trusting in Christ ALONE - His saving sacrifice and freely imparted righteousness.

6. Catholic salvation is viewed as eating, confessing to priests, and praying to Mary.

Catholic salvation is constantly experienced and maintained by eating the sacrifice of Jesus (Mass), confessing mortal sins to a fallible priest, instead of trusting in the infallible Christ alone for eternal forgiveness before God. Catholic Salvation is also viewed as praying to Mary who also provides the Catholic with grace and mercy through her intercession before God. This emphatically denies what Scripture teaches regarding salvation coming ONLY through Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12; 1 Tim. 2:5).

MASS: The Roman Catholic is Mass a pagan corruption of the Lord's Table that He instituted.

1 Corinthians 11:24-25 says:

“And when he had given thanks, he brake *it*, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in **remembrance** of me (not in re-sacrificing me). After the same manner also *he took* the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in **remembrance** of me” (not in re-sacrificing me).

It's very clear that Jesus was not teaching that His literal body would appear in the elements of the Lord's Table. Jesus was not teaching a literal reenactment or theater of His death in any way. If this were the case, Jesus would have needed to begin tearing Himself apart and feeding His flesh and blood to His disciples. Jesus was simply presenting a memorial supper by which His followers could use to remember His death. The supper Jesus instituted was not a Mass but a memorial. It was a time of remembrance – not a re-sacrifice. It was never intended to be anything else but a memorial of His passionate death on the sinner's behalf.

However, when the Catholic priest consecrates the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper, Catholics believe the entire substance of the bread and wine is changed into the literal body and blood of Christ and becomes a sacrament for their forgiveness. The whole idea of the Mass is that when the priest consecrates the wine and the bread, they immediately and miraculously become the real blood and the real body of Jesus Christ. This teaching is called "Transubstantiation (Latin = “change in substance”). It has been referred to as "the unbloody renewal of the

Sacrifice of Christ." Transubstantiation is the act of changing the substances of bread and wine into the substances of the actual Body and Blood of Christ. For Catholics, the presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist isn't just symbolic, it's real. "And since in this divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the Mass, the same Christ who offered himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross is contained and is offered in an unbloody manner," (CCC, 1367).

The Council of Trent makes this claim: "If any one denieth, that, in the sacrament of the most holy Eucharist, 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; but saith that He is only therein as in a sign, or in figure, or virtue; let him be anathema" (damned to hell – Canon 1).

Canon number four: "If anyone says that by the sacrifice of the Mass, a blasphemy is cast upon the most holy sacrifice of Christ consummated on the cross, let him be anathema" (damned to hell). In other words, if anyone says that this repeated sacrifice of the Mass blasphemes the original sacrifice of Christ, then they are blaspheming and will be damned to hell. This means that those who believe that Christ said His sacrifice was finished (John 19:30) and those who place faith in that sacrifice alone for their salvation, will be damned to hell!

Canon number five gives more warnings: "If anyone says that it is a deception to celebrate masses in honor of the saints, and in order to obtain their intercession with God, let him be anathema" (damned to hell). Masses are offered to dead saints to get dead saints to intercede for a Roman Catholic's salvation, both living and dead Catholics. If a person does not believe in this teaching, they will be damned to hell. And then just to make sure you can't escape, "If anyone says that the canon of the Mass contains errors, let him be anathema" (damned to hell).

The Catholic church tries to get you damned to hell in every possible way. There is no way out. But this is exactly why Roman Catholics are bound to this system. It is so full of damnation, there is no way out. Well, yes, there is a way out. Jesus Christ is the way out and the way to Heaven (John 14:6).

Catholic Catechism 1323 states: "At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Savior instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages until he should

come again, and so to entrust to his beloved Spouse, the Church ..." "The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice," (CCC, 1367). "The Eucharist is thus a sacrifice because it represents (makes present) the sacrifice of the cross" (CCC, 1366).

Roman Catholics are quick to say that the Eucharist is not a re-sacrifice of Christ. They will tell you that Christ was offered once for all and that the Mass is not a re-sacrifice but a "re-presentation" of the sacrifice. It is not a separated sacrifice, but it is the same sacrifice of the cross continually being offered again, and again, and again, and again, and again. My goal in this study is not to misrepresent Roman Catholic Theology, but how can the Mass not be a re-sacrifice of Christ when the Mass is called a divine sacrifice (CCC, 1068) that is done over and over again? We are told that "the sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice" (CCC, 1367), that it is an unbloody offering that is propitiatory (CCC, 1367), that it can make reparation of sins (CCC, 1414), and is to be considered a true and proper sacrifice (The Catholic Encyclopedia, topic: "Sacrifice of the Mass").

We must conclude from Catholic writings that the Mass is intended to be a sacrifice that occurs over and over again. If this sacrifice is said to be propitiatory (something that provides forgiveness before God), then logically it must be a re-sacrifice of Christ. If it is not a re-sacrifice of Christ, then it could not provide forgiveness, since only the sacrifice of Christ can provide forgiveness. Also, if it is not a re-sacrifice, then how can it be called a sacrifice of Christ? The canons and catechisms all speak of a re-sacrifice of Christ. This is the true Catholic position.

Catholic Church Catechism 1460 also claims that Christ "expiated our sins once for all" but then turns a "once and for all" sacrifice into a re-sacrifice of Christ in the Mass, a sacrifice that can only remove sins gradually as people attend Mass throughout their entire lifetime. There is no "one and for all" in any of this. This is a giant smokescreen found in Catholic teaching. Christ does not die for Catholics once and for all, remove sin once and for all, save them once and for all, justify them once and for all, and give them eternal life once and for all. Don't believe their lies.

The Bible says that after Christ's death upon Calvary's cross "**there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins**" (Heb. 10:26). Period. At the very heart of the Mass is a denial of the singular sacrifice of Christ on the cross. The Mass is a repeated offer of Christ by an illegitimate priesthood. You wonder why you always see a crucifix

and not an empty cross? John O'Brien, A Catholic priest tells us why: "The priest brings Christ down from heaven and renders Him present on our altar as the eternal victim for the sins of man, not once but a thousand times" ("The Faith of Millions: The Credentials of the Catholic Religion"). There you have it. Christ can never come down off the cross for Roman Catholics because of the portrayal of His continual sacrifice. This portrayal of Christ is not the true Christ. It is actually a false Christ ("**another Jesus**" – 2 Cor. 11:4) in spite of what Rome teaches. The Jesus of Biblical revelation is not on the cross. He is risen again and is interceding in Heaven for those who embrace Him as their Savior (Heb. 7:25).

The chief purpose of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is to apply the merits and graces of Christ's sacrifice on Calvary to the Catholic and provide repeated forgiveness for ordinary sins (venial sins which are not soul damming) as they continue on their journey to Heaven. Catholics need to be forgiven of venial sins in order to be released from Purgatory. Therefore, a Catholic's forgiveness before God and *salvation from Purgatory* is obtained through the Mass. This is true regarding both living and dead Catholics.

To all who deny the salvation nature of the Mass, Trent pronounces another anathema: "If any one saith, that the sacrifice of the mass is only a sacrifice of praise and of thanksgiving; or, that it is a bare commemoration of the sacrifice consummated on the cross, but not a propitiatory sacrifice; or, that it profits him only who receives; and that it ought not to be offered for the living and the dead for sins, pains, satisfactions, and other necessities; let him be anathema." (damned to hell - Trent: On the Sacrifice of the Mass: Canon 3);

Catholic Church Catechism 1608 adds: "For it is in the liturgy, especially in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, that "the work of our redemption is accomplished." Catholics can only speak of repeated redemption through a repeated sacrifice of Christ that can never release sinners from all of their sins forever, but the Bible speaks of an "**eternal redemption**" (Heb. 9:12) that can never be repeated or lost. The Bible declares that "Christ **hath redeemed us** from the curse of the law" (Gal. 3:13). "In whom we have **redemption** through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7). "In whom **we have redemption** through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:14). We have been forgiven of all our sins forever and released or set free from God's wrath and judgment forever "for thou wast slain, and **hast redeemed us to God** by thy blood" (one-and-

for-all and forever!). Biblical redemption is not repeated in the Mass but is a done deal – a finished transaction!

In Catholic Theology, a person cannot be set free from his sins and escape Purgatory without receiving repeated forgiveness through a repeated sacrifice of Christ in the Mass. For this reason, Mass is viewed as part of the Catholic's salvation. Once again, the forgiveness found through the Mass (a recreation of Christ's sacrifice) is necessary not only for the living but the dead in Purgatory. "As sacrifice, the Eucharist is also offered in reparation for the sins of the living and the dead," (CCC, 1414). Both the living and dead saints need repeated redemption and forgiveness and this is allegedly provided through the re-sacrifice of Christ. It is needed to provide forgiveness and lesson a Catholic's stay in Purgatory. During Mass, prayers are offered to God seeking forgiveness, not only for a person who is still alive, but also for the sins of others who are already dead and in Purgatory. Prayers are offered up for those in Purgatory so they might be forgiven of their sins and get out Purgatory sooner than later.

In addition, the Catholic Church Catechism 1416 says that Mass is necessary to keep a person from falling into serious sins that might damn them to hell. "Communion with the Body and Blood of Christ increases the communicant's union with the Lord, forgives his venial sins, and preserves him from grave sins..."

Think of this. Roman Catholic Theology actually teaches that a person can attend a thousand Masses during his lifetime, and still leave this life not fully purified, and then go into Purgatory and have another thousand Masses read in their behalf, and still not be fully purified. What a horrible trap. This is not salvation! It is mystical mumbo-jumbo right out of the pit of hell which is designed to keep people trapped and away from true salvation in Jesus Christ alone (John 14:6).

In summary, Catholics view Christ's death as a *continuing sacrifice* providing a *continual work of redemption* for the sins that Catholics commit throughout the course of their entire lifetime. As a result, there is need for constant and repetitive forgiveness through the recreation of Christ's sacrifice. The Mass is a heretical teaching that is propagated by Romanism since the Bible clearly teaches Christ died for sin only once (1 Pet. 3:18) and finished His sacrifice on the cross (John 19:30). Furthermore, the Bible does not mention the work of popes or priests in New

Testament Christianity (Eph. 2:20; 4:11-12; Cor. 12:28), recreating Christ's sacrifice in a religious ceremony, in order to provide forgiveness for people.

According to Catholic teaching, venial Sins (lesser, non-mortal sins that will not condemn you to Hell) do not have to be confessed to a priest but can be forgiven through Mass. However, it is a good idea to confess them, since any venial sins will require extra time in Purgatory where a person is finally cleansed of all their sins by the good works of others on their behalf.

It's taught in Catholic Theology that the Mass does not take away from Christ's original death but is simply the process of applying Christ's death to the faithful, who need repeated forgiveness, as they make their way through life, applying sanctifying grace to their lives in order to spend less time in Purgatory. But this conclusion is totally false and misleading since Christ's one-time sacrifice on the cross (not in the Mass) is sufficient to provide complete forgiveness for sins forever and a justified position before God (Rom. 5:9). Of course, the reoffering of Christ's sacrifice in a bloodless manner is total apostasy.

Hebrews 9:26

"For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now **once** in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

Hebrews 10:12

"But this man, after he had offered **one sacrifice for sins for ever**, sat down on the right hand of God."

Hebrews 10:14

"For by **one offering** he hath perfected for ever (provided full and complete forgiveness before God) them that are sanctified."

1 Peter 3:18 also declares:

"For Christ also hath **once** suffered for sins (paid the dreadful penalty or punishment for our sins), the just (Jesus) for the unjust (sinners), that he might bring us to God (provide us with acceptance in the very throne room of God), being put to death in the flesh (the cross), but quickened by the Spirit" (the resurrection).

Hebrews 9:12

“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in **once** into the holy place (God’s presence), having obtained (past tense) eternal redemption for us” (setting us free by releasing us from all of our sins forever and appeasing God’s wrath or anger against us).

Pope John Paul II disagrees with the Bible and does not believe Christ’s work is actually finished. He writes, “The Church (Catholic Church) is the instrument of man’s salvation. It both contains and continually draws upon the mystery of Christ’s redemptive sacrifice. Through the shedding of His own blood, Jesus Christ constantly enters into God’s sanctuary thus obtaining eternal redemption.”

The Bible is not teaching that Christ is constantly or continually entering Heaven. The word “entered” in Hebrews 9:12 is in the aorist tense which means a completed act. It is not a present tense action as the pope says. The pope says “constantly” but the Bible says “**once**” (once for all!) Christ paid the fine for our judgment (Heb. 9:12). The pope also changes “having obtained eternal redemption” (a past event) so that it reads “thus obtaining eternal redemption” which is an attempt to teach the perpetual or ongoing sacrifice of Christ in the Mass. Jesus Christ is not obtaining redemption for us today; He already obtained it when He died upon the cross! Our eternal redemption or release from sin’s penalty occurred through the one-time sacrifice of Christ upon the cross. Blessed noonday truth!

“Free from the law, O happy condition,
Jesus hath bled, and there is remission;
Cursed by the law and bruised by the fall,
Grace hath redeemed us once for all.

Now we are free, there's no condemnation,
Jesus provides a perfect salvation;
"Come unto Me," O hear His sweet call,
Come, and He saves us once for all. [Chorus]

Once for all, O sinner, receive it,
Once for all, O friend, now believe it;
Cling to the cross, the burden will fall,
Christ hath redeemed us once for all.”

Most Catholics are taught that Jesus was teaching the Mass in John 6:53-54 where He mentions about eating his flesh and drinking His blood. John 6:53-54, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." It's interesting that Jesus did not mention about the wine. This alone would confirm that Jesus was not speaking about the Mass or literally recreating His blood. When Jesus instituted this supper, he had not yet been crucified. How then could this supper be his crucified body and blood? If, as the Roman Catholic Church teaches, that the supper's wine is the literal blood of Christ, then how is that not violating the Old Testament law against drinking the blood of any flesh (Lev. 17:14)? How is it possible for this supper to be the actual body and blood of Christ if, by definition, a human body is only in one place at one time as Jesus' body was in the incarnation (1 Tim. 2:5; Col. 2:9).

What was Jesus really talking about in John 6? Jesus had just fed the people the loaves and the fishes. He uses the physical feeding of these people to teach a spiritual lesson about Himself. Although some thought Jesus was speaking of His physical flesh (John 6:52) their interpretation and understanding of what Jesus was saying was all wrong, as in other cases (John 3:4; 4:15, 6:32-34). Jesus sometimes taught spiritual lessons through using physical illustrations. The eating of His body and drinking of His blood is another example of this type of teaching.

It's very clear that Jesus was not referencing the doctrine of the Mass by these statements. He was not teaching cannibalism! Jesus was using the terms of eating and drinking as metaphors. In other words, He was comparing eating and drinking to the way a person is saved. Just as one must *consume* or partake of physical food to sustain physical life, so one must spiritually *appropriate* Christ through believing on Him in order to have spiritual and eternal life. Salvation and eternal life have nothing to do with physical eating but with the spiritual appropriation of Christ to one's life through faith in Him. Jesus did not teach cannibalism! Jesus used the figurative expressions of eating and drinking in relationship to Himself to convey that people need to appropriate the salvation that He provides for them through faith in Him alone.

John 6:47 clearly explains how one eats Christ's flesh or appropriates Christ and the salvation He provided for them to their lives: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." This is Jesus' own interpretation of His words.

For the Roman Catholic, one is saved by eating, but true salvation comes into a person's life through believing in Christ alone to be one's Savior, or appropriating Christ to one's life, through faith in His finished work on the cross (John 1:12).

Hebrews 10:29

"Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"

The writer of the Book of Hebrews reminds us that the hottest place in hell belongs to those who have known about the cross but at the same time have trampled it under their feet in unbelief. Many Catholics exhibit unbelief toward the cross of Christ by rejecting the sufficiency of Christ's death to take away their sins forever. They refuse to believe that His one sacrifice for sin can give them permanent forgiveness and justification in God's presence forever. As a result, many Catholics refuse to embrace Christ alone as their Savior. Knowing about the cross, while at the same time rejecting the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice to save them forever, will result in more severe, eternal judgment.

As a Catholic, where do you look for your salvation? To what sacrifice or Mass? The one you had today? Yesterday? The one you'll have down the road? No wonder in Roman Catholicism there's no such thing as assurance of salvation. How would you ever know? This is because the Mass is not recreated to take away all of your sins and bring you into a justified position before God. Only Christ's one sacrifice can do this.

Romans 5:9

"Much more then, being now justified by his blood (declared legally righteous in God's presence forever through Christ's one sacrifice for sin), we shall be saved from wrath (saved from hell forever) through him (Jesus Christ alone).

I also want you to think about something else if you're a Catholic. You have tens of thousands, millions upon millions of sacrifices of Christ being made by priests all over the world, and your Catholic dogma teaches that it is the same Christ, the real Christ, the actual Christ (not just a spiritual Christ) but the real Christ - Body, blood, spirit and divinity. Did you ever ask yourself, "How can this be? How can Christ be

literally sacrificed millions of times on Catholic altars? The fact of the matter, it can't be happening. "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins" (Hebrews 10:26).

What about somebody who says, "Well I think I'm a Christian but I like going to the Catholic Church. I feel at home there. And they might ask, "Should I leave?" Listen to what 1 Corinthians 10:21 says, "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils." In other words, if you try and incorporate paganism and pagan practices, such as turning the Lord's Table into a Mass (recreating His sacrifice) then you are actually sitting down as the table of demons because demons are behind the false and pagan practice of the Mass. In other words, it would be an act of treachery and disloyalty to the Lord Jesus to profess adherence or allegiance to His finished work on the cross, on the one hand, and then to go and have fellowship with those who sacrifice to demons. It would be morally improper and utterly wrong. Trying to mix the Lord's Table with idolatrous and pagan practices is a travesty or mockery of Christ's death. This is one good reason why a Catholic that is truly saved should leave the Catholic Church.

Make your choice. But remember that at the end of each delivery in the Mass, the person who receives the Host is required to say one thing to the priest, "Amen...amen," affirming the truth of having received Christ through His recreated sacrifice. This is something that should be impossible for a true Christian to do. When properly understanding the teaching and meaning of the Mass, no genuine believer in Jesus Christ should remain in the Catholic Church. And if you are still lingering with the Roman Catholic system, you should come out from this apostasy and separate from it based upon the clear command of Scripture (2 Corinthians 6:14-17).

MAKING CONFESSION TO PRIESTS: The following quotes are taken from the book by Richard Bennet, "Far from Rome, Near to God: Testimonies of 50 Converted Roman Catholic Priests" (Carlisle, The Banner of Truth Trust, 1997). They are very interesting and valuable since they give an insight to Catholicism from those who were priests in the Catholic Church and then left it to find salvation in Jesus.

Henry Gregory Adams was born in Saskatchewan, Canada. He entered the Basilian Order of monks and adopted the monastic name of "Saint Hilarion the Great." He was ordained as a priest and served five parishes in the Lemont, Alberta area.

Sacraments. He writes: "The monastic life and the sacraments prescribed by the Roman Catholic Church **did not help me to come to know Christ personally and find salvation . . . I realized that the man-made sacraments of my church and my good works were in vain for salvation.** They lead to a false security." (p. 3)

Joseph Tremblay was born in Quebec, Canada, 1924. He was ordained a priest in Rome, Italy and was sent to Bolivia, Chile where he served for 13 years "as a missionary in the congregation of the Oblate Fathers of Mary Immaculate." He writes: "**My theology has taught me that salvation is by works and sacrifices . . . my theology gives me no assurance of salvation;** the Bible offers me that assurance . . . I had been trying to save myself on my works . . . I was stifled in a setting in which I was pushed to do good works to merit my salvation." (pp. 9, 11-12)

Bartholomew F. Brewer applied to the Discalced Carmelites, a strict monastic order. He received training of "four years of high school seminary, two years in the novitiate, three years of philosophy, and four years of theology (the last after ordination)." He was ordained to the Roman Catholic priesthood at the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception of Mary in Washington, D.C. He eventually served as a diocesan priest in San Diego, California and entered the Navy as a Roman Catholic chaplain. He began questioning Rome's Beliefs, "At first I did not understand, but gradually I observed a wonderful change in mother. Her influence helped me realize the importance of the Bible in determining what we believe. We often discussed subjects such as the primacy of Peter, papal infallibility, the priesthood, infant baptism, confession, the mass, purgatory, the Immaculate Conception of Mary, and the bodily assumption of Mary into heaven. **In time I realized that not only are these beliefs not in the Bible, they are actually contrary to the clear teaching of Scripture**" (pp. 21-22).

He also rejected the Catholic teaching of salvation by works. He left the Roman Catholic Church, got married and through conversations with his wife and other Christians, "**I finally understood that I had been relying on my own righteousness and religious efforts and not upon the completed and sufficient sacrifice of Jesus Christ.** The Roman Catholic religion had never taught me that our own righteousness is fleshly and not acceptable to God, nor that we need to trust in his righteousness alone . . . **during all those years of monastic life I had relied on the sacraments of Rome to give me grace, to save me.**" (p. 25)

There are many more stories and testimonies of priests who saw the truth, were saved, and left the Catholic Church. They knew that the Sacrament of Confession and Penance was not according to what the Bible teaches.

Here is the testimony of a former Catholic woman who was saved:

“While we were looking up the Scriptures, we came across one in my Catholic Bible (Douay Rheims Catholic Bible) I came across Luke 13:3 “Unless you do penance, you shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven. They all were quite shocked and said, "That's not what that verse says at all! It says, 'Unless you REPENT, you shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven'!!" "Penance" is a Catholic term which means going to confession and then doing what the priest tells you to do to "make up for" your sins. "Repent", on the other hand, is an internal change that happens when we turn away from our sins and turn back to God—a totally different meaning! Creg was so upset that my Bible had such untruths that he gave me his own personal Bible and told me to read it! And I did!” Later this woman was saved by understanding that salvation was not promised to her through the good works of penance.

The sacrament or penance and reconciliation is designed to secure forgiveness for those mortal sins, the sins that bring spiritual death to God’s grace and damn a person to hell, which are committed after baptism. These are sins such as pride, envy, lust, anger, gluttony, greed, slothfulness (laziness concerning prayer and spiritual life), which will surely condemn a person to hell if not forgiven by a priest. Venial Sins (lesser, non-mortal sins that will not condemn you to Hell) do not have to be confessed in Confession. However, it is a good idea to confess them, since any venial sins will require extra time in Purgatory.

Look how one Catholic writer answers this important question:

“Is the Catholic who confesses his sins to a priest any better off than the non-Catholic who confesses directly to God? Yes. First, he seeks forgiveness the way Christ intended. It the ordinary way to have our sins forgiven. Second, by confessing to a priest, the Catholic learns a lesson in humility, which is avoided when one confesses only through private prayer. Third, the Catholic receives sacramental graces the non-Catholic doesn’t get; through the sacrament of penance sins are forgiven and graces are obtained. We may not be positive that we have “perfect” contrition without confession. Fourth, the Catholic is assured that his sins are forgiven; he does not have to rely on a subjective ‘feeling.’ We have certainty that

our sins our wiped away, by hearing the words of absolution. Lastly, the Catholic can also obtain sound advice on avoiding sin in the future.”

One Catholic writer asks this question. “Can You Go Straight to God? Yes and no. We are told, as we see clearly in Scripture above, that we are to confess our sins to one another. Thus, the ordinary way we have our grave sins forgiven is through the Sacrament of Confession. Thus, this is the way that Christ has established as the ordinary way to forgive grave (i.e. mortal) sins. But, there are extreme circumstances where God may forgive grave sins outside of Confession if the person has perfect contrition (sorrow) for their sins, but these are extraordinary.”

Then another question is asked. “Can only Catholics have their sins forgiven? The simple answer is no. While confession is the ordinary way to have your sins forgiven, it is not the only way. The Catechism says: ‘When it arises from a love by which God is loved above all else, contrition is called “perfect” (contrition of charity). Such contrition remits venial sins; it also obtains forgiveness of mortal sins if it includes the firm resolution to have recourse to sacramental confession as soon as possible’ (CCC 1452).”

It’s very difficult for Catholics to get passed Confession. Confession before priests is seen to be necessary for a person to be sure that their sins are forgiven before God. Roman Catholicism seeks to keep Catholics bound to priests for the confession of their moral sins and the assurance that these sins are forgiven.

Hebrews 10:21-22 gives a completely different priestly story:

“And having an high priest (Jesus Christ) over the house of God (the universal Church of all people who place faith alone in Christ for salvation); Let us draw near (a blood-bought privilege to enter God’s presence through prayer) with a true heart (sincerity) in full assurance of faith (the confidence that God has accepted us through Jesus Christ and having the conscious enjoyment of freedom from all guilt, enjoying the complete provision of forgiveness and perfect righteousness provided for us through Jesus Christ, and with the firm conviction that we shall have a gracious reception in God’s presence!), having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water” (a metaphorical way of expressing the New Covenant blessings of spiritual cleansing from all of our sins, knowing that all of our sins are forgiven forever through Jesus Christ’s sacrifice on

our behalf – Ezek. 36:25 – “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you”).

This is what the Bible teaches regarding Christ’s priestly work on our behalf. However, in Penance, the sinner is expected to show grief or contrition for his specific sin, confess it to a priest, and then do works of satisfaction prescribed by the priest to gain God’s favor. Penance actually helps Catholics atone for the mortal or death sins they’ve committed, satisfy God’s wrath against them, and be reconciled to the Catholic Church. The sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation is a sacrament in which the priest, as the agent of God, forgives sins committed after Baptism, when the sinner is very sorry for them, sincerely confesses them, and is willing to make satisfaction for them. The sacrament of confession and Penance, when you do it every week, gives the Catholic the opportunity to release himself from the burden of his sins. A Catholic can confess all of his sins to a priest but they must declare their mortal sins first and be willing to do some penance (good work) which is part of the process of being released from the debt of their sin.

Here is how it works. After confessing the sin, the priest gives you a penance or some specific good work for you to perform. A penance may be to do something nice for your enemy every day for a week. It may be to visit a nursing home or hospital one day a week for a month. It may be to donate time to a rescue mission or some other work. However, to receive forgiveness and satisfaction before God one must right the wrong or pay the price for the sin that has been committed. They must do some form of good works to satisfy God’s wrath against them. Once again, sometimes a penance might simply be praying ten “Our Father’s” or repeating ten “Hail Mary’s, or by performing some other meaningless works to restore them to God.

Catholic Church Catechism 980 states: “It is through the sacrament of Penance that the baptized can be reconciled with God and with the Church...**This sacrament of Penance is necessary for salvation** for those who have fallen after Baptism, just as Baptism is necessary for salvation for those who have not yet been reborn.” So confession to a priest and the works of penance are a packaged deal which is necessary to find forgiveness before God, appease God’s anger against them, and place a Catholic back on their salvation journey. In fact, even after the sin is forgiven or remitted, Catholics are encouraged to engage in works of penance such as prayers, fastings and alms, and other good works in order to pay their "debt of

temporal punishment" for the sins they have committed. Giving up pleasurable activities during "Lent" is a common practice among many Catholics which is done for this reason. They want to perform certain meritorious deeds to satisfy God's disfavor against them and lessen their stay in Purgatory.

Catholic Church Catechism 1472, " . . . On the other hand every sin, even venial, entails an unhealthy attachment to creatures, which must be purified either here on earth, or after death in the state called Purgatory. This purification frees one from what is called the "temporal punishment" of sin . . . " (temporary punishment in Purgatory)

The priest's forgiveness and acts of penance which are connected with mortal sins (sins that damn a person to hell) result in a person's reconciliation to the Catholic Church and reinstating the Catholic in the mode of sanctifying grace (using God's grace to earn their salvation), so they can continue on their never-ending journey of meriting justification before God and eternal life.

The penitential conditions prescribe by the priest must be met for one to receive absolution (the act of releasing a Catholic from their sin and sin's guilt before God through the means of a priest and penance). Absolution is accomplished through the authority of the priest who assigns penance, a certain amount of works that need to be performed by the sinner, by which forgiveness is eventually achieved. The priest, as a minister of Christ, has the power to "retain" or "remit" sins. The priest offers forgiveness by saying a prayer that calls on God to give you absolution and peace. In doing this the priest has the power to forgive sins through his intercessory prayer to God. However, the Bible states that only God can forgive sin (Matt. 9:5-6; Luke 5:21). In fact, the Bible clearly reveals that as a Christian we are to confess our sins directly to God.

1 John 1:9

"If we confess our sins, he (God the heavenly Father) is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

This is a confession that is related to the Christian life (somebody who is already saved and justified before God). It is not a confession to receive, maintain, or regain salvation but to restore fellowship and communion with God as the context suggests (1 John 1:7). It's a confession and forgiveness within the Christian life that

is relates to the matter of sanctification – not salvation. Also, within the Christian life, there is sometimes a need to confess our sins to other Christians that we have wronged in hope of restoration and fellowship with them (James 5:16). However, when it comes to being justified before God we are called upon to believe on Jesus Christ (Acts 16:31) – not confess our sins. The Bible never links salvation and forensic (legal) forgiveness before God’s throne to the repeated confession of all the known sins in a person’s life. At the moment a person believes on Jesus Christ to be his Savior that person is forgiven of all his sins (past, present, and future) and is forever justified (declared legally righteous) in God’s presence through Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:21).

Instead of confessing our sins, we are called upon to REPENT of our sins in order to be saved, since God “commandeth all men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30). This simply means to have a change of mind about several things 1) that we are sinners before God’s presence 2) that we cannot save ourselves 3) that we want to be freed from sin’s power, and 4) that Jesus is the only way to Heaven. Luke 24:47 states that “repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

We must also BELIEVE on Jesus Christ alone for salvation, forgiveness, and justification in God’s presence (“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved” – Acts 16:31). In short, repentance paves the way for a person to place their faith in Jesus Christ alone for salvation. Repentance and faith occur simultaneously in that miracle of a moment, when a person is transferred from spiritual death unto spiritual life (John 5:24; Eph. 2:1-2). Acts 20:21 brings both repentance and faith together when it declares that a person wanting to be saved must express “repentance toward our God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” It’s interesting that the word “confession” never appears in the conversion vocabulary or how a person is converted to Christ and saved.

But the Catholic Church teaches that we need to find forgiveness and salvation through confessing to Roman Catholic priests: “If the disciples believed that Christ instituted the power to sacramentally forgive sins in his stead, we would expect the apostles’ successors—the bishops—and Christians of later years to act as though such power was legitimately and habitually exercised. If, on the other hand, the sacramental forgiveness of sins was what Fundamentalists term it, an “invention,” and if it was something foisted upon the young Church by ecclesiastical or political

leaders, we'd expect to find records of protest. In fact, in early Christian writings we find no sign of protests concerning sacramental forgiveness of sins. Quite the contrary. We find confessing to a priest was accepted as part of the original deposit of faith handed down from the apostles."

Of course, the Bible teaches that in relation to our salvation, all of our sins have already been declared forgiven forever through the cleansing of Christ's death on Calvary's cross ("ye are washed" - 1 Cor. 6.:11 and "washed us from our sins in his own blood" - Revelation 1:5). This is all the authority we need! We do not need any earthly priest declaring our sins to be forgiven. If we have placed faith alone in Jesus Christ, we are already forgiven of all our sins before the throne of God ("forgiven you all trespasses" – Col. 2:13).

Catholics claim that John 20:22 teaches that the apostles could actually forgive the sins of others and that the priests are the successors of the apostles possessing this authority to forgive sins. This is coined as apostolic succession. Romanism teaches that the apostles could actually forgive sins and this authority was passed down to the priests in the Roman Catholic Church.

Catholic Church Catechism 1444 states: **"In imparting to his apostles his own power to forgive sins** the Lord also gives them the authority to reconcile sinners with the Church. This ecclesial dimension of their task is expressed most notably in Christ's solemn words to Simon Peter: 'I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. The office of binding and loosing which was given to Peter was also assigned to the college of the apostles united to its head."

John 20:22 states: "Whose soever sins ye remit (forgive), they are remitted (forgiven) unto them; *and* whose soever *sins* ye retain (do not forgive), they are retained (not forgiven)." What Jesus was teaching in this verse is not difficult to understand. As the disciples went forth they could announce the terms upon which people could be forgiven. Their terms were that forgiveness was only found through Jesus Christ. (the Messiah). If people would place their faith in Jesus Christ to forgive their sins, then the apostles could officially announce and declare the people's sins forgiven. However, if they refuse to repent of their sins and place faith in the Messiah, they would official declare that a person's sins cannot be forgiven.

The declaration of sins forgiven is an announcement – not a prerogative, right, power, or authority to actually forgive sins. Jesus never promised that He would have successors on earth that would follow in His footsteps and be able to actually forgive the sins of the people like He did (Luke 7:48). The apostles could not do this and neither can Roman Catholic priests. It is blasphemy to conclude that man can forgive sin in the place of God Almighty.

But the Catholic Catechism 987 states: "In the forgiveness of sins, both priests and sacraments are instruments which our Lord Jesus Christ, the only author and liberal giver of salvation, wills to use in order to efface our sins and give us the grace of justification" (Roman Catechism, I, 11, 6). "Penance is a sacrament of the New Law instituted by Christ in which forgiveness of sins committed after baptism is granted through the priest's absolution to those who with true sorrow confess their sins and promise to satisfy for the same," (The Catholic Encyclopedia, Penance). "The absolution given by the priest to a penitent who confesses his sins with the proper dispositions remits both the guilt and the eternal punishment (of mortal sin)," (Catholic Encyclopedia, Penance).

According to the Catholic catechisms, the priests do not simply declare someone forgiven, they are used as the necessary "agents" of God which are given to the Catholic Church to erase sins and grant salvation. Catholic Church Catechism 1441 states: "**Only God forgives sins.** Since he is the Son of God, Jesus says of himself, 'The Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins' and exercises this divine power: 'Your sins are forgiven.' Further, by virtue of his divine authority he gives this power to men to exercise in his name."

All of this is doubletalk. Catholic theologians will tell you that only God forgives sins but then immediately say that a priest can forgive sins acting on God's behalf. You can't have it both ways – only God forgiving sins and also priests forgiving sins.

CCC 984: "The Creed links 'the forgiveness of sins' with its profession of faith in the Holy Spirit, for the risen Christ entrusted to the apostles **the power to forgive sins** when he gave them the Holy Spirit." CCC 986: "By Christ's will, the Church possesses **the power to forgive the sins of the baptized** and exercises it through bishops and priests normally in the sacrament of Penance." "**Only God forgives sins.** Since he is the Son of God, Jesus says of himself, 'The **Son of man has authority on earth to**

forgive sins' and exercises this divine power: 'Your sins are forgiven.' Further, by virtue of his divine authority **he gives this power to men to exercise in his name.**" What is the power He gives to priests? It is the power to forgive sins – not merely declare them to be forgiven. There is no doubt about it. The official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church is that priests have the power to actually forgive the sins of people. It is mind-boggling arrogance to claim that divine judicial power is given to sinful men to forgive sins. This is total blasphemy.

Catholic Church Catechism 981 states: "After his Resurrection, Christ sent his apostles 'so that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations.' The apostles and their successors carry out this 'ministry of reconciliation,' **not only by announcing to men God's forgiveness** merited for us by Christ, and calling them to conversion and faith; **but also by communicating to them the forgiveness of sins in Baptism, and reconciling them with God and with the Church through the power of the keys, received from Christ.**"

Rome teaches that "although the absolution of the priest is the dispensation of another's bounty, **yet it is not a bare ministry only, whether of announcing the Gospel, or of declaring that sins are forgiven, but is after the manner of a judicial act**, whereby sentence is pronounced by the priest as by a judge" (Trent, Session 14, Chapter 6). The Roman Catholic Church claims that a mere man, with the right formula of words, is an effective means of grace in the judicial act of forgiveness.

"**God above confirms what priests do here below**" (St. John Chrysostom). Communicating to someone the very forgiveness of sins is much different than declaring someone forgiven. When a person has the power to forgive sins and communicate forgiveness to someone, they are seen as the person forgiving that sin. The absolution that is necessary for the Catholic to obtain forgiveness, as taught by Rome, is not to be a simple declaration that God has forgiven the person confessing, but that the priest who says, "I absolve you from your sins," is himself forgiving the sins as a judge in a judicial act. He believes he is acting on Christ's behalf to forgive sins.

The Bible repeatedly teaches that only Jesus Christ is the Great High Priest, which has given His own life for us on the cross to *provide* us with complete forgiveness

before God, but He has also risen again to *represent* us in Heaven before God as forgiven in God's presence forever.

Hebrews 5:6:

"As he saith also in another *place*, Thou *art* a **priest for ever** after the order of Melchisedec."

Hebrews 7:26-27:

"For such a **high priest** (Jesus Christ) became us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this **he did once, when he offered up himself.**"

Hebrews 4:14:

"Seeing then that we have a **great high priest** (Jesus Christ), that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession."

The whole process of seeking priestly forgiveness through sinfully flawed priests and doing penance for one's sins in order to gain God's favor is heretical. The Bible teaches we do not need any priest to acquire forgiveness for us since Christ is our High Priest that has granted us complete acquittal and acceptance before God.

Hebrews 7:25 teaches that by Christ's death and endless life He saves us:

"Wherefore he is able also to **save them to the uttermost** (completely and forever) that come unto God by him, seeing he **ever liveth to make intercession for them.**"

Romans 8:34:

"Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also **maketh intercession for us.**"

No earthly priest can actually forgive and release a person from their sins. The Bible only reveals that Jesus has loosed us from our sins (Rev. 1:5) and now lives to confirm our eternal salvation and justification in Heaven (Heb. 5:9).

Lastly, Catholicism teaches that even if a person is not conscious of any mortal sin that needs to be forgiven by a priest, regular reception of the sacrament of penance is a good spiritual practice. According to Catholic Theology, Penance can take different forms including reading scripture, restitution to the offended party, saying

certain prayers such as the “Our Father” or the “Hail Mary” a specified number of times.

Catholic Church Catechism, paragraph 1460 reads: “The penance the confessor imposes must take into account the penitent's personal situation and must seek his spiritual good. It must correspond as far as possible with the gravity and nature of the sins committed. It can consist of prayer, an offering, works of mercy, service of neighbor, voluntary self-denial, sacrifices, and above all the patient acceptance of the cross we must bear. Such penances help configure us to Christ, who alone expiated our sins once for all. They allow us to become co-heirs with the risen Christ, "provided we suffer with him." “The satisfaction that we make for our sins, however, is not so much ours as though it were not done through Jesus Christ.”

What is important to note when reading the catechisms is that the works of Penance performed by the Roman Catholic help “make satisfaction” for sins. This is totally contrary to what the Bible teaches. Only Jesus Christ and His sacrifice can satisfy God’s wrath and anger against sin (Romans 3:25 - **“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation** [a satisfying sacrifice before God – a sacrifice that appeases God’s wrath against sin and the sinner] **through faith in his blood”** [when a person expresses faith ALONE in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which paid the penalty for sin and satisfied God’s wrath against the believing sinner forever).

Catholic teaching once again denies what the Bible says. “Absolution takes away sin, but it does not remedy all the disorders sin has caused. Raised up from sin, the sinner must still recover his full spiritual health by doing something more to make amends for the sin: he must "make satisfaction for" or "expiate" his sins. This satisfaction is also called "penance," (CCC, par. 1459). The Catholic Catechism says that Penance is a work when it identifies it as, “works of penance” (CCC, 1430). Therefore, we can see that Penance is, essentially, taking care of your own sins by performing a work that releases you from sin’s debt. Of course, this is a works righteousness approach to salvation, no matter what the Roman Catholic Church teaches! It also bypasses the wonderful truth that Jesus satisfied God’s wrath against us forever by becoming the propitiation (satisfying sacrifice – God’s mercy seat) for us (1 John 2:2; 4:10; Rom. 3:25).

The Roman Catholic teaching is bizarre. Catholic theologians talk about “the grace of justification” but they actually mean to receive sanctifying grace to help one earn

or merit their justification before God. They also speak of receiving the merits of Jesus Christ, Mary, and His faithful followers as one taps into the good works treasury in Heaven. Through Penance (good works) and buying indulgences a Catholic can have the merits of Jesus, Mary, and other saints applied to the sin account of others, paying for the debt of their sins, which in return shortens a Catholic's stay in Purgatory. This kind of teaching is preposterous, heretical, a perversion of the true Gospel and is nothing but "another gospel" (Gal. 1:6) which has deceived millions of people.

One preacher shares this interesting story. "I remember on a Sunday night a young man came here after I preached and spoke to me and told me this personal testimony. He was a jazz drummer and he had gone on that very morning, Sunday morning, to his Catholic Church. And he had felt tremendous guilt over sins. And as a Catholic he felt the way to get relief from guilt was to go to confession. And so he went and asked that a priest would go in the booth and hear his confession. And he confessed all of his sins. And he said, 'I want to be delivered from the guilt of these.' And the priest said, 'Take your beads,' and I think it was the number 35, 'go say 35 Hail Marys.'

"So he went over to the altar and he said to me, 'I said several Hail Mary's, and I stood up and I took my beads and I threw them as hard as I could and as far as I could across the church and walked out.'

"The preacher then comments, "Somehow in the wonderful providence of God, this man found his way to the service here on that same Sunday night, heard the message of Jesus Christ and was wonderfully saved. And the newly saved man said to me, 'I knew that all of that was doing nothing to deal with the guilt of my sin.'"

Now friend, it wasn't that this man didn't believe in Christ's death, it was that he was told that Christ was NOT ENOUGH, that you couldn't just expect Christ to forgive all of your sin forever so that you could go to Heaven when you die. Many are wrongly taught that they must do something, something religious. This is prominent in all of the ceremonial ritualistic systems, in self-righteous works systems which people participate with to gain or merit God's favor. People are told to believe in Christ but are then told to try to earn their way into Heaven. We can be sure about what the Bible teaches. It's not Christ plus your prayer beads, Christ plus your candles, Christ plus your baptism, Christ plus the sacraments, Christ plus

your charitable deeds or penitence, Christ plus the Catholic Church, Christ plus fasting, or Christ plus anything! It's only Christ that saves you.

Colossians 2:10 declares, "And we are complete in him." This means that God sees us in Christ. His finished work that Christ accomplished on our behalf through His death and resurrection gives us full and final acceptance before God. We have all spiritual blessings in Christ including the transferal of His own righteousness to our life so that God accepts us (Eph. 1:3). This means we don't need Mass, priests, penance or any other sacraments to give us acceptance before God. Christ is enough! The Bible declares that when we place our faith alone in Jesus Christ that we are "complete in him" (Colossians 2:10). This means that Jesus Christ has done everything for us and we do not have to do anything to merit our salvation.

"Complete in Thee! no work of mine
May take, dear Lord, the place of Thine;
Thy blood hath pardon bought for me,
And I am now complete in Thee.
Yea, justified! O blessed thought!
And sanctified! Salvation wrought!
Thy blood hath pardon bought for me,
And glorified, I too, shall be!"

As a Catholic, I want to ask you how many confessions is enough to save you? How can you be sure that your sin was not a mortal sin? How can you be sure that you won't spend eternity in hell? What if your priest is "invalid" because the intent of the priest is not pure? And what if he's immoral? What if he's a pedophile? What if he's a homosexual? The answer to all of these questions is simple. Just trust in Jesus Christ to be your Savior (Acts 16:31).

MARY: It is the official position of the Roman Catholic Church that Catholics do not pray TO saints or Mary, but rather that Catholics can ASK saints or Mary to pray FOR them. This is a very hair-splitting difference. On the one hand, you should not pray TO the saints but you can ASK them to intercede and pray for you. This is mumbo-jumbo talk!

The official position of the Roman Catholic Church is that asking saints for their prayers is no different than asking someone here on earth to pray for us. However,

the practice of many Catholics diverges from official Roman Catholic teaching. And leading figures themselves do not follow this procedure. Many Catholics do in fact pray directly to saints and/or Mary, asking them for help – instead of asking the saints and/or Mary to only intercede with God for help. Whatever the case might be, whether a saint or Mary is being prayed *to*, or *asked* to pray, neither practice has any Biblical basis. We are told to only pray to the Father (“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name” – Matt. 6:9). We are never told to pray to anyone or anything else for help, assistance, and strength. We are not to invoke another name outside the Godhead as we rely upon God for salvation, strength, and guidance in life (Ps. 5:3).

When it comes to Mary, the Roman Catholic theologians notoriously conclude that fundamental evangelicals really don’t understand what they actually teach about Mary. It’s the same old – “You people just don’t understand what we are saying.” Yes, we do! Catholic Theologians repeatedly claim that the Catholic Church does not teach Mary is connected with a person’s salvation since grace and salvation can only come through Christ. But what they say about Mary contradicts this. Mary is referenced as “Our Lady of Atonement,” “The Mother of Forgiveness,” “The Mother of Mercy,” and “One who brings the gifts of eternal salvation to the church.” Actually Catholicism teaches that Mary *cooperates* with Jesus to bring about spiritual blessings upon the Catholic Church, including forgiving the saints and preparing them for Heaven.

One Catholic shares this:

“A saying that is well known among Catholics is, ‘To Jesus, through Mary.’ This does not mean, ‘To Mary, through Jesus.’ Nor does it mean, ‘To Jesus and to Mary.’ According to Catholic teaching, this saying affirms that Catholics do not pray ‘to’ Mary as an equal to God. They pray ‘through’ Mary as an intercessor who prays to God on behalf of mankind.”

This is also a bunch of “vain jangling” (1 Tim. 1:6) or endless doubletalk. There is not a shred of evidence in the Bible that accommodates this kind of “vain babbling” (1 Tim. 6:20).

Yes, Roman Catholicism does teach that the virgin Mary is a co-redeemer between God and man and that praying to her in an act of worship brings a person into God’s favor, through the graces she bestows upon Catholic followers. It is believed that

she became a co-redeemer with Christ in His suffering on the cross and is now a co-mediator alongside Him in heaven - essentially an alternative avenue of access to God. Catholic Theologians and teachers actually believe that Mary shares in the saving work of salvation and redemption. Jesus allegedly bestows graces through her to Catholics all over the world. The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains, "Mary's role in the Church is inseparable from her union with Christ and flows directly from it" (CCC 964). In the simple words of one Catholic, "Well, if I can approach Christ's mum, she will put in a good word for me to Christ."

In summary, all the Catholic writings and rosaries convey that Mary does more than just helping Catholics through their daily struggles of life. She actually does forgive sins and brings God's saving grace into the lives of praying Roman Catholics. Let's find out what they say.

Mary is a Mediatrix: Catholic Church Catechism 969 states, "Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked in the Church under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix" (a reference to the intercessory role that Mary has between Christ and Catholics and how Mary plays a role in the redemption of man).

One Catholic Theologian states:

"Mary's title of mediatrix arises from her cooperation in the Incarnation and in the Redemption of mankind. Through her "yes" (Lk 1:38), she became the Theotokos (God-bearer), and, as the "New Eve," she is "the Mother of all living."

Roman Catholics refer to Mary as Theotokos - God-bearer. They claim she gave birth to God and therefore she is to be elevated and adored. But Mary giving birth to God is a terrible misconception. She gave birth to Jesus in his humanity (John 1:14). She did not give birth to God. God was never born. He is eternal (Psalm 90:2).

Another Catholic writer concludes this about Mary: "We can therefore say that the Co-redemptrix, who uniquely participated with the one Redeemer in obtaining the graces of redemption, continues her participation by distributing the graces of redemption with the one Mediator, Jesus Christ, and the Sanctifier, the Holy Spirit. Part of this mediating role of Mary in God's plan of salvation includes the providential task of being the Advocate for the People of God, that is, a mother pleading on behalf of her children. Thus Mary not only mediates the graces of God

to humanity as Mediatrix, but she also mediates the petitions of the human family back to God as our Advocate.”

In explaining what all of this means, let’s quote another Catholic writer: “We do, after all, mediate for others when we pray to God on their behalf. This does not affect Christ being the sole Mediator because our small efforts are entirely dependent upon Him. In the same way when we ask Mary's intervention through prayer, she mediates on our behalf, praying for us in perfection within the Father's will for our lives. Her status as Mediatrix of all graces exists in a double sense: First, she gave the world its Redeemer, the source of all graces, and in this sense she is the channel of all graces. Second, Mary is the Mediatrix of all graces through of her intercessory role for us in heaven. What this means is that no grace accrues to us without her intercession. This does not mean that we are obliged to ask for all graces through her or that her intercession is intrinsically necessary for the application of graces. She continues that motherly role in our redemption by continuous intercession in heaven and by mediating her Son's saving graces to the pilgrim Church on earth.”

In Roman Catholicism, Mary is presented as being so close to Jesus, that she can gain favors from Him and dispense them to praying Catholics (graces to help them live properly and also the grace of forgiveness). This allows Mary to intercede for Catholics in relation to their salvation experience which involves receiving the needed “graces” (good virtues) to remain in a state of grace (sanctifying grace) and also find the necessary forgiveness from sin. This means that Mary is the mediator of all graces. She is the channel of all graces. Catholics constantly talk about Mary as the mother of all graces. Mary is the source of all mercies. No grace is conferred on anyone without her mediation, intercession, and cooperation. All graces come to Catholics through Mary’s hands. Mary is the direct intercessor with Christ who receives from Christ all graces and dispenses them to us, and therefore Catholic prayers should be directed at Mary. In short, Mary is revealed as being an instrument used by Jesus to help Catholics in their continuing salvation process and journey. No matter which way you cut the pie – Mary is viewed as being part of a Catholic’s salvation.

Mary dispensing grace and salvation to Catholics is heretical teaching which is relegated to the doctrines of demons (1 Tim. 4:1). Thank God we don’t need a helper outside of Jesus! Mary does not help us gain more favor before God so in

the end we can enter Heaven. Jesus Christ alone is our advocate or heavenly lawyer that pleads the efficacy or saving value of His own sacrifice before the throne of God on our behalf (“**we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous**” - 1 John 2:1). The Bible never mentions that Mary is an advocate in Heaven helping Catholics to gain eternal life. Jesus Christ needs no help in interceding on behalf of all those who place faith alone in Him for salvation (Heb. 7:25).

The Second Vatican Council (Lumen gentium ## 61-62) said this about Mary: ... in suffering with Him as He died on the cross, she cooperated in the work of the Savior, in an altogether singular way, by obedience, faith, hope, and burning love, to restore supernatural life to souls. As a result she is our Mother in the order of grace.”

St. Bernardine of Siena said:

“Every grace that is communicated to this world has a threefold course. For by excellent order, it is dispensed from God to Christ, from Christ to the Virgin, from the Virgin to us.”

The Catholic writers always talk about “graces” and “saving graces” being given to Catholics through Mary (“by mediating her Son's saving graces to the pilgrim Church on earth”). This indicates that Mary plays a definite and active role in assisting Catholics to get to their heavenly destination. In some cases, through her cooperation with Jesus, she intercedes for Catholics and gives them the needed “graces” (Christian virtues) to live in a state of sanctifying grace, so they can continue to live a holy life and merit their justification before God. Sometimes the Catholic writers confirm that through her intercession she also grants salvation to praying Catholics, presumably by helping to acquire forgiveness before God for both venial and mortal sins, and lessening a person’s stay in Purgatory.

Mary brings us the gifts of eternal salvation: Catholic Church Catechism 969 states, "Taken up to heaven she did not lay aside this saving office but by her manifold intercession continues to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation . . . " Mary delivers souls from death: CCC 966 reveals, " . . . You [Mary] conceived the living God and, by your prayers, will deliver our souls from death."

Pope Francis said:

“The Church’s forgiveness must be every bit as broad as that offered by Jesus on the Cross and by Mary at his feet. There is no other way.”

Yes, there is. “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).

Catholic Church Catechism 2677 adds more: “By asking Mary to pray for us, we acknowledge ourselves to be poor sinners and we address ourselves to the 'Mother of Mercy,' the All-Holy One. We give ourselves over to her now, in the Today of our lives. And our trust broadens further, already at the present moment, to surrender 'the hour of our death' wholly to her care.” The rosary states:

Hail Mary, full of grace.
Our Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
Pray for us sinners,
Now and at the hour of our death.
Amen.

In his *Ineffabilis Deus* in 1854, Pope Pius IX established as dogma the immaculate conception of Mary, which preserved her from inheriting original sin. His concluding statements provide a good summary of the Catholic view of Mary. “Let all the children of the Catholic Church, who are so very dear to us, hear these words of ours. With a still more ardent zeal for piety, religion and love, let them continue to venerate, invoke and pray to the most Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, conceived without original sin. Let them fly with utter confidence to this most sweet Mother of mercy and grace in all dangers, difficulties, needs, doubts and fears. Under her guidance, under her patronage, under her kindness and protection, nothing is to be feared; nothing is hopeless. Because, while bearing toward us a truly motherly affection and having in her care the work of our salvation, she is solicitous about the whole human race. And since she has been appointed by God to be the Queen of heaven and earth, and is exalted above all the choirs of angels and saints, and even stands at the right hand of her only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ

our Lord, she presents our petitions in a most efficacious manner. What she asks, she obtains. Her pleas can never be unheard.”

“The most Blessed Virgin Mary was, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God and by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of the human race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin.”

How can Mary be called “the Savior of the human race” unless she does some saving? Catholics have historically recorded what they actually believe about Mary. Their very own words convey that they depend upon Mary to grant them with spiritual help and salvation, so they can reach Heaven someday. Mary is viewed as a Savior, who through her unique link and cooperation with Jesus Christ, can acquire forgiveness for Catholic sinners, enable them to escape hell, and spend less time in Purgatorial fires. On Catholic writes said that “three Hail Mary’s a day keep mortal sin away.” “Another fall, and what a fall! Must you give up hope? No. Humble yourself and, through Mary, your Mother, have recourse to the merciful Love of Jesus” (St. Josemaria, The Way, #711).

Saint Bernard wrote this about Mary’s role in salvation: “She keeps her Son from striking us; she prevents the devil from harming us; she preserves virtue in us; she prevents our merits from being lost and our graces from receding. When you follow Mary you will not go astray; when you pray to her, you will not despair; when your mind is on her, you will not wander; when she holds you up, you will not fall; when she protects you, you will have no fear; when she guides you, you will feel no fatigue; when she is on your side, you will arrive safely home.”

Scripture actually has very little to say about Mary. There’s no description of her physical appearance, nothing about her life, her later years after Christ’s death, or her own death and burial. And when she does briefly appear with the disciples and the other believers on the day of Pentecost, she’s not an object of worship or even a leader in the early church—she’s just one among many. There simply are no biblical examples of anyone ever praying to her, honoring her, or venerating her. Of course, Mary was undoubtedly blessed among women (Luke 1:42). But, it is not appropriate to attribute to her the titles of “Our Queen, Our Mother, Our Life, Our Sweetness, and Our Hope.” The Bible attributes none of these titles to Mary.

Mary holds an exalted position in Catholic Theology. Because of her exalted position in Heaven, she is able to approach the Son with requests and petitions from her followers and become a “Co-Redemptrix” in a Catholic’s salvation. She is prayed to, adored, and worshipped by millions of Catholic devotees around the world. She is called the “mother of God” by Catholics but Scripture nowhere exalts her with this title. Mary was never called the mother of God until the council of Trent (AD 431). As mentioned above, Mary is not the originator of Christ and His deity and therefore should not be termed as the mother of God. Mary is not the actual mother of God. Nor could she ever be. God has no mother! This is because God is eternal in His being and existence (Rev. 1:18).

That Mary is worshipped, can pray on the behalf of sinners, and make atonement for sins exalts her to the status of a god. Exodus 20:3 states “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” However, by its practice of promoting Mary (and the Saints) to the level of God-like capabilities, Roman Catholicism breaks the first commandment to have no other gods before the true and living God.

Revelation 22:8-9 records:

“And I John saw these things, and heard *them*. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See *thou do it* not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: **worship God**” (not Mary, the saints, angels, relics, statues, or anything else!)

The Roman Catholic Church has committed the same error as John, promoting a mere citizen of heaven to an improper place of authority and honor. God alone is our Redeemer, our Deliverer, our Benefactor, and our Comforter. He alone is to be worshiped, venerated, adored, and petitioned. The testimony of Scripture is clear.

Here is a general summary of the Roman Catholic teaching on Mary. Mary is the mediatrix (Catechism of the Catholic Church paragraph 969); Mary is the subject of preaching and worship (Vatican Council II, p. 420), and Mary is made atonement for the sins of man. “Mary, by her spiritual entering into the sacrifice of her divine son for men, made atonement for the sins of man and (de congruon) merited the application of the redemptive grace of Christ. In this manner she cooperates in the subjective redemption of mankind,” (Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma, Ott, Page 213).

A Catholic title given to Mary is "Our Lady of the Atonement." According to Catholic folklore, Mary was immaculately conceived in the womb (CCC 490, 491, 493), the "new Eve" (CCC 726), who had no original sin (CCC 508), and never committed sin (CCC 493). Her body did not see corruption after death. Instead, she ascended to Heaven (CCC 974). Today she is seen as a perfect intercessor for Catholics (CCC 969) as she sits "on the right hand of the majesty on high" (Pope Pius X, Ad Diem Illum Laetissimum, 14). In fact, "no man goeth to Christ but by His Mother" (Pope Leo 13th, Octobri Mense). It was Mary who "crushed the poisonous head of the most cruel serpent and brought salvation to the world" (Pope Pius IX, Ineffabilis Deus). It is she who "delivers our souls from death" (CCC 966), and "continues to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation" (CCC 969). Again, "Mary, by her spiritual entering into the sacrifice of her divine son for men, made atonement for the sins of man," (Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma4, Ott, page 213). Finally, in paradise the church gathers "around Jesus and Mary" (CCC 1053).

All of these miraculous accomplishments mimics Christ's status as God. Catholic writers say this about Mary: "The concept of Our Lady of the Atonement includes two parts. First, it emphasizes Mary's role as co-redemptrix in the mystery of the cross. Secondly, it points to Mary's role in effecting the unity or At-one-ment of men with God. Mary co-operated with Christ as no other creature did, in His work of reconciling man with God" ("There's Something About Mary" – Our Lady of the Atonement").

Here is "Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Novena Prayer: "I offer you this spiritual Bouquet of Roses? because I love you. I put all my confidence in you, since your prayers before God are most powerful. For the greater glory of God and for the sake of Jesus, your loving Son, hear and grant my prayer. Sweet Heart of Mary, be my salvation."

There is more. "The Holy Spirit prepared Mary by his grace. It was fitting that the mother of him in whom "the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily" should herself be "full of grace." (CCC 722). "The holiness which is our end in Christ (cf. 1 John 3:2-3) was seen, by unmerited grace, in Mary, who is the prototype of the hope of grace for humankind as a whole." (www.vatican.va, Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian unity. Anglican--Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC), #59). "This mother . . . is waiting and preparing your home for you" (Handbook for Today's

Catholic, p. 31). "... when she [Mary] is the subject of preaching and worship she prompts the faithful to come to her Son . . ." (Vatican Council II, p. 420).

All of this is rank heresy because it brings Mary to a goddess status and gives her equal power to bring about a person's forgiveness before God. Facts are stubborn things. This is exactly what the Catholic Church believes about Mary in spite of how the Catholic theologians try and cover up the true meaning of these statements.

The rosary is stated to be "a means of grace." One again, Catholics pray to Mary through the rosary to acquire grace which leads to their salvation. In the rosary, there are 50 "Hail Mary's" and only five "Our Fathers." Mary has the highest position in the Roman Catholic Church because all grace is transferred to Catholics through her intercessory work on their behalf. But how can this be? Mary herself was a self-confessed sinner who needed a Savior (Luke 1:47). She was born a sinner like everyone else (Ps. 51:5; Rom. 3:23). The Bible says that "all have sinned" (Rom. 3:23). It does not say "all have sinned except Mary." Only Jesus was sinless (Heb. 7:26; 1 Pet. 1:19). Praying to Mary or some dead canonized Catholic saint is paganism and apostasy of the worst sort (Matt. 6:9). The Bible categorically denies that Mary is a Mediator in Heaven that helps us to be forgiven and accepted before God in any way. The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man. Period.

Of course, the Bible says nothing of Mary in an active role of intercession before the throne of God. Salvation and grace are not supplied by Christ through Mary. This makes Mary another vehicle of a Catholic's salvation which defies the central truth of the Bible and Christianity that Jesus ALONE is the Mediator between God and man.

1 Timothy 2:5

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

Jesus did not say He was a Mediator with a working relationship with Mary and other canonized saints. Jesus is not one mediator among many; He's the only one! It is the man Christ Jesus. Jesus is the only intercessor (Heb. 7:25). This means we do not need the Our Mother of Perpetual Help! Paul spells it out plainly. In Paul's day the Gnostics had a vast system of mediators made up of angels but God declares, not so. The Virgin Mary, Joseph Smith, nor anyone else is a mediator. Jesus

is the Mediator. This is the message of the Bible and true Christianity. Any other message is cultic and soul-damning.

A deluded Catholic writer states this about 1 Timothy 2:5:

“In 1 Timothy 2:5, which refers to Jesus as the ‘one mediator,’ the Greek word for ‘one’ is heis, which means ‘first’ or ‘primary’ and does not denote something exclusive.”

This is incorrect. The Greek word “heis” means just that – the numerical number one! Thayer, the Greek scholar says it means “emphatically, so that others are excluded, a single, alone.” Another Catholic writer states: “In Jesus’ one and perfect mediation (cf. 1 Tim. 2:5), subordinate and secondary mediators are able to participate.” Catholics are looking for a needle in a haystack as they attempt to find a way to overlook the clear revelation of Scripture and replace truth with traditions. Mary is never said to be an intercessor before God. The exaltation of Mary as an intercessor blasphemes Jesus Christ and the Bible.

It has been imagined by Catholic theologians that Revelation 5:8 teaches that the prayers of the saints on earth are heard by other saints in Heaven. This somehow opens up the reality that Mary hears the prayers of faithful Catholics. Revelation 5:8 states, “And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.” However, this text reveals that the prayers were being addressed to God - “before the Lamb” (Jesus Christ) - not the saints. And furthermore, these prayers were linked to those who were martyred and already in Heaven (Rev. 6:10). The Bible give absolutely no evidence that the saints in Heaven are praying for us. None.

Catholics pray to Mary and other saints because they view them as "intercessors" before God. They believe that a saint, who is glorified in Heaven, has more "direct access" to God than we do. Therefore, if a saint delivers a prayer to God, it is more effective than us praying to God directly. This concept and conclusion is blatantly unbiblical.

Hebrews 4:16

“Let us (not the canonized saints of the Roman Catholic Church) therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

This Bible verse tells us that we, believers here on earth, can directly approach God in prayer with absolute confidence, knowing that we have direct access into the very throne room of God. This means we can find Christ's grace to help us through our struggles and temptations in life. We don't need Mary or any other saint to interceded for us or help get God's attention for us. And we certainly don't need their assistance in praying to God so we might be granted forgiveness for our sins. This is unbiblical and erroneous.

The fact that Mary can intercede for sinners, praying for them, and "bring us the gifts of eternal salvation" (CCC 969) is a mockery and travesty upon the intercessory work of Jesus Christ ALONE which gives a person acceptance in the presence of God (Rom. 8:34).

Jesus taught in John 10:9:

"I am the door (not Mary): by me (not by the Roman Catholic sacraments) if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

Christ is the door to salvation. Christianity is not a creed or a church. Rather it is a Person and that Person is the Lord Jesus Christ (not Mary). Salvation can only be received through Christ. Baptism, the Lord's Supper, nor any other person, such as Mary or any other canonized Roman Catholic saint, will never give a person salvation and acceptance before God. How can Mary as a sinner (Luke 1:76) save other sinners? This is preposterous.

Acts 4:12

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is **none other name** (including Mary's name) under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

John 14:6

"Jesus saith unto him, **I am the way, the truth, and the life** (not Mary): no man cometh unto the Father, **but by me**" (this excludes all other people).

You wonder why Catholics are attached to Mary? Well, if you don't love Mary, you don't have any hope of being saved. She's the one who holds off God's divine justice. *She's the one who talks God into accepting sinners.* Page nine of de Liguori's treatise on Mary says, **"It is God's own goodness which comes to us through Mary's intercession"** and **"There are no sinners who will be lost, no matter how great their crimes, when Mary intercedes for them."** On page 402 of this book he

states: **“The Divine Mother can be called the savior of the world.”** That pretty much says it all. Of course, the Bible says that Jesus is the “Saviour of the world” – not Mary (John 4:42. 1 John 4:14). This is because Christ paid the full penalty for sin by “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross” (Col. 2:14). This means that Jesus paid the necessary ransom price that God required to set people free from His wrath and judgment forever (1 Pet. 1:18), and then rose again from the dead.

The Catholic salvation is unfinished and therefore the continued prayers to Mary, confessions to priests, the eating of Christ’s flesh in Mass, and doing works of penance is necessary to keep a Catholic in God’s favor in hope that they will someday enter Purgatory and be finally purged of all sins after their death.

I would like to quote some more from the book written by Saint Alphonsus de Liguori. He wrote a massive book called “The Glories of Mary.” It is a history of devotion to Mary reaching back to the 5th century, reprinted many, many times. A 1981 version is 750 pages in length. Let me share some more highlights from this book. It pains me to do it because of the absolute blasphemy of Mary worship and dependence upon Mary for the salvation of Catholic souls.

“O Mary, sweet refuge of poor sinners. Assist me with thy mercy. Banish me from the infernal enemies and come thou to take my soul and present it to the eternal judge. My Queen, do not abandon me. I give you my heart and soul.”

“O immaculate and holy pure Virgin Mary, Mother of God, Queen of the World, thou art the joy of the saints. Thou art the peacemaker between sinners and God. Thou art the advocate of the abandoned, the secure haven of those who are on the sea of this world. Thou art the consolation of this world, the ransom of slaves, the comforter of the afflicted, the salvation of the universe.”

“I do not deserve that thou shouldst even look at me, but I know that thou, having seen thy son die for the salvation of sinners, hast the greatest desire to help them. I hear all call thee the Refuge of Sinners, the Hope of those who are in despair and the Help of the abandoned. Thou art then my refuge, my hope and my help. Thou hast to save me by thy intercession.”

“Help me, for the love of Jesus Christ. Extend thy hand to a miserable creature who has fallen and recommends himself to thee. I know that thy pleasure is to help a sinner to thy utmost. Help me, therefore, now that thou canst do so. By my sins I have lost divine grace and with it I have lost my soul. I now place myself in thy hands. Tell me what I must do to recover the favor of my Lord and I will immediately do it. He sends me to thee, that thou mayest help me and He wills that I should have recourse to thy mercy, **that not only the merits of thy son, but also that thy intercession may help me to save my soul.**”

Now think of this. There are millions of people all over the world who worship Mary. There are millions of images of her in every imaginable form are scattered throughout the world. They’re obviously not able to be counted – millions of them in every form and every location: churches, cathedrals, houses, cars, wallets. Everywhere are images, pictures, and representations of Mary. There are millions upon millions of people every day who pray to her. They pray to her to forgive and save them. They pray to her to protect them. They pray to her to help them, to comfort them, to rescue them, to bring them to heaven, and she has never heard one of those prayers. Ever. This is because she is not an intercessor.

Cathedrals elevate her above God and above Christ. People kiss her statue. They kiss her picture. Catholics crawl on their knees in penitential pain as some kind of preparation to come before statues of her. Catholics pray to her regularly using the rosary. Now if that is not worship, I don’t know what worship is! This is pagan worship which is something that the Bible strictly forbids (Exodus 20:3). God says, “I will not give my glory unto another” (Isa. 48:11). The pagan worship of Mary as an intercessor before God, which is found in Roman Catholicism, is a lie and a mass deception (1 Tim. 4:1). It is a continuation of the pagan goddess worship of the cult religion of the “queen of heaven” (Jeremiah 7:18; 44:17-19, 25) imported into Christianity. This is why Catholics still call Mary the Queen of Heaven.

All of this Mary worship steals glory from God the Father. It steals glory from God the Son. It steals glory from God the Holy Spirit. But one thing is certain, you cannot worship the true God and sit at the table of demons at the same time (1 Cor. 10:20). You can’t. It’s an abomination to God. Psalm 115:1 reminds us that God alone should be glorified and worshipped. “Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, *and* for thy truth's sake.” The Lord is to be the

object of all our worship. The Lord is to be the object of all our thanksgiving (Psalm 118:1).

The worship of Mary in the Catholic Church is an attack on **God** Himself. De Liguori in "The Glories of Mary," page 566, says: "At the command of Mary all obey, even God." This is blasphemy against God. This goddess worship of Mary is also blasphemy against the **Holy Spirit** who is called the Comforter (John 14:26) or the One is called alongside of us to help us. For Catholics, Mary is the comforter, the sympathizer, the helper, encourager, and empowerer, and the sanctifier who works to make Catholics (her children) pure. This goddess worship of Mary is also an attack against the **Son**. She becomes a counterfeit savior who was born sinless, without the stain of original sin, living a sinless life. She is called the all-holy child. She becomes redeemer, provider of salvation, dispenser of forgiveness, mercy and grace, the source of all blessing, including salvation.

In Revelation 5:12 all of Heaven is recorded as "Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." Heaven honors Jesus Christ. Not Mary. Mary worship is idolatry in the clearest form and this idolatry and dependence upon Mary damns people to hell, since many do not trust in Christ alone for their salvation. Furthermore, this type of worship is also a horrible dishonor to Mary. Catholics have built a cult of Mary worship which would bring unspeakable horror to Mary if she ever truly knew it was taking place.

We need to wrap up our section covering Mary. Let me ask you a few questions.

Catholic Questions: As a Catholic, do you really believe that Mary is able to hear and understand the prayers of millions of people all over the world, simultaneously, in different languages, as they are spoken and thought? If you do believe she has all of these abilities, how are you not attributing godlike abilities to her? Why pray to Mary when Jesus said to come to him (Matt. 11:28), ask him anything (John 14:14), and he has all authority in heaven and earth (Matt. 28:18)? Isn't Jesus capable enough without Mary? Is Mary somehow better than Jesus? Are people wrong when they pray to Jesus alone and asking Jesus to forgive them all of their sins? How many masses, confessions, and prayers to Mary are enough to reassure you that you have been forgiven of all your sins and are ready to enter Purgatory? Do you know that you are going to Heaven?

Bottom Line: Eating Christ, confessing to priests, and praying to Mary, is a barrier that keeps Catholics from trusting in Christ ALONE. The Bible says The Father is satisfied with Christ's sacrifice since he is the "propitiation (satisfying sacrifice) for our sins" (1 John 2:2). Are you satisfied with the sacrifice of God's Son? Will you place your faith in Christ's sacrifice ALONE to be your Savior?

7. Catholic salvation involves grace being transferred by sacraments to the faithful Catholic.

The Bible teaches that God's grace is transferred into one's life by faith alone in Christ ("For by grace are ye saved through faith" – Eph. 2:8). Catholicism views grace as SACRAMENTAL grace (grace is channeled into one's life through the sacraments instead of through Christ alone) and as SANCTIFYING grace (grace that enables a person to earn their justification and entrance into Heaven). "The principal ways of obtaining grace are prayer and the sacraments, especially the holy Eucharist" (The New Saint Joseph Baltimore Catechism, No. 2, Answer to Question 117).

Catholics claim to receive grace via sacraments (instead of through Christ alone) and they actually WORK or COOPERATE with grace to merit one's justification and salvation before God. Catholic grace is a *faulty type of grace* that helps or assists a Catholic to live out a life of faith and works (good deeds), so they can merit their final or ultimate justification before God and salvation from hell. Faithful Catholics receive and attain, what they view as saving grace, through the repeated applications of the sacraments and their continued obedience to the sacraments. Instead of receiving saving grace DIRECTLY by faith in Christ's finished work on the cross, it's believed that God's grace is obtained through the sacraments as it is repeatedly, gradually, and transferred to a person throughout the course of their entire lifetime.

The Bible teaches that salvation comes DIRECTLY and ONLY through Jesus Christ (John 14:6). Jesus did not say "I am the way through baptism, Mass, Absolution, and all the sacraments offered in the Catholic Church." The Bible never says that salvation and forgiveness is found in sacraments. It never promises that God's forgiveness and salvation is passed down through the sacraments such as Mass, confession to priests (Penance and Reconciliation), or Last Rites. Jesus never promised to administer or dispense His grace, forgiveness, and salvation through Roman Catholic priests and sacraments. We find nothing of this in the Bible. It's not

Jesus and the sacraments – it's Jesus! It's not Jesus and priests – it's Jesus! It's not Jesus and Penance. Jesus is enough! We receive God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone (Eph. 2:8-9).

The Council of Trent declared this regarding the sacrament of Penance: "As a means of regaining grace and justice, penance was at all times necessary for those who had defiled their souls with any mortal sin." In other words, God's grace is gradually reapplied to one's life as they seek to do good works to satisfy God's wrath through works of penance. It is something that a person earns as they do those things which are right and pleasing to God.

The Bible teaches that God's grace is NOT something that is earned through a lifetime of taking sacraments and doing good deeds (Eph. 2:8-9). Instead, God's grace, through the expression of Christ's death alone, is what saves a person immediately, forever, and finally (Acts 15:11; Titus 2:11; 2 Tim. 1:9). And here is the greatest news of all – God's grace is free!

Romans 3:24

"Being justified (declared legally acquitted of all our sins and righteous in God's presence) **freely** (without human works and meriting salvation) **by his grace** (God's kindness) **through the redemption** (the purchasing price that Jesus paid for our freedom from God's wrath and judgment) **that is in Christ Jesus"** (Jesus Christ alone!).

Here is good news! God's grace is FREE (Gal. 3:24), salvation is a FREE gift (Eph. 2:8-9), eternal life is FREE (Rom. 6:23; 2 Cor. 9:15), and justification is FREE (Rom. 5:15-16). Everything is free! There are no sacraments or human works required. Salvation can be received right now if you will place your faith only in Jesus Christ to save you (John 1:12).

Revelation 22:17

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

You can receive free salvation today through Jesus Christ. Salvation takes place at the very moment a person believes in Christ ("For by grace are ye saved" - Eph. 2:8). The Bible says that you are saved (Eph. 2:8) – not that you will be saved gradually

and continually, until one day in the distant future you are finally purged of all your sins while suffering in Purgatory. The Bible teaches we are instantaneously and forever saved the moment we believe on Christ (“**he shall be saved**” - John 10:9; “**thou shalt be saved**” - Acts 16:31; “**thou shalt be saved**” - Rom. 10:9; “**shall be saved**” – Rom. 10:13; “**ye are saved**” – 1 Cor. 15:2; “**he saved us**” - Titus 3:5; “**who hath saved us**” – 2 Tim. 1:9; “**them which are saved**” - Rev. 21:24). It’s not a question of hoping to be saved in the future after a lifetime of taking sacraments and trying to do one’s best. No, you are saved once-and-for-all and forever when you place your faith in Christ alone to be your Savior.

God’s saving grace is not received in piecemeal installments through the sacraments and throughout one’s entire life. Initial justification begins with the sacrament of baptism and confirmation into the Catholic Church. Baptism allegedly washes away the original inherited sin of Adam. The Masses and Reconciliation (absolution of priests) are viewed as sacramental instruments that enable a Catholic to receive forgiveness from God and in passing on forgiveness, acting as vehicles between God and sinful man, they are viewed as providing the necessary forgiveness for one’s salvation. However, the Bible says nothing about intermediary sacraments and priests which are designed to transfer God’s grace and salvation into a person’s life.

If priests, absolution, and masses are the vehicles of God’s grace, then salvation does not come through Christ alone (John 14:6). The repetition and need of sacraments bypass the sufficiency of Christ’s death to save a person forever (John 19:30). Salvation is received all at once and forever, through faith alone in the expression of God’s free grace, as seen in Christ death (“For by grace are ye saved” – Eph. 2:8). There is no grace found in sacraments and priests. Grace is only found and experienced in Christ. The Bible emphatically teaches we are saved by grace ALONE (Eph. 2:8-9) and justified by grace ALONE (Titus 3:7; Rom. 3:24) without receiving sacraments to obtain forgiveness, or following sacraments to merit our salvation and justification before God.

Catholic Canon 24 disagrees with the Bible: “If any one saith, that the justice receive is not preserved and also increased before God through good works; but that the said works are merely the fruits and signs of Justification obtained, but not a cause of the increase therefore; let him be anathema” (damned to hell).

The Bible contradicts the works teaching of Roman Catholicism. A person is justified before God on the basis of faith in Christ alone. Our justification is not obtained, maintained, or effected in any way by our works.

Romans 3:20

“Therefore by the deeds of the law (human works) there shall no flesh be justified (declared righteous and accepted) in his sight (God’s presence): for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”

Romans 3:28 adds:

“Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith (by faith in Christ alone we are declared righteous in God’s presence forever) without the deeds of the law (without human works of any kind – Penance, indulgences, sacraments).”

Romans 3:21

“But now the righteousness of God (a perfect righteousness freely given to us when we believe on Christ) without the law (human works) is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets” (Gen. 15:6; Dan. 9:24).

Romans 4:5

“But to him that worketh not (no human achievements), but believeth on him (only believe on Christ!) that justifieth the ungodly (declares the believing sinner righteous in God’s presence), his faith (not works) is counted for righteousness” (through faith in Christ alone we are credited God’s perfect righteousness and accepted in His presence forever).

Romans 4:6

“Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth (places on one’s account) righteousness (a right standing before God) without works” (without yourself and others paying for the debt of sins through the good works of Penance and Indulgences).

Romans 5:1 also declares:

“Therefore being justified (declared legally righteous in God’s heavenly courtroom) by faith (not works), we have peace with God (a peaceful and accepted standing before God’s presence) through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Galatians 2:16 repeats this same liberating truth:

“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law (human achievements and good works), but by the faith of Jesus Christ (placing faith in Christ alone), even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified (declared legally accepted in God’s presence) by the faith of Christ (through our faith in Jesus Christ alone), and not by the works of the law (a process of human works).

What are the deeds of the Law? Anything we do in hopes of earning and maintaining our righteousness and salvation before God falls under the category of the deeds of the law. These verses speak for themselves. They clearly reveal God’s mind on the subject of justification by faith alone without works or human involvement. This means you cannot be saved by receiving Roman Catholic sacraments and through an elaborate system of rituals. Catholic theologians teach that a person is *made* righteous before God through meritorious good deeds but the Bible says a person who believes only on Christ is DECLARED judicially righteous forever in God’s presence without good works.

Catholic Questions: Where does the Bible teach that God’s grace is transferred into your life through sacraments? Why not receive grace directly from Jesus Christ who said that He alone was the way to Heaven (John 14:6) and that salvation only comes through Him (Acts 4:12)? How wonderful that the Bible says “For by grace are ye saved through faith” (Eph. 2:8) in Christ alone (without sacraments). Why not just trust in Christ alone to be your Savior?

Bottom Line: The transferring of grace into a person’s life through sacraments such as baptism, Mass, and Confession to a priest become another barrier that keeps Catholics from trusting in Christ ALONE for their salvation.

8. Catholic salvation is maintained by cooperating with grace.

Titus 2:11 reveals:

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation (deliverance from hell) hath appeared to all men” (through Christ’s death on the cross).

Titus 3:7 also declares:

“That being justified by his grace (declared legally righteous through the gracious act of Christ’s death), we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (we can be absolutely confident and assured that we are an heir of eternal life).

The Bible repeatedly says that it's grace ALONE (as seen in the death of Jesus Christ alone) that brings salvation into one's life (Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 3:24; Heb. 2:8-9; Titus 2:11; 3:5-7). Saving grace, as seen in the Bible, is never presented as something that enables a person to live a good life so he can merit justification and eternal life. As mentioned previously, Catholic salvation is viewed as participating with God's grace. In one sense, grace in Catholic Theology is something a person uses or interacts with (through the sacraments and restored God-given ability of sanctifying grace) which in return helps a Catholic to earn his justification before God. At baptism, Catholics believe that they receive "sanctifying grace," so they can gradually EARN or MERIT their justification before God through living a holy and sanctified life.

Catholic Church Catechism 2023 states: "Sanctifying grace is the gratuitous gift of his life that God makes to us; it is infused by the Holy Spirit into the soul to heal it of sin and to sanctify it." CCC 1266, "The Most Holy Trinity gives the baptized sanctifying grace, the grace of justification." This "grace of justification" is viewed as a type of grace that is infused in a Catholic at the time of baptism which enables them to perform good works and earn or merit their justification before God. Catholic Church Catechism 2010 also states: "Moved by the Holy Spirit and by charity, we can then merit for ourselves and for others the graces needed for our sanctification."

Catholic Church Catechism 2027 goes one step farther: "Moved by the Holy Spirit, we can merit for ourselves and for others all the graces needed to attain eternal life, as well as necessary temporal goods." CCC 2003 further states: "But grace also includes the gifts that the Spirit grants us to associate us with his work, to enable us to collaborate in the salvation of others and in the growth of the Body of Christ, the Church."

In Catholic Theology, grace is viewed as something people need to help them to be saved. It's understood to be something that enables a Catholic to reach the final goal of his journey which is justification before God through good works. Grace is something that is infused and used by a good practicing Roman Catholic which enables God to see them as a good person and accept their life of meritorious works. Many times the word "graces" is used which means that God gives Catholics *virtues* which enable a person to live a good Catholic life and merit their eternal life.

The concept of the New Birth to Roman Catholics means that they receive “initial grace” or “first actual grace” (the sanctifying grace of God’s life which they claim is without merit). However, this same grace then helps the Catholic to seek after God, have faith and live a life of good deeds, so they can through a life-long process earn their justification before God. From baptism to Purgatory the Catholic is commissioned by the church to live a good life in order to merit their final justification before God. In essence, a Roman Catholic must *cooperate with grace* to be saved and justified before God. To the Roman Catholic, justification is gradually earned over a lifetime.

It is believed by Roman Catholics that when a person is baptized the original sin of Adam is removed from his soul and “sanctifying grace” is infused in the person’s life (the original non-meritorious act of the New Birth – CCC 2010). Paradoxically, this means that God gives the Catholic the grace or help they need to follow all the Catholic teachings of the Church and participate with the sacraments of the Catholic Church in order to obtain or merit their justification before God.

Grace in Catholic Theology is not salvation by grace alone through faith alone in the death of Christ alone but receiving God’s life and grace which enables the Catholic to live a transformed life and eventually attain justification before God through sacraments and living a good Catholic life. In short, a Catholic’s salvation and justification is **CONDITIONAL** and based upon how well they **PERFORM** throughout their earthly lives, as they **COOPERATE** with God’s sanctifying grace.

"We can therefore hope in the glory of heaven promised by God to those who love him and do his will. In every circumstance, each one of us should hope, with the grace of God, to persevere 'to the end' and to obtain the joy of heaven, as God's eternal reward for the good works accomplished with the grace of Christ," (CCC, par. 1821). Catholic Church Catechism 2016 also teaches: “The children of our holy mother the Church rightly hope for the grace of final perseverance and the recompense of God their Father for the good works accomplished with his grace in communion with Jesus.” CCC 2027 once again confirms how “we can merit for ourselves and for others all the graces needed to attain eternal life, as well as necessary temporal goods.”

In short, Catholics are told to cooperate with God’s *sanctifying* grace and persevere in this *state of grace* so they can save themselves through good works which are

called “graces.” Once again, graces are virtues that come from God which enable a Catholic to live a good life, win God’s approval, and ultimately earn their salvation. Many Catholic writings talk about “graces” that are needed to earn eternal life. However, the Bible does not say we are saved by *graces* given to us by God but by *grace* alone (Eph. 2:8).

A man once approached Jesus and asked: “Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? (Matthew 19:16). This is the underlying basis of Catholic Theology. Catholicism teaches that a person must perform good deeds to merit their salvation and justification before God. Another man once said to Jesus: Jesus taught something important in Luke 18:10-13:

“Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men *are*, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as *his* eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.”

Although Catholic Theology admits that Catholics are sinners in need of repeated forgiveness through Masses and priests, they also readily admit that they are also good people which are expected to earn or merit their justification before God, through acts of Penance and the practice of Indulgences, which allows them to pay for their own sinful debt before God and others, lessening their stay in the unknown world of Purgatorial fires. Sadly, Roman Catholicism teaches that a person must cooperate with God’s sanctifying grace and persevere in grace, or the help God is giving them to earn or merit their salvation. Catholics are told to not commit mortal sins, so they can remain in the state of sanctifying grace (earning their salvation) and not lose the original salvation given to them through baptism. And they are told to keep doing good things to lessen their stay in the purging fires of Purgatory. It’s clear that Catholics view grace as a type of transforming grace that enables them to perform good deeds which in return helps them earn and maintain salvation.

Of course, this is not the Biblical view of grace. There is no sanctifying grace in relation to our salvation. Grace, *as seen in the death of Jesus Christ for sinners* (Titus 2:11), is what is given to a person freely, since we are “justified freely by his grace”

(Rom. 3:24). Grace is something which is unearned and unmerited (Eph. 2:8-9). Saving grace is never viewed as HELPING people to be saved but is GIVING salvation to undeserving sinners freely and forever. God does not need any help in saving your soul! He has accomplished everything for your salvation through His Son Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 1:9

“Who hath saved us (once-and-for-all and forever), and called *us* with an holy calling, **not according to our works** (not according to our meritorious deeds that we perform to earn our salvation - not according to what we give up in the Lenten season, or according to our penitential good works), **but according to his own purpose and grace** (according to God’s compassionate favor and kindness), **which was given us** (as a free gift!) **in Christ Jesus** (in the saving merits of Jesus Christ alone) **before the world began”** (in the eternal plan of God).

This is the glorious plan of God regarding salvation. Salvation comes into our life through God’s free expression of grace as seen in the death of Christ (Rom. 3:24). There are no human works associated with God’s saving grace (“Not of works, lest any man should boast” – Eph. 2:9). However, in Romanism, infused grace is necessary because it produces good works which in turn are necessary for maintaining one's salvation. Persevering in good works, keeping commandments, and participating in the sacraments are all part of the salvation process. This is why salvation is never guaranteed in Catholicism or known to be possessed by the average Catholic. Salvation cannot be guaranteed because it depends on a person's own faithfulness and effort instead of Christ.

The Bible teaches that we need SAVING grace (Eph. 2:8-9; 2 Tim. 1:9) to bring salvation into our life and acceptance before God’s throne - not SANCTIFYING grace. Grace is *undeserved, unearned, unmerited, and unused* when it comes to a person’s salvation and justified position before God (Eph. 2:8-9). The old hymn writer said, “Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to the cross I cling.” We don’t use God’s grace or cooperate with God’s grace to be saved. God’s grace has no human cooperation or merit attached to it (Heb. 11:6).

Let’s set the record straight. A person does not COOPERATE with grace or the Gospel in order to be saved; they must BELIEVE the Gospel in order to be saved (1 Cor. 15:3-4). We must believe in Jesus Christ alone for our salvation (John 3:15-16; Acts

16:31), which is the way God expresses His saving grace to us as fallen sinners (Eph. 2:7; Titus 2:11). Saving grace is not a STATE that we remain in through good deeds but is a STANDING that we possess through the saving merits of Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:2; 1 Pet. 5:12). A believer's standing in Christ's perfect righteousness never changes!

Catholic Questions: How can you be sure you are in a state of sanctifying grace? What if you missed some sin and God no longer accepts you as His child? Will you then die and go to hell? How many graces or good virtues do you need perform to make sure that you are right before God? Is salvation a game of percentages and chances? It is wonderful and reassuring to put your faith alone in Jesus Christ and allow Him to once-and-for-all take away all of your sins and make you fit for Heaven by being clothed in His perfect righteousness ("And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness ... but the righteousness which is of God by faith" - Phil. 3:9).

Bottom Line: Cooperating with God's grace to earn or merit one's salvation instead of simply believing in God's grace (Jesus Christ's death on the cross) to save a person, becomes a barrier that keeps Catholics from trusting in Christ ALONE to be their Savior.

9. Catholic salvation can be reassured through Last Rites.

The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick was is administered to the dying Catholic, for the remission of sins, spiritual strength, and the recovery of physical health. The Last Rites ceremony is also termed as Extreme Unction which means anointing a person with oil who is in grave danger of dying. The ceremony is meant to prepare the dying person's soul for death, by providing absolution for sins, sacramental grace, and prayers for the relief of suffering through anointing. It commonly consists of confession, Holy Communion, and ceremonial Anointing.

The priest will begin with the Sign of the Cross and then administer the Sacrament of Confession (if the person is Catholic, conscious, and able to speak) or lead the person in an Act of Contrition. The priest will then lead the dying person in the Apostles' Creed or in the renewal of his or her baptismal promises (again, depending on whether the person is conscious). Non-Catholics can take part in this aspect of Last Rites as well.

At this point, the priest will anoint the dying person, using the form of the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick (for Catholics) or a simple anointing with holy oil or chrism (for non-Catholics). After reciting the "Our Father," the priest will then offer Communion to the dying Catholic (assuming he or she is conscious). This final Communion is referred to as *viaticum* (Latin - food for the journey into the next life) which is the Last Sacrament given to the Catholic. The ritual of last rites concludes with a final blessing and prayers.

Colossians 2:20 says this about rituals:

"Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances."

The one who believes only in the finished work of Jesus Christ's death to save them should never be subject to what the Bible terms as "ordinances." These are religious, legalistic regulations or practices which are followed in order to help a person to get to Heaven. One of these ordinances in the Catholic Church is Last Rites. Last Rites is a tradition of man (Mark 7:8; Col. 2:8) performed on those dying to make sure no mortal sins are left in a person's life that might damn them to hell and cause them to miss their stay in Purgatory. Like Mass and Confession, this end-of-life ceremony is a *means of grace*, or another way to transfer God's grace into a person's life before they die.

We have seen that the Catholic understanding of salvation is conditioned upon ongoing forgiveness for one's salvation and justification before God, through Mass (repeated forgiveness that gets people out of Purgatory faster) and Confession to priests (forgiveness that is needed to save someone from a mortal sin that would damn them to hell). For this reason, Catholics also believe that they should have Last Rites performed over them, through the ritual of a priest, to reassure them that all of their mortal sins on this earth have been forgiven before they enter eternity.

Catholic Catechism 1520 states: "A particular gift of the Holy Spirit. the first grace of this sacrament is one of strengthening, peace and courage to overcome the difficulties that go with the condition of serious illness or the frailty of old age. This grace is a gift of the Holy Spirit, who renews trust and faith in God and strengthens against the temptations of the evil one, the temptation to discouragement and anguish in the face of death. This assistance from the Lord by the power of his Spirit is meant to lead the sick person to healing of the soul, but also of the body if such is God's will. Furthermore, **"if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven."**

Catholic Catechism 1523 adds: “The Anointing of the Sick completes our conformity to the death and Resurrection of Christ, just as Baptism began it. It completes the holy anointings that mark the whole Christian life: that of Baptism which sealed the new life in us, and that of Confirmation which strengthened us for the combat of this life. This last anointing fortifies the end of our earthly life like a solid rampart for the final struggles before entering the Father's house.

This is a rite performed by the priest on the seriously ill. It is viewed as a special grace given to the sick through prayer and anointing the sick with oil. It is supposed to make one better prepared to face death by purifying one's soul of any sins they might have missed before Confession. Through the administration of last rites at the time of death, a Catholic can be spared from going to hell by receiving forgiveness for mortal sins, through the final prayers and rituals of a Roman Catholic priest. Administering the sacrament, the priest says, “Through this holy anointing may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit.” He also says, “**May the Lord Who frees you from your sins, save you and raise you up.**”

The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick absolves or forgives all the sins the person is sorry for but did not previously confess in the Sacrament of Confession and Penance. If the person can't make a confession, the anointing compensates by forgiving those sins he would have confessed, if he was able to do so.

The Catholic also believes that they can in some sense experience personal redemptive suffering that is united with Christ's suffering (a type of suffering that helps them to merit eternal life) when they are passing through suffering. Catholic Church Catechism 1521 states: “Union with the passion of Christ. By the grace of this sacrament the sick person receives the strength and the gift of uniting himself more closely to Christ's Passion: in a certain way he is consecrated to bear fruit by configuration to the Savior's redemptive Passion. **Suffering**, a consequence of original sin, acquires a new meaning; **it becomes a participation in the saving work of Jesus.**”

This means that a Catholic can in some mystical way participate in the saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross which is somehow applied to his life at the time of death. So, even when dying, Catholics are entering into Christ's suffering to earn or merit their salvation and justification before God. In short, Catholics believe that Mass,

Penance, and Last Rites are what prepares people for their heavenly homeland after their earthly pilgrimage.

The Extreme Unction or Last Anointing is a false teaching since a justified and saved believer has already received complete forgiveness for all his sins through faith in Christ's finished work (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14). No person who is truly saved and forgiven needs Last Rites; this is because they have received the first rites of God's total and complete forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

Colossians 2:13 gives this promise:

“And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.”

Yes, you read the Scripture correctly. God has promised that you can have all of your sins forgiven through Jesus Christ once and for all and forever. Now this is something very wonderful. You can actually know that all of your sins are forgiven by God through Jesus Christ – past sins, present sins, and future sins. God has a big eraser!

Catholic Questions: Do you know that all of your sins are forgiven forever through Jesus Christ? You can be assured of this if you will believe what the Bible teaches. Christ was judged for all of your sins (“the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God” - 1 Pet. 3:18). Why not just place your faith alone in Jesus Christ who bore the judgment for every one of your sins and who promises to forgive you of all your sins forever (“their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more” – Heb. 10:17).

Bottom Line: Trusting in the ceremony of Last Rites to prepare you for eternity also becomes a barrier that gets in the way of Catholics trusting in the finished work of Christ ALONE to provide complete forgiveness of sins, save them from hell, and take them to Heaven.

10. Catholic salvation is finalized in Purgatory as living saints pray and perform meritorious gifts for Catholics to be released into Heaven.

The Bible repeatedly and unmistakably declares that through faith alone in Jesus Christ, faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ (His death, burial, and resurrection), that a person can know beyond a shadow of a doubt that all of his sins are washed away

forever and that God has accepted them in His presence, by openly declaring them sanctified and justified.

The truth of 1 Corinthians 6:11 authoritatively declares:

“And such were some of you (before we were saved): but **ye are washed** (totally cleansed of all our sins!), but **ye are sanctified** (made holy in God’s presence), but **ye are justified** (declared righteous in God’s presence) in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

There are no “ifs” “ands” or “buts” about it. When we place faith in Christ, all of these spiritual blessings become our immediately and forever. But the Catholic Church rejects the clear promise of what God’s Word teaches. Catholic Theology teaches there is a need for further cleansing from sin after one dies.

Purgatory: Catholic Theology does not believe Jesus paid the necessary fine or penalty for sin completely and forever. Therefore, when a Catholic dies they believe that they enter a place called Purgatory which allows them to pass through a time of final cleansing from sin. According to Catholic teaching, people spend lesser or greater amounts of time in Purgatory depending on the level of purging needed for their venial sins (non-damning sins). Purgatory is viewed as a hospital for the soul.

Catholic Church Catechism 1031 states: “The Church gives the name Purgatory to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned. The Church formulated her doctrine of faith on Purgatory especially at the Councils of Florence and Trent. The tradition of the Church, by reference to certain texts of Scripture, speaks of a cleansing fire.”

The Second Vatican Council, p. 63, says, "The truth has been divinely revealed that sins are followed by punishments. Gods holiness and justice inflict them. Sins must be expiated. This may be done on this earth through the sorrows, miseries and trials of this life and, above all, through death. Otherwise the expiation must be made in the next life through fire and torments or purifying punishments." Catholic Catechism 1030 says, “All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.”

There is a difference of opinion among Catholic writers on the severity of suffering in Purgatory. One Catholic writer said: "The old pictures of the suffering souls in the fires of Purgatory should motivate us now to regularly examine our conscience, go to confession, and do penance." Dwight Longenecker, a Catholic priest, writes: "Despite the hardships endured by the faithful as they climb their way through purgatory toward heaven, it is actually a joyful place." There seems to be a difference of opinion on the type of suffering in Purgatory. Many feel it is more mental anguish than any physical effects of suffering. Of course, nobody knows since this is an imaginary place invented by the imaginary doctrines of men (Matt. 15:9; Col. 2:22).

According to Catholic Theology, Purgatory is not for everyone. Baptized infants who have died before the age of accountability and Catholic saints who lived such holy lives are excused from the "purifying fires." Nobody knows how long a person remains in Purgatory. It depends on the severity of one's sins. It could be anywhere from a few hours to millions of years! Purgatory is a Catholic fairytale land that does not exist. The Bible speaks of no such place. The Bible teaches there are only two places that a person can go after they die – Heaven or hell (2 Cor. 5:8; Luke 16:23; Hebrews 9:27). There is no "limbo" or in-between place a person goes after they die. There is no temporary place of suffering before a person gets to Heaven. If a person has believed in Jesus Christ to be his Savior, they immediately enter God's presence upon death ("absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" – 2 Cor. 5:8). We are going to immediately "depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better" (Phil. 1:23). This is the believer's blessed hope!

Catholic theologians have tried to teach the doctrine of Purgatory from 1 Corinthians 3:15 which says, "but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." But this "fire" has nothing to do with the purging in Purgatory. The context is clearly speaking of the time when God's saints are evaluated for their rewards – not their salvation. The "fire" that is mentioned is God's omniscient inspection of our lives which will allow Him to reward us appropriately. The Bible says that the fire will test or "try every man's work (or service), of what sort it is" (1 Cor. 3:13). This is not an examination to forgive us of our sins but an examination to give us reward.

The believer that has trusted Christ as his Savior does not need any more forgiveness that is related to salvation and going to Heaven, since he has already been forgiven of all his sins (Eph. 1:7) and has peace before God through the

cleansing of “the blood of the cross” (Col. 1:20) – not through Purgatory’s imaginary cleansing. No person will be condemned to a time of purification and suffering in Purgatory, if they trust in Christ alone for their salvation. In fact, there is no place called Purgatory. The condemnation or judgment for your sins can only occur in hell. And this is where you will end up if you do not rely totally upon Jesus Christ to be your Savior.

Jesus said in John 3:18:

“He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already (you are already going to hell), because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

Friend, Christ already paid the penalty of judgment for your sins. He paid the fine that God required for sin, when He died in your place; therefore, you do not have to suffer for any of your sins in Purgatory. Christ already suffered for every one of your sins.

Galatians 3:13

“Christ hath redeemed us (set us free) from the curse of the law (hell’s judgment), being made a curse for us (taking the curse of judgment in our place): for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.”

Purgatory implies 1) Christ’s death did not pay the full penalty for our sins 2) justification is not by faith alone 3) there is something we must do in order to be cleansed of sin. What is important to remember is that Christ “suffered for our sins” (1 Pet. 3:18). There is no amount of suffering that we can do that could create the forgiveness of sins for others. Our faith must rest in Jesus Christ, the very One who suffered in our place.

Catholic Theology teaches that although sins (venial and mortal) can be forgiven through Mass and Confession in order to keep one out of hell and lessen one’s stay in Purgatory, it’s still necessary to pass through temporary punishment for one’s sins, sometimes in this life, through works of Penance, and certainly in the next life of Purgatory, so every sin can be fully compensated for and finally forgiven. The compensation for the venial sins (lesser or non-damning sins) of the deceased can be obtained by those on earth who choose to pray for them. In fact, asking a priest to say a Mass on a person’s behalf, who has been deceased, can shorten their stay

in Purgatory. The compensation or paying the debt for the sins of others in Purgatory can also be met through works of Penance and indulgences.

Of course, the concept of Purgatory makes good sense to a works-based salvation. It is the outgrowth of the Catholic view of salvation. This is because every Catholic knows that they are not good enough to go to Heaven on the basis of their living, since they have committed many sins over their lifetime. Therefore, they opt for a time of cleansing following their death for the temporal and final punishments that are still necessary to cleanse individuals from the remnants of sin not erased by the sacraments.

One Catholic apologist says: “The purification is necessary because, as Scripture teaches, nothing unclean will enter the presence of God in heaven (Rev. 21:27) and, while we may die with our mortal sins forgiven, there can still be many impurities in us, specifically venial sins and the temporal punishment due to sins already forgiven.” This is vain reasoning since Jesus taught that the person who believes only in Jesus Christ’s death for his salvation and forgiveness is totally cleansed of all his sins forever (Col. 2:13 - “having forgiven you all trespasses”).

A Catholic Website reads: “We are all in need of grace to come into the perfection of charity. We cannot enter heaven if we have not been completely cleansed of sin and all punishment due to sin. We believe that a Mass offered for a departed relative or friend may help hasten that final purification which he/she may still be undergoing in purgatory.”

This vain reasoning destroys the sufficiency of Christ’s death to take away all of our sins. The Bible says we have been purified of all our sins forever in the sight of God through Christ’s finished work on the cross.

Hebrews 1:3 triumphantly declares:

“Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, **when he had by himself purged our sins** (cleansed and washed away our sins provide complete expiation or satisfaction before God), **sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high**” (demonstrating that His saving work was finished).

1 Corinthians 6:11 once again reminds us:

“And such were some of you: but **ye are washed** (completely and forever cleansed of all your sins), but **ye are sanctified** (presented holy in God’s presence), but **ye are justified** (acquitted and declared legally righteous in God’s presence) in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

Revelation 1:5 again declares:

“And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins (all of them!) in his own blood.”

The Bible teaches us that Jesus purges us from all of our sins the moment we believe on Him alone for our salvation. This means will not need any final purging in Purgatory in order to get to Heaven. We will not be purged of our sins in any place or in any capacity after we die. Purification from our sins is not a lifetime process which ends in Purgatory. The Bible also teaches that when we transfer our trust (faith) only to Christ that He in return transfers perfect righteousness, justification, salvation, forgiveness, and eternal life to us. This occurs only once. Once and done! Once for all Christ rescued me! Is it true for you? Have you believed in the total saving provision of Jesus Christ? Salvation is not a process but a completed and final transaction that occurs in one’s life when they place faith in Christ alone (Gal. 3:26).

Bottom Line: Believing that a Catholic goes to Purgatory for more cleansing is one more barrier that keeps Catholics from trusting in Christ ALONE and the only One Who can purify us from all of our sins forever (Heb. 1:3).

Indulgences: This was part of an article in the New York Times, February 9, 2009. “In recent months, dioceses around the world have been offering Catholics a spiritual benefit that fell out of favor decades ago — the indulgence, a sort of amnesty from punishment in the afterlife — and reminding them of the church’s clout in mitigating the wages of sin.

“The fact that many Catholics under 50 have never sought one, and never heard of indulgences except in high school European history (Martin Luther denounced the selling of them in 1517 while igniting the Protestant Reformation), simply makes their reintroduction more urgent among church leaders bent on restoring fading traditions of penance in what they see as a self-satisfied world. “Why are we

bringing it back?” asked Bishop Nicholas A. DiMarzio of Brooklyn, who has embraced the move. ‘Because there is sin in the world. It faded away with a lot of things in the church. But it was never given up. It was always there. We just want to people to return to the ideas they used to know.’”

“Getting Catholics back into confession, in fact, was one of the motivations for reintroducing the indulgence. In a 2001 speech, Pope John Paul described the newly reborn tradition as ‘a happy incentive’ for confession.

“According to church teaching, even after sinners are absolved in the confessional and say their Our Fathers or Hail Mary’s as penance, they still face punishment after death, in Purgatory, before they can enter heaven. In exchange for certain prayers, devotions or pilgrimages in special years, a Catholic can receive an indulgence, which reduces or erases that punishment instantly, with no formal ceremony or sacrament.

“There are partial indulgences, which reduce purgatorial time by a certain number of days or years, and plenary indulgences, which eliminate all of it, until another sin is committed. You can get one for yourself, or for someone who is dead. You cannot buy one — the church outlawed the sale of indulgences in 1567 — but charitable contributions, combined with other acts, can help you earn one. There is a limit of one plenary indulgence per sinner per day.”

This is like saying, “One plenary indulgence per day — for a limited time only, not valid in some states, call now!” What’s next, get out of hell free cards?

Here is another article that appeared in “The Guardian” on Tuesday, July 16, 2013. “In its latest attempt to keep up with the times the Vatican has married one of its oldest traditions to the world of social media by offering “indulgences” to followers of Pope Francis’ tweets. The church’s granted indulgences reduce the time Catholics believe they will have to spend in purgatory after they have confessed and been absolved of their sins. The remissions got a bad name in the Middle Ages because unscrupulous churchmen sold them for large sums of money. But now indulgences are being applied to the 21st century.

“But a senior Vatican official warned web-surfing Catholics that indulgences still required a dose of old-fashioned faith, and that paradise was not just a few mouse

clicks away. 'You can't obtain indulgences like getting a coffee from a vending machine,' Archbishop Claudio Maria Celli, head of the pontifical council for social communication, told the Italian daily *Corriere della Sera*.

"Indulgences these days are granted to those who carry out certain tasks – such as climbing the Sacred Steps, in Rome (reportedly brought from Pontius Pilate's house after Jesus scaled them before his crucifixion), a feat that earns believers seven years off purgatory. But attendance at events such as the Catholic World Youth Day, in Rio de Janeiro, a week-long event starting on 22 July, can also win an indulgence.

"Mindful of the faithful who cannot afford to fly to Brazil, the Vatican's sacred apostolic penitentiary, a court which handles the forgiveness of sins, has also extended the privilege to those following the "rites and pious exercises" of the event on television, radio and through social media.

"That includes following Twitter," said a source at the penitentiary, referring to Pope Francis' Twitter account, which has gathered seven million followers. "But you must be following the events live. It is not as if you can get an indulgence by chatting on the internet."

Indulgences are being reintroduced in the Catholic Church and Rome is attempting to bring back the importance of indulgences. Why? It's because this teaching and practice has never been renounced by the Catholic Church. Here is the canon: "Since the power of granting indulgences was conferred by Christ on the Church (cf. Mt 16:19, 18:18, Jn 20:23), and she has even in the earliest times made use of that power divinely given to her, the holy council teaches and commands that the use of indulgences, most salutary to the Christian people and approved by the authority of the holy councils, is to be retained in the Church, and it condemns with anathema those who assert that they are useless or deny that there is in the Church the power of granting them" (Sess. 25, Decree on Indulgences).

Closely related to the false doctrine of Purgatory is indulgences where the merits (good deeds) of one Catholic can lessen his own stay in Purgatory and also be transferred to another Catholic that is in Purgatory. While they are being punished for these sins in Purgatory the meritorious deeds of other saints in Heaven and on earth (indulgences) are being applied to them to appease God's anger toward them

and earn their forgiveness. Catholics have to pay the debt in Purgatory (a temporal or temporary punishment) for the residual effects of their sins which are still present when they die. A Catholic in one sense becomes the savior of other Catholics as they appeal to the “treasury of merit” in Heaven (a vast reservoir of good deeds of the saints of all ages) which can be used to appease God’s anger toward the sinner in Purgatory and provide final cleansing for their sins.

What is the difference between Penance and Indulgences? According to Catholic teaching, Penance is a sacrament that pertains to only those who are living and occurs after the Sacrament of Reconciliation (after one receives forgiveness by a priest for mortal sins). However, the meritorious deeds of an indulgence (a payment for sin) can be applied to either the living or the dead to help lessen their stay in Purgatory (Canon 959 & 992).

According to Catholic teaching, Indulgences are meritorious or saving works performed by one person (prayers, sufferings, almsgiving, reciting the rosary, the pious exercise of the stations of the cross, or some other meritorious act performed in accordance with requirements set by a leader in the Catholic Church), which lessen the stay of that person in Purgatory. These works are also designed to purge another person of their sins who is already in Purgatory and awaiting their release. Catholic teaching says that an indulgence is “a way to reduce the amount of punishment one has to undergo for sins.”

One Catholic writer speaks plainly about this: “Through sacramental confession we obtain forgiveness, but we aren’t let off the hook as far as punishment goes.” In other words, Catholics must in some measure deal with the aftermath of their sins or the consequences for their sins in the next life. However, to try and make a distinction between forgiveness and punishment for one’s sins in relationship to a person’s salvation and heavenly destiny is a distorted way of thinking. To be sure, being cleansed of sins in Purgatory is part of the saving process that a Catholic must endure in order to get to Heaven. It is part of the Catholic salvation experience. However, the Bible teaches that when a person is saved and forgiven of all their sins before God (Acts 26:18; 1 Cor. 6:11; Rev. 1:5; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14), they are also released from all the condemnation and punishment associated with these sins (John 3:16-18, 36; 5:24). Therefore, forgiveness and punishment for sins are woven together in the saving plan of God and cannot be separated as many Catholics assume.

An indulgence, according to the Roman Catholic Church, is actually a means of seeking God's forgiveness by experiencing temporary punishment for a person's venial sins (lesser sins), which have already been forgiven, but nonetheless still require a certain amount of punishment, sometimes in this life (through various forms of suffering), but most assuredly in the next life (suffering in Purgatory). Catholic Theologians do teach that this punishment or suffering is most often in Purgatory but can also be experienced in this life to some degree. An indulgence allegedly removes time needed to be spent in Purgatory.

You cannot buy indulgences anymore since the church outlawed the sale of indulgences in 1567. However, charitable contributions, combined with other acts, can help you earn one. According to Catholic Theology, there are two kinds of indulgences: partial and plenary (Canon 993 & 994). A partial indulgence removes part of the punishment of sins which allows for less time in Purgatory. A plenary indulgence removes all of the punishment of sins which can potentially free one from entering Purgatory. One Catholic said: "If you do merit a full pardon, it's fine to break out the bubbly." Another said of a full indulgence, "It is your get-out-of-jail-free Purgatory card." Of course, no person really can know that they will escape Purgatory since any sin committed will immediately consign a person to the place of Purgatory. Indulgences are primarily given to Catholics so they might spend less time in the purging fires of Purgatory, since a person is only punished for the sins that are not cleansed, prior to their death. In short, indulgences subtract from a Catholic's time of cleansing and punishment that he or she must undergo in Purgatory.

Catholics believe they are normally in a state of *owing God satisfaction* for the temporary punishment (suffering) they are due because of sins they have committed, and they are expecting to spend some time in Purgatory until they are cleansed by its fire and made fit for Heaven. The Catholic believes they have to constantly perform good works to try and lessen the punishment they will receive. The Catholic literally tries to "work" their way into Heaven, thinking they are making themselves more acceptable to God in the process. Then, when entering Purgatory, Catholics rely on the good works and prayers of friends and relatives to get them out of Purgatory and into Heaven.

On the inside of the cover of the New St. Joseph Baltimore Catechism published in 1969 there is a prayer. After the prayer it says the following: "An indulgence of five

years. A plenary indulgence on the usual conditions, provided this prayer has been recited daily for a month." This means that by saying the prayer properly, five years is removed from a person's time in Purgatory! On the same page of the New St. Joseph Baltimore Catechism it says, "The faithful who devote 20 minutes to a half hour to teaching or studying Christian doctrine, may gain: an indulgence of three years. A plenary indulgence on the usual conditions twice a month, if the above practice is carried out at least twice a month."

According to this catechism, if you say the prayer properly, you can have five years removed from your time in Purgatory. Likewise, if the faithful devote 20 minutes to a half hour to teaching or studying Christian doctrine, they can have three years removed from their stay in Purgatory. Is this biblical? Not at all. It is absolutely ridiculous to think that reading doctrine and saying a prayer removes time of punishment in the Catholic-invented place called Purgatory. All of this is nothing more than a means to control Catholics and keep them dependent on "The Mother Church."

In short, this treasury of the church of Rome (a mythical place of meritorious deeds) is a means by which it keeps its people dependent upon its sacramental, ecclesiastical system. Without participation in Roman Catholic Sacraments, future punishment will be far more extensive in Purgatory. The Roman Catholic Church keeps its people coming back to it, dependent upon it, needful for the dispensing of the treasury of meritorious works that it has at its disposal through indulgences.

According to Catholic teaching, sin has two distinct punishments attached to it. One is eternal and the other is temporal. Catholic Theologians teach that indulgences do not save a person from the eternal and spiritual consequences for sins (hell) but pertain to Catholics dealing with the temporal (temporary) consequences for sins in this life or in Purgatory. The Roman Catholic Church distinguishes between eternal punishment for "major" sin and temporal punishment for "minor" sin. However, indulgences are seen as part of getting a person out of Purgatory and into Heaven. They are part of the works-salvation approach and experience of Catholics. So, indulgences are part of the Catholic's ongoing process of obtaining salvation before God.

Only a few lucky Catholics, who die in a state of pristine grace, having done so many good works of Penance and Indulgences (however many that might be!) can release

themselves from the debt of their sins before God, so they can die and go directly to Heaven. Catholic writers will give lists of religious qualifications one can use to help them avoid Purgatory. Several books and articles caught my attention: “How to Avoid Purgatory,” “Five Steps to Avoid Purgatory” and “12 Steps to Avoid Purgatory.” But in the end, no Catholic can know they will escape Purgatory for the simple reason that they can never know they have done enough good deeds, said enough “Hail Mary’s” or prayed to enough saints to escape the fiery judgment of the next life. How many good deeds and prayers are enough? Nobody knows – not even Catholics. Most Catholics believe that only the great saints have escaped Purgatory and this is why they pray to them for help in getting out of Purgatory!

This is why the Catholic teachings speak of the importance of indulgences: “Indulgences are part of the Church’s infallible teaching. This means that no Catholic is at liberty to disbelieve in them. The Council of Trent stated that it condemns with anathema those who say that indulgences are useless or that the Church does not have the power to grant them’ (Trent, session 25, Decree on Indulgences). Trent’s anathema places indulgences in the realm of infallibly defined teaching.

The Second Vatican Council, p. 63, mentions Purgatory as a place of punishment and purging for Catholic sins: “The truth has been divinely revealed that sins are followed by punishments. God's holiness and justice inflict them. Sins must be expiated. This may be done on this earth through the sorrows, miseries and trials of this life and, above all, through death. Otherwise the expiation must be made in the next life through fire and torments or purifying punishments.” The Roman Catholic Church teaches that Purgatory is a place of punishment where people **expiate** their own sins (CCC, 1475).

According to Catholic Theology, one way to be cleansed from the residual effects of sins is accomplished through indulgences which are designed to “expiate” a person’s sins. Expiation is a term associated with the removal, cleansing, or forgiveness of sin.

One Catholic teaches states this:

“At the core of indulgences is sin, which can either lead to eternal punishment — i.e., hell — or time spent in purgatory, a place of suffering where imperfections are

scrubbed away in preparation for entering heaven. Confession erases eternal punishment, but temporal punishment remains.”

But how does a person expiate or cleanse himself of his own sins? No person can do this through the application of meritorious works to his life. Only Jesus Christ can cleanse us from all of our sins forever. The Bible says that Jesus died on the cross “to take away our sins” (1 John 3:5) and promises every Gospel believer that “I shall take away their sins” (Romans 11:27).

Psalm 103:12 gives this wonderful promise:

“As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.”

Just as “east is east, and west is west, and never the twain shall meet,” so the believer and his sins will never meet. Those sins have been put out of God’s sight forever by the death of Jesus Christ on the sinner’s behalf. This speaks of the total removal of all our sins and the punishment that our sins required. Through faith in Jesus Christ ALONE, we can know that our sins are totally and forever removed. Indulgences will not take away any of your sins. This is a horrible teaching since it reduces the power and glory of the cross and God’s total and unconditional forgiveness.

Jesus taught in Luke 7:42:

“And when they **had nothing to pay** (no indulgences, no treasury of good works), he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?”

Isaiah 55:1

“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and **he that hath no money**; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk **without money and without price**” (without indulgences, without the saint’s good works providing satisfaction for our sin after we die).

Our eternal salvation and forgiveness before God is without human price or involvement. Salvation and eternal forgiveness before God is free to receive through faith alone in Jesus Christ!

The process of Catholic's seeking and finding cleansing from the residual effects of their own sins through indulgences through the application of the meritorious works of other saints is heresy. The Roman Catholic Church needs to recant its false teaching and urge its people to look to Christ ALONE for their cleaning and salvation

The teaching of indulgences is another tradition (Gal. 1:14) in Roman Catholicism that is absolutely foreign to the teaching of Scripture and actually sidesteps God's unmerited saving grace as the only means or way of a person's salvation.

Galatians 2:21

"I do not frustrate (set aside, violate) the grace of God: for if righteousness (before God's presence) *come* by the law (works, good deeds, Penance, indulgences), then Christ is dead in vain (Christ's death is meaningless and worthless to us).

Think about this for a moment. If a person can tap into the meritorious, heavenly reservoir of the good works of dead saints in order to save people from Purgatory and get them ready for Heaven, then there is no need for grace. Why would Christ have to die if a person can be finally saved by the merits of other saints? Indulgences diminishes the value of Christ's death. If a person can be finally saved by the merits of others, including Mary's meritorious good works, then Christ died in vain. His death was for a worthless cause.

Catholic Church Catechism 1471 states, "The doctrine and practice of indulgences in the Church are closely linked to the effects of the sacrament of Penance. What is an indulgence? 'An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain prescribed conditions through the action of the Church which, as the minister of redemption, dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of the satisfactions of Christ and the saints.' 'An indulgence is partial or plenary according as it removes either part or all of the temporal punishment due to sin.' The faithful can gain indulgences for themselves or apply them to the dead."

Yes, it's true. The Roman Catholic Church actually teaches that there is a vast reservoir of "indulgences" (meritorious deeds and good works) that can cancel out the debt of people's sins that are in Purgatory. The treasury is allegedly filled up with the works and prayers of Christ, His mother Mary, and the saints of all ages.

It's viewed as a treasury of merit that is so vast it can never be exhausted or depleted. Therefore, people can buy these indulgences (meritorious deeds and good works) from the Roman Catholic Church through monetary gifts and lesson a person's stay in Purgatory. They can also add to this treasury of merit by performing good deeds which will lessen their own stay in Purgatory and the stay of others.

The merit of Mary and the Saints can be applied to Catholics and others as stated in the Catholic Church Catechism 1477, "This treasury includes as well the prayers and good works of the Blessed Virgin Mary. They are truly immense, unfathomable, and even pristine in their value before God. In the treasury, too, are the prayers and good works of all the saints, all those who have followed in the footsteps of Christ the Lord and by his grace have made their lives holy and carried out the mission in the unity of the Mystical Body."

This is blasphemous. The Bible reveals that no person can provide meritorious deeds for another person. In short, you cannot save another person through your good works. This is because Jesus taught in John 6:63 that "**It is the spirit that quickeneth** (brings spiritual life and salvation to us); **the flesh profiteth nothing** (our own human attainments and achievements given on the behalf of others are absolutely worthless): the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life."

This is worth reiterating. Catholics actually believe that forgiveness is applied to our lives over a long period of time, through the intercessions of other praying saints, including Mary, and the practice of using indulgences (good deeds or meritorious works) of other saints, to release other fellow-Catholics from their sin debt, essentially paying the fine for their sins, so God's anger can be appeased toward these sinners. The combined, repeated acts of hundreds, thousands, and millions of indulgences over the years are designed to provide forgiveness for others and lesson their stay in Purgatory. The Catholic Church Catechism 1498 erroneously states, "Through indulgences the faithful can obtain the remission of temporal punishment resulting from sin for themselves and also for the souls in Purgatory."

Roman Catholicism teaches that even though mortal sins are absolved by a priest (CCC 1463, 1495) to keep a person out of hell, the punishment due to a person because of his sin still remains. To deal with the remaining temporary punishment that one must pass through in Purgatory, indulgences are administered, which

actually deal with the residual punishment and guilt of those sins which have already been forgiven by a priest (CCC 1471, 1498). In other words, the residual effects of sin still remain and Catholics must pass through temporary punishment for their sins in proportion to the type and amount of sins they have committed. Forgiveness is not enough, there must be punishment attached to the sins. In other words, there is a debt remaining for the sins that Catholics have committed which needs to be paid for and the way the debt is paid is to experience some type of suffering in Purgatory.

I'm so glad that Jesus did all the suffering in our place, so that we will never have to suffer for any of our sins. He took away our sin debt through His own suffering. The Bible says, "**But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities...**" (Isaiah 53:6) "He was oppressed, and **he was afflicted**, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth" (Isaiah 53:7). Jesus suffered for our sins, bearing the penalty for all of our sins on the cross, so we never must suffer any judgment for our sins.

1 Peter 3:18 declares:

"For Christ also hath **once suffered for sins** (so we will never suffer any spiritual consequences for our sins), the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit."

There are no residual effects of suffering for our sins. Jesus did all the suffering in our place as our substitute (1 Pet. 2:24). To say that we must pass through some type of suffering for our sins belittles the work of Christ on our behalf. The full debt for our sin has been paid! That is why Jesus cried from the cross, "**It is finished**" (John 19:30). The full payment and punishment for sin was made on the sinner's behalf!

"Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
In my place condemned He stood;
Sealed my pardon with His blood.
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

Lifted up was He to die;
"It is finished!" was His cry;
Now in Heav'n exalted high.
Hallelujah! What a Savior!"

The whole idea of Purgatory and Indulgences mocks the death of Christ. Jesus suffered so greatly on the cross of Calvary that the Bible reveals “his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men” (Isa. 52:14). But the teaching of Purgatory says this was not enough to pay for the sin debt of people. Jesus was separated from the Father’s presence in those dark hours on the cross (Mark 15:34). But the need for more suffering in Purgatory concludes that the suffering of Jesus Christ was not enough in bearing God’s wrath for our sins. There is more suffering that is needed for millions and millions of Catholics after they die. How much, nobody knows.

It is wonderful to believe and accept what the Bible teaches. Jesus took the full punishment for our sins upon Himself, so that we will never have to suffer any kind of judgment for them in hell, or in the fairytale land and place called Purgatory. If we place our faith in Christ alone, placing our full confidence in Christ’s saving sacrifice to take away our judgment, we will never have to suffer the consequences for our sins. Jesus taught, “He that believeth on him is not condemned” (John 3:18). This means we will never have to pay the consequences for our own sins, or experience judgment for our sins after we die, since He paid the penalty in our place. Right now you can claim Christ’s promise.

If you believe on Jesus Christ ALONE to save you (without trusting in sacraments, your good works Penance, Indulgences), then you will never experience God’s wrath and punishment for any of your sins. This is because the debt of all your sins has been wiped away, erased, totally forgiven, through the death of Jesus Christ on your behalf. “And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin” (1 John 3:5). If you place your faith alone in Christ alone for your salvation and forgiveness, you can know that all of your sins are taken away and that Jesus bore the punishment for every one of them.

Now let’s think about the debt of sin that we have before God. It is an enormous debt that we must pay and the Bible says in Romans 6:23 that “the wages of sin is death” (separation from God in hell). The wages or payment that each one of us deserve is hell and damnation for our sins. Now, an indulgence actually refers to paying for a sin debt – the sin debt of Catholics. However, the idea that the good deeds of other Catholics and saints can pay for the sinner’s judgment and release them from God’s judgment is the height of all blasphemy. The Bible teaches that Jesus paid the sinner’s spiritual debt before God with the sacrifice of His own life

upon the cross. When Jesus experienced God's wrath on our behalf, He took the full judgment of our sin debt upon Himself. It was the judgment that we deserved.

1 Peter 2:24 describes the glorious transaction in this way:

"Who his own self bare our sins (the penalty or sin debt related to our sins) in his own body on the tree (when Jesus died on the cross), that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (that we might be spiritually healed, having our sin debt totally forgiven).

"Jesus paid it all,
All to Him I owe,
Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow."

Friend, Jesus bore your full debt of sin, so that you might not bare any of it by facing God's wrath or judgment! This is grace and it is wonderful! But Roman Catholicism teaches otherwise. Catholics are taught that there still remains a sin debt before God that must be paid. This is why there is a need for indulgences. Romanism teaches the need for indulgences to pay for the sinner's debt. They can be expressed through praying the rosary and through many personal good deeds which are sent on to a treasury of good works, which will satisfy God's wrath against the sinners in Purgatory.

In essence, other people who are still alive can lessen their own stay in Purgatory and also buy people out of Purgatory. An indulgence (some meritorious human efforts rooted in the sacraments and other religious good works) is believed to offer the sinner the means of forgiveness and release him from his sinful debt after death in the purging fires of Purgatory. These good deeds are applied to the treasury of merit in Heaven and enable a person to experience a faster purging process in Purgatory, where they must suffer some temporal consequences for their sins (pay the fine for their sins) in order to be granted forgiveness.

According to Catholic Theology, there are various kinds of indulgences or meritorious works performed for oneself and the dead who are in Purgatory. For instance, making the sign of the cross is said to be a partial indulgence which lessens a person's stay in Purgatory. Reciting the rosary in a family group or setting can grant an indulgence that will lesson a person's stay in Purgatory. Visiting a Catholic shrine, sacramental confession, attending the Mass, venerating the saints

in Heaven, almsgiving, and praying for the pope are other ways to lessen a person's stay in Purgatory (your own stay and the stay of others).

Nobody knows how long it will take, how many prayers it will take, how many Hail Mary's it will take to finally satisfy God's wrath toward the sinner and stop his temporal or temporary suffering in Purgatory. What a hopeless and heathenistic teaching this is!

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states: "An indulgence is obtained through the Church who, by virtue of the power of binding and loosing granted her by Christ Jesus, intervenes in favor of individual Christians and opens for them the treasury of the merits of Christ and the saints to obtain from the Father of mercies the remission of the temporal punishment due for their sins."

In summary, indulgences are a way to reduce the amount of spiritual punishment a person has to undergo for their sins, whether its temporal punishment for sins in this life or in the next life (Purgatory). Indulgences (paying the debt for the sins of others who have died) is still part of the Catholic Church's alleged infallible teaching. Saints throughout history have offered up their sufferings, mortifications, alms, and good works as capital in the Church's spiritual warehouse to pay the debt for the sins of those who have died, so they can be released from their sins and discharged from Purgatory.

The Bible nowhere speaks of a person's good deeds or meritorious works being able to satisfy God's wrath and provide forgiveness and salvation for another. This is an erroneous and far-fetched invention of Roman Catholicism.

Philippians 3:8

"Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things (all legalistic, and meritorious works), and do **count them *but* dung**, that I may win (gain) Christ."

Dung or manure cannot save souls and that is exactly what our good deeds are compared to when we boastfully place before a holy God as a means to justify and save ourselves and others! It is a mockery of the work of Christ to think that human works can release someone from their sin debt before God. If a person really wants

to gain salvation through Jesus Christ, they must renounce false religion, their own personal attainments, and express faith alone in Christ's finished and saving work.

One Catholic summarizes this false doctrine: "Truly smart people will start today to get all of the indulgences they possibly can. None of us are guaranteed a tomorrow. And no one needs to die with all of the punishment for all of their sins yet to be paid. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross opened the door to heaven for us all, which had been closed since the sin of Adam and Eve; it did not pay the penalty for our individual sins, like some Protestants think. In other words, Jesus' dying on the cross is not a "get out of jail free" card for us sinners. We still need to confess our sins, and we still need to pay back the punishment due those sins (Matthew 5:26). Making a good confession (removing the guilt) combined with getting indulgences (removing the temporal punishment) is the answer."

1 Timothy 4:1 informs us that this is a doctrine of demonism:

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils."

Catholics have always prayed for the relief of dead people in Purgatory. They pray for a speedy deliverance from suffering for their sins. In spite of what Catholics argue, the entire works approach to satisfying God's justice through the meritorious works of others completely overrides the need for the saving work of Christ. It actually turns a Catholic into his own savior and the savior of other people by helping them to be purged of their sins, so they can go to Heaven. Think of it, ultimately every Catholic is his own Savior, saving his soul through his meritorious good works, and also saving others by having their good works applied to others suffering in Purgatory.

Why is incense ("holy smoke") used at Catholic Mass and during funerals? Roman Catholicism teaches that Incense is always symbolic of the prayers of the saints rising up to God. When a body is incensed at a funeral Catholics are ending up prayers to God for that person to eventually be released him from Purgatory and that his soul will one day "rise to God" as the incense rises. The incense also portrays their belief in the resurrection of the human body. A Catholic has to be in the state of grace (living a life of good works and acceptable before God) to help the souls in Purgatory.

Another Catholic author says: “When we pray for the souls, we’ve got to remember we’re giving them paradise, the face of God, when we get them out sooner from purgatory. Our prayers are shortening this horrible suffering of being without God. They then show us their gratitude in the same proportion to their joy.” This is extreme apostasy. It is heretical to think that one can earn their own salvation, let alone help save another person, through presenting to God their meritorious good deeds on that person’s behalf and satisfying or appeasing God’s wrath against that person.

Catholic Church Catechism again states: “Absolution takes away sin, but it does not remedy all the disorders sin has caused. Raised up from sin, the sinner must still recover his full spiritual health by doing something more to make amends for the sin: he must "make satisfaction for" or "expiate" his sins.” However, a sinner cannot make satisfaction for his own sins since his entire life is severely flawed (“there is none righteous, no, not one” - Romans 3:10) and since all of his righteous acts are as “filthy rags” in God’s site (Isa. 64:4). Only Christ can appease God’s wrath against the sinner since He is the only perfect and satisfying sacrifice (1 John 2:2) that God will accept on the sinner’s behalf.

1 John 2:2

“And he is the propitiation (satisfying sacrifice) for our sins (all of them!): and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world.”

1 John 4:10

“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation (satisfying sacrifice) for our sins” (all of them!)

The Bible teaches that ONLY the death of Jesus Christ satisfied God’s wrath against the sinner for His sacrifice paid the penalty or fine that God required for sin. Therefore, God justifies and accepts the believing sinner in His presence forever through the satisfying sacrifice of His Son. The debt has been paid. What a liberating message! When you place your faith in Christ alone to be your Savior (John 1:12), you can be released from God’s wrath forever. You can be confident that God loves and accepts you forever through Jesus Christ (Romans 8:38-39).

Here is the six-million-dollar question. If you ask the average Catholic if they could go to Heaven without the Catholic Church, without sacraments, without baptism and confirmation in the Catholic Church, without priestly forgiveness, without Mass, without Mary, without doing Penance, good works, Indulgences, without receiving the necessary Last Rites, and without going to Purgatory for final cleansing, they would tell you emphatically “No!” This demonstrates that they have not placed faith in Christ ALONE for justification and salvation before God. This is an indication that they need to transfer their faith to Christ for their salvation.

Sadly, the true Gospel (which excludes sacraments), the way of salvation through Christ alone (without the help of Mary and the saints), the total and complete forgiveness of sins, and a person’s declaration of a justified and righteous standing before God, through Jesus Christ alone, is not taught in the Catholic Church. It has been proven that their canons and catechisms deny this. All of the above happens only gradually, by receiving piecemeal and partial forgiveness (through Mass and Confession to priests) for the sins that you commit, and by complying to a meritorious works system that is only offered through the Roman Catholic Church. The true Gospel, the true way of salvation, and the true way to find forgiveness and justification before God is hidden behind sacraments, Mass, Penance, priests, rules and regulations, Indulgences, good works, Last Rites, and Purgatory.

In summary, the Roman Catholic does NOT believe that Jesus Christ paid the full and final penalty for his sins and provided complete forgiveness for his sins before God forever (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; 1 John 2:12). This is why Catholics are continually trying to have their sins forgiven and acceptance before God through the Mass, Penance and Reconciliation, the Absolution of the priest, Mary, Last Rites, and Purgatory. If the penalty was fully paid and God is satisfied with Christ’s death alone (1 John 2:2), as the only means of one’s salvation, then full and final forgiveness can be applied to one’s life through faith alone in Jesus Christ. But instead of trusting in Christ to provide complete forgiveness from sin’s penalty or judgment in hell (Gal. 3:13), Catholics are trusting in the Mass, continual forgiveness through a priest, along with their penitential good works, so that they might escape hell or spend less time in the purgatorial judgment in the next life.

Catholics are on a journey to try and earn or merit their salvation from hell by not committing mortal sins and living a life that is worthy of God’s acceptance. Their acts of penance and other good deeds is part of the justifying journey not only for

themselves but others in Purgatory. Once again, the Catholic views his salvation and justification before God as a *process* since he believes his acceptance before God comes through following church sacraments, doing meritorious good deeds, and being in a right standing with the Catholic Church.

Baptism, Confirmation, Mass (the unfinished sacrifice), Confession and forgiveness of priests, along with all the other sacraments, including Penance and indulgences, the prayers of living saints for dead saints, and the prayers of dead saints in Heaven for the living saints on earth, which release Catholics from Purgatory, and infused sanctifying grace so one can merit their justification; these are the means or ways by which Catholics view their salvation. Sadly, the Catholic Church becomes the INSTRUMENT of a Catholic's salvation - not Christ. The Catholic Church is viewed to administer forgiveness and salvation to faithful Catholics by the sacraments and this salvation and forgiveness occurs throughout one's entire lifetime as they continue on their journey, striving to get to Heaven. Catholics follow traditions and the traditions of men (Mark 7:8) get in the way of trusting in Christ alone to be their Savior.

One Catholic writer puts it like this:

“A non-Catholic who suspects that the Catholic Church is the one true Church of God and does not investigate Her claims with a mind to join if Her claims prove to be true, cannot be saved, because outside of Christ's Mystical Body (the Catholic Church), there is no salvation.”

The Bible repeatedly teaches that salvation is not found in the sacramental traditions of the “Mother Church” or any church. Salvation only comes to a sinner by grace through placing faith in Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5), and that one's justification is not a lifelong process, but an instantaneous declaration of a believer's righteous standing in God's presence (Rom. 3:24; 5:1; 8:30; 1 Cor. 6:11; Gal. 3:24; James 2:23), which is the result of a person placing faith alone in Christ alone for justification (Gal. 3:26).

Catholic Questions: Do you really believe that the payment for all of your sins was finished when Jesus died on the cross? If not, why not? Jesus said, “It is finished” (John 19:30). Since Jesus paid the full penalty for everyone's sins upon the cross, then how can another person in some measure help pay for another individual's sins and provide forgiveness, cleansing, and help for those who are in Purgatory?

Bottom Line: Performing meritorious deeds on the behalf of others (indulgences), in order to provide dead Catholics with cleansing or forgiveness of sins and lessen their stay in Purgatory, is a false teaching that actually helps living Catholics save dead Catholics. This teaching is yet another barrier that keeps Catholics from trusting in Christ ALONE for salvation and justification before God.

Let's visit Romans 5:1:

"Therefore being justified (declared legally righteous in God's presence) by faith (faith alone in Jesus Christ), we have peace with God (a peaceful and accepted standing before God – God's wrath is appeased against us) through our Lord Jesus Christ" (through what Jesus did on the cross – taking our judgment and wrath that we deserved).

When you believe this to be true and transfer your faith to Christ, you can be declared legally righteous and accepted before God forever. Justified freely and forever! Is this what you want? You can have it today. "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 3:24).

The story is told that there was a man in England who put his Rolls-Royce on a boat and went across to the continent to go on a holiday. While he was driving around Europe, something happened to the motor of his car. He cabled the Rolls-Royce people back in England and asked, "I'm having trouble with my car; what do you suggest I do?" Well, the Rolls-Royce people flew a mechanic over! The mechanic repaired the car and flew back to England and left the man to continue his holiday.

As you can imagine, the fellow was wondering, "How much is this going to cost me?" So when he got back to England, he wrote the people a letter and asked how much he owed them.

He received a letter from the office that read: "Dear Sir: There is no record anywhere in our files that anything ever went wrong with a Rolls-Royce." The man was stunned. The people had worked on his car but had not charged him for the work. In fact, after the car was fixed their records showed that the car had never been broken and out of commission.

This is what the Bible truth of justification means. When the believing sinner trusts in Christ alone to be his Savior, God says, “There is no record anywhere that anything ever went wrong with this person.” As someone once suggested, Justification means “just as if we never have sinned.” In other words, God declares us righteous based upon the imputed righteousness of God’s Son to our account. As a result, we are acquitted of all our sins and counted righteous in God’s presence or “just as we have never sinned.”

The doctrine of **imputation** (to calculate and credit) appears in the Bible as the words “counted” and “imputed” (Romans 4:3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 22, 23, 24) and is related to this glorious transaction of justification or being declared legally righteous in God’s presence. Here is the simple story. First, God calculates or credits Adam’s sin and death penalty to us (Rom. 5:12-21). Having Adam’s sin credited to us results in many more “sins” being committed by us which stem from the original sin and death in Adam (Eph. 2:1 - “dead in trespasses and sins” “dead in sins” - Eph. 2:5). Second, God calculates and credits all of our sin to Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:24; Isa. 53:5-6) so we don’t have to suffer the judgment for any of our sins. Third, God calculates or credits Christ’s righteousness to us (2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:9). The moment a person believes on Jesus Christ, this calculation of God occurs.

At one moment in time God’s judicial calculation gives (credits) the believer with the legal righteousness he needs to go to Heaven. The righteousness that saves and justifies us in God’s presence (Romans 5:1) is a judicially credited righteousness given to us, which is based on the value of Christ’s sacrificial death alone, which paid sin’s penalty for us (“justified by his blood” - Romans 5:9). This means that the entire relationship we have with God is by imputation – not by works or anything else.

Justification is a change in God’s records whereby our sins are blotted out (Rom. 4:8) and the righteousness of Christ is credited to us (Rom. 4:6). The believing sinner is just as righteous as Christ because he has been “made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:9). A person does not BECOME righteous through good works and the Catholic Church but is MADE righteous at the moment he believes.

“My hope is in the Lord
Who gave Him-self for me
And paid the price
Of all my sin at Calvary.

No merit of my own
His anger to suppress
My only hope is found
In Jesus' righteousness."

Legalistic righteousness ("the righteousness of the law" – Rom. 10:4) depends on the sinner but the "righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:3) depends on the Savior. What happens in our conversion or salvation is this: sin was transferred from our account to Christ and the righteousness of Christ was transferred to our account. This is God's system of bookkeeping! Justification is the legal declaration in God's heavenly courtroom that declares believing sinners not guilty in His presence forever.

Sadly, most Catholics do view their salvation and justification before God as a process since they believe their acceptance before God comes through adhering to church sacraments and doing meritorious good deeds, not only to save and find forgiveness for themselves, but to grant forgiveness and final justification for others in Purgatory, an alleged place of purifying fires where a person pays the final penalty for their sins and is purified, removing the last traces of sins, before one can enter Heaven. I'm so very glad none of this is true. The Bible does not view justification as a PROCESS but as a PROCLAMATION of a person's position of acceptance before God, which they receive based upon the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Biblical justification occurs when a person is forgiven, or acquitted of all his sins, and then given a righteous standing of acceptance before God, by having Christ's very own righteousness transferred to him.

Romans 4:5-6 is the great proclamation: "But to him that worketh not (justification excludes works), but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness (justification comes only through faith in God's provision - the death of Jesus Christ). Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works" (the blessed assurance of knowing you are justified before God through faith in Christ).

The believer can know that he has eternal life by the very promise of God's Word (1 John 5:13; John 6:47). The Bible repeatedly teaches that salvation is only by grace through faith in Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5) and that one's justification is not a lifelong process but an *instantaneous declaration* of believer's righteous standing

in God's presence (Rom. 3:24; 5:1; 8:30; 1 Cor. 6:11; Gal. 3:24; James 2:23) which is the result of a person placing faith alone in Christ alone for justification (Gal. 3:26).

One Ex-Catholic gives a revealing testimony of all the qualifications that are needed in order for a Catholic to finally get to Heaven. Those Catholics who are reading this booklet need to listen to this testimonial. It may be similar to what you have been struggling with. He writes: "Here is my personal story--echoing that of a billion souls, many of whom are your neighbors, work associates, school friends, and acquaintances (every one in four people in the U.S. is Roman Catholic). As an infant, I was brought to the priest, and in the presence of godparents received the Sacrament of Baptism, which brought me into the Church and started me on my way to heaven. Baptism cleansed me of original sin and infused me with sanctifying grace. Although we didn't use the phrase 'born again' when I was growing up, more and more Catholics today refer to their baptism that way. (Clearly, that is not what the Scriptures teach about being 'born again').

"Hypothetically, if my godparent had slipped on the holy water, dropping me right after my baptism and causing my death, I would have gone straight to heaven. No Purgatory--just right straight into the presence of God. This is explained by the Church's teaching that only the sinless can enter heaven. An infant is stained only by original sin, which is removed at baptism. Thus Purgatory is not necessary for a baptized baby who dies in infancy.

"There does come a time, however, when a child adds his own sins to his soul. When I reached that point and committed what the Church considered a mortal sin, the process of working my way to heaven stopped. A mortal sin short-circuits the process by condemning me to hell. When a child reaches the age at which the Catholic Church considers him or her capable of committing mortal sins, two Sacraments are made available: Penance and the Eucharist.

"The Sacrament of Penance enabled me to confess my sins to a priest, who alone can absolve Catholics of their mortal sins. I made my First Confession at age 7, which was followed by my First Holy Communion. When partaking of communion, also known as the Eucharist, I was told that I was eating the 'body and blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ, under the appearance of bread and wine.' That ritual infused sanctifying grace into me and restored the process of my working my way to heaven.

“It's at this point in a Catholic child's life that Purgatory comes into the picture. Although the priest absolved my sins (both the deadly sins, known as mortal, and the lesser sins, which are known as venial) at confession, they still needed to be expiated, or atoned for. That is accomplished by doing acts of penance.

“I would go to confession on Saturday so that I could receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist at Mass on Sunday. My life as a Catholic was a continuous cycle of ascending toward heaven and plummeting toward hell. To sustain the upward process, I would add whatever good works and sacramentals I could in order to stay in the state of sanctifying grace: rosaries, novenas, stations of the cross, Eucharistic holy hours, blessed medals, scapulars, indulgences, personal sufferings, appeals to Mary, prayers to the saints for help, etc., etc. The best I could hope for was that I would die while in the state of grace, while on the ascent, working my way up the ladder. I knew I'd have to face a time of suffering in Purgatory, but eventually I'd get into heaven, or so I hoped.

“How it would turn out for me I couldn't know; nor could anyone assure me. To tell me that I could know for certain that I was going to get to heaven was itself a ticket to hell. That's a mortal sin, sometimes referred to as the *sin of presumption*. Not even the pope knows--and he is called the Vicar of Christ, literally one who stands in the place of Christ on this earth! The best a Catholic can do is to increase his odds by doing all that the Church tells him to do. One thing that needs to be understood is that obedience to the Church is critical for a Catholic to get to heaven.

“If you interact with believers who are former Catholics, you will very likely hear, ‘I never heard the gospel as a Catholic.’ As a matter of fact, there was a time after getting saved that I thought, Catholics never hear the gospel because the Church doesn't really understand the biblical gospel. It's lost in all the added rituals and liturgy.”

This is the serious problem within the Catholic Church. The pure Gospel is hidden, veiled, and completely lost behind the rituals and sacraments. The sufficiency of Christ's death for one's salvation (Rom. 1:16) becomes lost in the Mass, Confession, Penance, Indulgences, rosary, Last Rights, Purgatory, Lent, and many other rituals. As stated above, the Roman Catholic Gospel is basically this: Christ died for you, He takes away Adam's original sin, and then gradually removes all of your other sins through the administering of the Roman Catholic sacraments such as Mass,

Confession, and Last Rites. And finally, after an undetermined period of time in Purgatory, you are purged of the rest of your sins.

This purging is based upon how many Masses you have attended, how many good deeds you have done while living on earth, and how many prayers others make on your behalf after your death. It's also based upon the good deeds (indulgences) people perform to satisfy God's wrath against you, in order to erase the remainder of your sins in Purgatory and prepare you for Heaven. Of course, none of this reflects the true Gospel and is actually "another gospel" (Gal. 1:6) connected with a sacramental system of paganism and works. Attempting to approach God through manmade sacraments, rituals, and works is not approaching God through Jesus Christ (John 14:6).

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 declares the true Gospel: "For I delivered unto you first of all **that which I also received** (the Gospel), how that **Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures** (paying sin's penalty and judgment in full for each one of us – no Purgatory is needed!); And that **he was buried** (proving He died and paid sin's penalty), and that **he rose again the third day according to the scriptures**" (providing us with the evidence that God accepted Christ's sacrifice and that we can now have the promise of eternal life with Him in Heaven).

Friend, the wonderful Gospel message means that I do not need to suffer for my sins in Purgatory, after I die, since Jesus paid the full penalty for my sins forever, providing me with total forgiveness and purification before God ("purged my sins" - Heb. 1:3). It means that I do not have to earn or merit my ticket to Heaven through living a good Catholic life, taking Mass, confessing my sins to a priest, doing works of penance, suffering and atoning for my own sins, and ultimately earning my salvation and justification before God. It means I do not have to ever fear losing my salvation through committing a mortal sin.

Jesus did everything for us so we can go to Heaven. He paid the full penalty that God required for our sins, provided the way to receive salvation from hell and total forgiveness for all of our sins, and rose again to give us the promise and hope of eternal life. Once again, we don't COOPERATE with the Gospel and grace in order to get to Heaven. We must BELIEVE the Gospel, what Christ has done for us, paying sin's full penalty and providing us with total forgiveness and acceptance with God forever.

We are “justified by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ’s Jesus” (Rom. 3:24). We are justified or declared legally righteous and accepted in the throne room of God on the basis of Christ alone (not our human works or good deeds) and are declared to be saved from hell (Acts 16:31) through Jesus Christ alone, whose sacrifice satisfied God’s wrath and justice against us (1 John 2:2), providing us with complete forgiveness and final acquittal in God’s presence, and Who is now at God’s right hand interceding for us, declaring the saving value of His sacrifice on our behalf.

Hebrews 7:25 once again declares:

“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost (completely and forever) that come unto God by him (Jesus Christ), seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (to maintain their justification before God).

Now friend, what will it be for you? Will it be Heaven or hell? Will it be the Gospel truth or Roman Catholic traditions? Will it be the sacraments or the Savior? You must choose between Christ and human ceremonies and works. The Bible supersedes all of the church traditions of Roman Catholicism and other religions. Indeed, the truth that the Bible declares is very simple and clear. Placing faith in Jesus Christ’s one-time sacrifice on the cross, His priestly work in His death, resurrection, and ascension into Heaven, can provide you with the assurance of a justified and forgiven standing before God forever.

Galatians 2:16

“Knowing that a man is not justified (declared legally righteous in God’s presence) by the works of the law, but **by the faith of Jesus Christ** (Christ alone is the object of one’s faith), even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the **faith of Christ** (Christ being the sole object of our faith), and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”

But what does Catholic Theology say about salvation? Canon 14 again declares: "If any one saith, that man is truly absolved from his sins and justified, because that he assuredly believed himself absolved and justified; or, that no one is truly justified but he who believes himself justified; and that, by this faith alone, absolution and justification are effected; let him be anathema" (damned to hell).

But “what saith the scripture? (Romans 4:3). “Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness” (God credited to him His perfect righteousness

to secure his salvation forever). Do you possess the assurance that you have a righteous standing before God that has been freely given to you through Christ? You can, if you will look to Christ in faith and allow Him to cloth you in His perfect righteousness and give you eternal life.

Faith in Christ ALONE can take you from the realm of doubt into the realm of assurance and certainly regarding your salvation. You can know that you possess a justified position before God, that you have everlasting life, and that you are not going to hell, when you place faith alone in Jesus Christ.

1 John 5:13 declares this above all the Catholic Canons:

“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God (without participating with the seven Roman Catholic sacraments); that ye may know that ye have eternal life (through Jesus Christ ALONE – without sacraments), and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”

Taking the sacraments is not believing on Jesus Christ. Being a baptized in the Catholic Church and trying to live a good Catholic life is not believing on Jesus Christ. Friend, will you take God at His Word? The Scripture is very clear and the promise is sure! If we believe only in God’s Son for our justification before God and salvation from hell, we can receive the free gift of everlasting life (Rom. 6:23). A gift can only be free and it’s ours to receive by faith in Christ alone.

Yes, you can “know that ye have eternal life! Do you know this? What does Catholic teaching say about the assurance of one’s salvation before God? Canon 23 says in part: "If any one saith, that a man once justified can sin no more, nor lose grace let him be anathema" (damned to hell).

As previously researched, Catholic Theology declares that a person can lose his state in grace by committing certain sins which are worthy of the punishment of hell (mortal sins). It also teaches that Catholics can experience more Purgatory (judgment) for even the venial sins (lesser sins) they have committed in this life. Roman Catholics, who embrace the teaching of the Catholic Church, cannot have any assurance that they will enter Heaven when they die. This is because their sins are not totally and finally forgiven through Jesus Christ. Without knowing they are forgiven of all mortal sins, a Catholic cannot possess the assurance that they are

saved from hell, going immediately to Heaven when they die, or that they possess eternal life.

Paul the apostle taught that when we trust Christ to be our Savior, we can know that we will be “absent from the body and present with the Lord” at the time of our death (2 Cor. 5:8) and that we will “depart and be with Christ which is far better” (Phil. 1:23). Paul was not passing through Purgatory on his way to Heaven!

Jesus said, in the most beloved verse in the Bible, John 3:16:

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Jesus taught in John 5:24:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”

Jesus reveals that if you believe only in the finished, saving work of Jesus Christ, you have everlasting life right now and forever. It’s something you can possess today and forever! This means that you can know you are going to Heaven because you will never lose what God has granted to you – eternal life.

Who will you believe, the Council of Trent or the promise of God’s Son, Jesus Christ? Dear friend, it’s faith alone, in Christ alone that brings His free gift of salvation and eternal life to you! If you will transfer all of your trust, confidence, or faith, away from yourself and meritorious works, away from priests, penance, popes, baptism, church traditions, and express faith alone in Jesus Christ, then you can know that you are saved and ready to enter Heaven when you die. You can be released from all of your church traditions, all of your sacraments, all of your confessions, rosaries, and strivings to inherit eternal life, if you will only trust in Christ. Jesus Christ will give your eternal life right now, if you will transfer all of your confidence and trust to Him.

Jesus declared in John 6:47:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.”

The Catholic view of salvation denies six central and Biblical truths of Christianity.

1. Jesus alone forgives us of all our sins, once-and-for-all and forever, without the means of sacraments, Masses, priests, Mary, Last Rites, and Purgatory (Col. 2:13).
2. Jesus is the ONLY way to gain access to God and Heaven (John 14:6). No Masses, priests, works of penance, indulgences, prayers to Mary or other saints are needed as intermediate ways to receive forgiveness before God (1 Tim. 2:5).
3. Grace ALONE, as seen ONLY in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is what saves and justifies a person forever in the presence of God (Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 3:24). The Bible says nothing about Mass, Penance and Reconciliation (absolution of priests) as being the necessary vehicles and agents through which grace is transferred into a person's life. Grace being transferred through sacraments takes the focus away from Jesus Christ and the salvation that He ALONE offers without the use of sacraments and good works (Titus 3:5).
4. A one-time expression of faith alone in Jesus Christ alone is all that is needed to grant eternal forgiveness and justification before God (John 6:47; Acts 16:31). The faith of many Catholics is a misplaced, misguided, and misdirected faith that is centered upon one's need to seek repeated forgiveness through the reimplementation of sacraments instead of only through Christ. The vehicles or agents related to a Catholic's salvation (the good works of sanctifying grace, the sacraments of baptism, Mass, Reconciliation/Penance, Last Rites, Mary, Indulgences, Purgatorial purging) become the basis of a Catholic's faith instead of Christ. Believing that salvation gradually comes into a person's life through a lifetime of eating, seeking forgiveness through priests, and participation with all of the sacraments is not trusting in Christ for one's salvation.
5. Justification does not mean gradually MAKING oneself righteous through Catholic Church sacraments, penance, good works, indulgences, and Purgatory. Biblical justification is an instantaneous and final DECLARATION of a believer's accepted position before God (1 Cor. 6:11 - "ye are justified"),

through Christ alone (Rom. 3:26 - "the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus"), and it lasts forever (Rom. 5:21 - "righteousness unto eternal life").

6. Here is good news! God's grace is FREE (Gal. 3:24), salvation is a FREE gift (Eph. 2:8-9), eternal life is FREE (Rom. 6:23; 2 Cor. 9:15), and justification is FREE (Rom. 5:15-16). Everything is free (Isa. 55:1). There are no sacraments or human works that are required. Salvation can be received right now if you will place your faith ALONE in Jesus Christ to save you (John 1:12). Revelation 22:17 says, "And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Freely! This means there is no need for repeated sacraments, dependence upon priests, acts of penance, indulgences, and good works. Salvation is absolutely free. Take it as a free gift ("the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" - Rom. 6:23). Receive it as you take the air into your lungs. How wonderful and reassuring! Jesus Christ is enough!

Are *some* Roman Catholics saved and going to Heaven? They are if they have trusted in Jesus ALONE for the forgiveness of their sins. However, if they believe they are saved by God's grace and their works, then they are not saved, even if they believe their works are done by God's grace working through them. This is because they deny the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice to save them. Instead of looking ONLY to Christ, they are looking at sacrament and their own good works to save them.

If you cannot believe in Jesus Christ ALONE for your salvation and know that He can forgive you of all of your sins forever, then you must be trusting in something else, either entirely or in addition to Jesus, to give you acceptance before God. You must be trusting in your own ability by going through ceremonies, ritualistic prayers, ordinances, confessionals, penance, sacraments, so that you can hope that you will be faithful enough to be saved. In essence, your faith is not true and genuine faith that is resting in Christ ALONE to be your Savior.

Hebrews 4:2

"For unto us was the gospel preached (that Jesus Christ's death and resurrection saves a person forever), as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith (faint in Christ alone) in them that heard *it*."

The Gospel cannot save you if you don't believe it! You must embrace it by faith ALONE. If you do not trust in Jesus Christ alone to be your Savior, then the Gospel

cannot save you. Why? It's because you refuse to express simple faith in Christ alone for your salvation. Jesus said in John 5:40: "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." But Jesus is still giving this wonderful invitation to you today: **"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"** (Matthew 11:28).

You can never find rest in the salvation that Christ offers to you, or rest that comes from knowing that all of your sins are forgiven forever, that God accepts you unconditionally through Jesus Christ, when you don't trust in Christ ALONE to be your Savior. Will you please stop and think for a moment? If you cannot believe in Jesus Christ ALONE to be your Savior, if you cannot know that He can forgive all of your sins forever and declare you righteous in God's presence, then you must be trusting in something else, either entirely or in addition to Jesus, to give you acceptance before God. You must be trusting in your own human achievements, in religious ceremonies, ritualistic prayers, ordinances, confessionals, penance, sacraments, Mary, the Saints, hoping that in the end you will have done enough and can die in a state of grace, without having any mortal sins hanging over your head. In essence, your faith is not true and genuine faith that is resting in Christ ALONE to be your Savior.

Some Catholics will tell you that they believe in the Gospel and that Jesus is the only way to Heaven. But they don't have a proper or clear understanding of the Gospel message and how the Gospel is received through faith alone. *Their Catholic doctrine teaches them that Jesus is the way to Heaven through the way of sacraments.* This is the fly in the ointment. To many Catholics, Christ's death is viewed as being gradually applied to them through the Catholic Church, the sacraments of baptism, Mass, Penance & Reconciliation, priestly forgiveness, Mary's intercessory assistance and help, Indulgences, Last Rites, and the purging of Purgatorial fires.

A person needs to help themselves and others out of Purgatory by performing meritorious good deeds. They must also strive to maintain their own salvation by not committing any mortal sins, hoping in the end that they have no mortal sins which will send them to hell and keep them out of Purgatory. Also, they can only hope that the residual punishment required for all of their sins can be appeased quickly by the application of the "heavenly treasury of merit" to their life in Purgatory. This treasury consists of the meritorious good deeds of all Catholics and

canonized saints (including Mary herself), so a person can be released sooner than later from their Purgatory prison.

Is this the Gospel? Is this the hope we have of getting to Heaven? Certainly not. There is no good news in any of these errant and blasphemous teachings. Sadly, if one actually embraces all of these Catholic teachings, in the way the Catholic Church teaches them, then they cannot be saved. This is because a person's faith becomes centered on the means to obtaining or meriting Christ's forgiveness and justification instead of simply believing in Jesus Christ's sacrificial death to grant them perfect acquittal, justification, righteousness and the free gift of salvation and eternal life.

To believe on Jesus Christ for salvation (Acts 16:31) does not mean to believe that He can *gradually* forgive and grant you salvation through the Catholic Church sacraments, through the waters of Baptism, Confirmation, Mass, confession to priests, Mary, indulgences, Last Rites, and Purgatory. To believe on Christ does not mean that Jesus *indirectly* provides partial forgiveness and salvation to your life through sacraments and that you must do your part to merit your justification or acceptance before God. To believe on Jesus Christ does not mean you must still be purged and forgiven of your sins by priests, Purgatory's fires, Penance, and the personal merits of others who buy indulgences for you. This is not belief in Jesus – it's unbelief.

So, we ask again, are *some* Catholics saved? Yes. But only if they have in God's providence bypassed the Catholic heresy of justification by faith and works, which is the key doctrinal truth related to salvation, only if they do not embrace sacramental salvation through the Catholic Church, trusting in the dispensing of the sacraments to gradually bring forgiveness and salvation into their lives, only if they refuse to depend upon Mary and the saint's assistance to help find them forgiveness and acceptance before God, and only if they express faith alone in Christ alone for their salvation.

In order to be saved, a Catholic must reject the Catholic teaching and underlying doctrine regarding the way of salvation which is taught in the Catholic Church. This is because every person must come "unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4) in order to be saved. I am thankful for every Catholic that is truly saved, but I am also saddened by the great masses of Catholics who are stooped in a pagan religion

that is dressed like Christianity, and who have not seen the truth of the Gospel message of salvation through Christ alone.

Sadly, many Catholics think they are going to Heaven only because they have been baptized, confirmed in the Catholic Church, and because they believe they are a good person, who occasionally, or more regularly, identifies with the Catholic Church services, in order to receive temporary sacramental forgiveness before God for their sins and failures. If we have believed in Jesus Christ alone for our salvation and justification before God, we need to talk to our Catholic friends and family that may still be in the Catholic Church. We need to share the simple Gospel with them (Mark 16:15; 1 Thess. 1:8) and remind them that salvation is freely given to us through Christ ALONE. Philip “preached Christ unto them” (Acts 8:5) – not the Catholic Church sacraments. This is what is important. Share the wonderful truth that Jesus ALONE can bring salvation into their lives.

We need to let our Catholic friends and acquaintances know that salvation is not in the sacraments, the Catholic Church, or in anything they might do to justify or make themselves acceptable before God. They need to understand that Biblical forgiveness was never promised to come into a person’s life through baptism, the Mass, and priestly confession. The Bible teaches this nowhere. Jesus taught that He was the way to Heaven (John 14:6) because forgiveness and salvation only come DIRECTLY through Him (not sacraments). We need to remind our Catholic friends that salvation and forgiveness was only promised to be given to believing sinners when they express faith ALONE in Jesus Christ (Acts 16:31) for their FREE gift of salvation and eternal life (Romans 6:23; 2 Cor. 9:15; Rev. 22:17).

Let’s revisit the testimony of Bob Bush, a former Roman Catholic priest. He went to a Jesuit Seminary and studied for 13 years before being ordained in 1966. He entered a post graduate program in Rome. After being saved he recorded these words. "It took me many years to realize that I was compromising by staying in the Roman Catholic Church. Throughout all those years I continued to stress that salvation is only in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross and not in the infant baptism; that there is only one source of authority which is the Bible, the word of God; and that there is no purgatory but rather that when we die to either go to heaven or hell." (“Far from Rome, Near to God: Testimonies of 50 Converted Roman Catholic Priests,” p. 69)

Yes, there are some Catholics who have embraced the truth that Jesus Christ alone saves without baptism, works, priests, penance, and earning one's way to Heaven, while remaining in the Catholic Church. However, they did not discover this truth through the Catholic Church, since it does not teach the clear Gospel message of salvation by grace, through Christ alone, by faith alone in Christ. The light of the Gospel truth (2 Cor. 4:6) might come to Catholics through the witness of another person outside the Catholic Church which resulted in bringing them to faith alone in Christ. Or, the truth that Jesus Christ saves a person without works might occur in the heart of a Catholic, who honestly reads the Bible, and who is saved by experiencing the inward witness of the Holy Spirit to the truth of Scripture (2 Thess. 2:13).

Unfortunately, many Catholics are not saved because the Gospel is hidden behind the veil of rituals and sacraments such as baptism, Mass, confession, reconciliation, justification by works, indulgences, Mary, the saints, and other ceremonies and religious traditions (Mark 7:3-13; Col. 2:8). Also, Satan keeps people in the realm of blindness when they choose to bypass salvation through Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4:4). Salvation through the Gospel and justification by faith alone through Jesus Christ alone (Acts 4:12) is not taught in the Catholic Church. As a result, many Catholics do not understand what Christ really accomplished in order to save them completely and forever. They fail to understand that God fully, finally, and forever accepts them through His Son Jesus Christ – not the sacraments of the Catholic Church.

All of the Catholic sacraments, the statues of Mary, and the saint's good deeds (penance, Hail Mary's, Our Father's, the rosary, indulgences, Lent) get in the way of the wonderful truth that Jesus Christ ALONE grants total and complete forgiveness of a person's sins forever (Col. 1:14) and that Jesus Christ saves and justifies a person forever in God's presence (Heb. 7:25). The need for continual sacraments, good works related to penance and indulgences, prayers to Mary, Last Rites, regaining one's salvation and remaining in a state of grace, along with purgatorial fires, keep Catholics from placing faith in Christ ALONE for their salvation.

The Gospel is not clearly presented and openly declared in the Catholic Church as the only way to Heaven and the way to receive the Gospel, through faith alone, is not revealed. Therefore, many Catholics remain in spiritual darkness in need of the light of the Gospel to shine upon their hearts (2 Cor. 4:6), so that they will embrace

the claims of Jesus Christ and believe only in Christ for their justification before God and salvation from hell. The repeated Masses, the need for priestly forgiveness, the works of penance and indulgences, the prayers to Mary, which are needed to either save people from hell or get them out of Purgatory earlier have nothing to do with a completed Gospel salvation that provides eternal forgiveness and justification before God (Romans 5:1), and which comes directly and only through Jesus Christ (John 14:6).

Once again, these religious observances are like a giant veil or smokescreen which keeps Catholics from looking only to Christ for their salvation (John 3:14-15). What are you basing your salvation upon? Is it Catholic sacraments or Christ? Is it your good works or Christ? It cannot be both since salvation only comes directly through Jesus Christ.

Acts 4:12

“Neither is there salvation in any other (no other sacrament, ceremony, person, or church): for there is none other name under heaven given among men (the name of Jesus!), whereby we must be saved.”

Believing that grace, forgiveness, and salvation are gradually (over a long period of time) passed down to us through rituals such as the sacraments is not believing in Jesus Christ ALONE for salvation (Acts 16:31). Genuine faith in Jesus Christ bypasses baptism, Mass, Mary, Penance, Indulgences, Last Rites and any other ceremonies that a person believes are necessary to be saved. A person’s faith must only be directed to Christ alone for salvation, if that person wants to be saved from hell. It’s not baptism and Christ. It’s not Mass and Christ. It’s not sacraments and Christ. It’s not Penance (good works) and Christ. It’s Christ!

If you are a practicing Catholic, I beg of you, consider what Christ has done for you on the cross. His redemptive, justifying, and saving work was finished when He died on the cross for you. Yes, Jesus said, “It is finished” before He died (John 19:30). Consider also that Jesus also taught that salvation comes into our life by expressing faith ALONE in His finished work (“He that believeth on me hath everlasting life” - John 6:47). As a Catholic, you must look outside the church, the sacraments, the priests, Mary, the saints, indulgences, Last Rites, Purgatory and only see Jesus, or as Philip said long ago, “we would see Jesus” (John 12:21). Christ died on the cross paying your full penalty for sin and rose again the third day (1 Cor. 15:3-4) to give you everlasting life right now.

Romans 6:23

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Everlasting life is a gift you can receive today. God wants you to express faith in the finished work of Christ, who died on the cross to grant you full acquittal or forgiveness in God’s presence, to give you a perfectly righteous standing before God that will never change, to save you from hell, and to give you the free gift of eternal life. Dear Catholic friend, the benefits of Christ’s saving work come DIRECTLEY from Him (John 1:12; 14:6). Don’t look to the sacraments; look only to Christ for your salvation. Don’t look to the Catholic Church; look only to Christ and His cross to save you. **“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth”** (Isa. 45:22).

God did not say look unto me *through the sacraments* so you can be saved. He said “look unto me and be ye saved.” There is a difference! Where you look for your salvation is very important. Many people today are looking for salvation through their church, the sacraments that they receive or perform throughout their lifetime, and by waiting for some priest or other clergyman to pronounce them forgiven. But God says, look unto my Son Jesus Christ who died in the sinner’s place, so you can find total forgiveness and salvation from hell forever! Genuine faith in Jesus Christ bypasses the sacraments. All we must do is look to Christ. **Look and live!** Oh the simplicity of it! Have you only looked to Jesus Christ for your salvation from hell and the free gift of eternal life?

When Charles Spurgeon was saved, he expressed faith in this very promise that one only needs to look to Christ for salvation and nothing else. He recounts how an old primitive Methodist shared with him to look only to Christ for his salvation. Spurgeon reveals his salvation story in this way. “Just fixing his eyes on me, as if he knew all my heart, he said, ‘Young man, you look very miserable. Well, I did, but I had not been accustomed to have remarks made from the pulpit on my personal appearance before. However, it was a good blow, struck right home. The preacher continued, ‘And you will always be miserable—miserable in life and miserable in death—if you don’t obey my text; but if you obey now, this moment, you will be saved.’ Then lifting up his hands, he shouted, as only a Primitive Methodist could do, ‘Young man, look to Jesus Christ. Look! Look! Look! You have nothing to do but look and live!’

“I saw at once the way of salvation. I know not what else he said—I did not take much notice of it—I was so possessed with that one thought . . . I had been waiting to do fifty things, but when I heard that word, ‘Look!’ what a charming word it seemed to me. Oh! I looked until I could almost have looked my eyes away! There and then the cloud was gone, the darkness had rolled away, and that moment I saw the sun; and I could have risen that instant, and sung with the most enthusiastic of them, of the precious blood of Christ, and the simple faith which looks alone to Him. Oh, that somebody had told me this before, ‘Trust Christ, and you shall be saved.’”

Dear friend, you can believe in Christ today and be saved from hell without depending upon your baptism, without Confirmation, without observing sacraments, without doing meritorious acts of penitence, without Indulgences, without Mass, without priests, without Last Rites, without all the rules and regulations, without praying to Mary, without praying to the saints, and without Purgatory. You can possess the free gift of everlasting life right now if you look only to Jesus Christ for your salvation.

Ezekiel 33:11 says: “As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die ...? Like God, I find no pleasure in telling people they are lost and going to hell. I find no delight in people who are condemned to die the sinner’s death in hell (John 3:18). Like God, I long that people will be saved (2 Peter 3:9). This includes the many Catholics who have not trusted in Jesus Christ alone to be their Savior. It has not been easy to write this study. But it was absolutely needful. This is because many Catholics don’t understand the unadulterated Gospel which is free from sacraments and good works and how faith alone in Jesus Christ is the only way to receive salvation and justification before God.

The Bible says in Romans 10:13:

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Calling upon Jesus Christ to save you from hell and God’s wrath is a Biblical expression that reveals how you must express your faith in Christ alone to be your Savior. It is a faith that is directed only to Christ and His claims (what He did to save you) which are found in the Gospel message (Christ died for you, was buried, and rose again the third day – 1 Cor. 15:3-4). Faith in Christ is a faith that Jesus Christ

died on the cross to pay the judgment for all of your sins, that He was *buried*, proving that He fully expired, and then *rose* again the third day as proof the Father accepted His Son's sacrifice (Rom. 4:25), and to give you eternal life (John 11:26) before God and in His presence forever, as your Great High Priest.

Your faith in Christ results in receiving the free gift of eternal salvation (John 3:15-16), complete and final forgiveness before God (Col. 2:13), justification before God's presence (1 Cor. 6:11), and eternal life (Rom. 6:23). Faith is a personal decision that everyone must make. It involves a person relying totally and only upon Jesus Christ to be one's Savior. Friend, it may be time for you to make the call! It may be time for you to express faith in Christ alone so that you can know you are going to Heaven when you die. Remember that it is your faith alone, in Christ alone, that saves you by grace alone. You don't need sacraments. Don't allow sacraments to create a barrier between you and salvation through Jesus Christ alone. Transfer your faith to Christ alone right now. He will save you from hell forever by giving you the free gift of salvation and eternal life.

Below is a simple prayer that may help you to express your personal faith in Christ alone for your salvation.

"Dear God, I want to express my faith alone in Your Son, Jesus Christ, who died in my place, taking upon Himself the full penalty of sin that I deserved, which was hell. I know I cannot save myself through any meritorious, penitential works, because I am a sinner. I understand that sacraments cannot save me from hell. I know that only Jesus Christ can give me free salvation, justification, and acceptance before God. I am looking only to Jesus Christ. Thank You Jesus for dying on the cross on my behalf and rising from the dead to give me eternal life. I do accept Your free gift of justification, acceptance before God, forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life today. Thank You for saving me by Your grace alone without rituals, ceremonies, sacraments, Last Rites, and Purgatory. In Jesus' name, Amen."