

The Gospel for Roman Catholics

The Bible, the infallible Word of God, declares in 1 Timothy 2:5, “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”

Notice that he is called “the *man* Christ Jesus”. Yes, Jesus Christ was a Man! But He was also God: God manifest in the flesh. In the first chapter of John, we are told that Jesus Christ, “the Word”, is God Himself (v.1). He is the Second Person of the Godhead: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

All men are sinful by nature, and no man can ever be saved from his sins by his own works; his own efforts. The salvation of sinners is the work of *God alone*. And for this purpose God the Son, Jesus Christ, left heaven, taking upon Himself human nature (without laying aside His divine nature), being born miraculously of a young virgin (Matthew 1:18-25).

He grew up as all men do, with one difference: He lived a sinless life. This was essential because, in order to suffer the penalty for sin in the place of sinners, He had to be without sin Himself – a *perfect* Man. The totally innocent had to die for the totally guilty, for the punishment for sin is death (Romans 6:23).

When He died on the cross, He paid the penalty for sin, and shed His blood to wash away sins (Hebrews 9:22-28). And then He rose from the dead, destroying the power of death (Matthew 28:5-7; 1 Corinthians 15:55-57).

Jesus Christ is thus the way to eternal life. He is the only way, there is no other, for the Bible says that there is only *one* Mediator between God and men, and that is Jesus Christ. The only way to the Father is through Him (John 14:6).

Now before we see exactly how a sinner comes to God through Jesus Christ, let us consider the Roman Catholic teaching on salvation. There is only one way to be saved, whether you are a Roman Catholic or not. There is only one Mediator.

No man, according to Roman Catholic teaching, can have assurance of salvation in this life. The Roman Catholic Council of Trent declared that anyone who says they have assurance of salvation is *anathema*, that is, accursed!¹ This means that one can never know whether one is saved or not. You must simply do the best you can, and hope that you have been good enough, by the time you die, to finally reach heaven (after spending an unknown period of time in purgatory).

There are certain things which *every* loyal Roman Catholic is taught to do, in order (supposedly) to earn his salvation; and each one is said to be *essential* to salvation. In Roman Catholicism there are seven “sacraments”, and any loyal Roman Catholic will know what these are: Baptism (by which a baby is said to be cleansed of original sin, and when it is supposedly “born again”); Penance (some deed to perform, given to a Roman Catholic by a priest, to atone for some sin; however, when he dies he will go to purgatory to be fully purified before entering heaven); the Holy Eucharist (“transubstantiation” is the doctrine that the bread and wine are *literally* changed into the body and blood of Christ, so that the Roman Catholic partakes of His actual flesh in the mass; also, Christ is, in effect, *re-offered* as a sacrifice to God; the mass is said to be the *same* sacrifice as that which He made on the cross); Confirmation (when the Roman Catholic is said to “receive the Holy Spirit”); and Extreme Unction (called “the sacrament of the anointing of the sick”, received at the point of death).

There are two other sacraments: the sacrament of Holy Matrimony is received when two Roman Catholics marry; and the sacrament of Holy Orders is for men who become priests. Thus the Roman Catholic, if he marries, must receive six of the seven sacraments in order to hope to be saved; five if he does not marry; and six if he enters the priesthood.

The sacraments are considered *essential* to salvation.²

But even the sacraments are not all there is to it. The Roman Catholic must be subject to all the doctrines of the Roman Catholic religion, regardless of whether or not they are supported by the Scriptures. He must, for example, believe the teaching that Mary is *co-mediator* with Jesus Christ; that

she was conceived without original sin; that one should pray to her; that tradition is equal in authority with the Bible; etc. All the above can be verified by consulting official Roman Catholic works on these subjects. The list goes on and on.

And yet, even if he does all his church requires of him, he still cannot be sure he is saved. The best he can hope for, when he dies, is to go to purgatory until he is purified enough to enter heaven. And he has no idea how long that will take.

That, then, is the Roman Catholic teaching on salvation in a nutshell. And if you are an honest person, you will have to admit that it is a system of salvation by *works*. In other words, one attempts to *earn* one's salvation.

Salvation by works, however, is contrary to what Scripture teaches. As was seen earlier, man is too wicked to earn his salvation by good works. God Himself has to redeem men. Man cannot keep God's holy law, but Jesus Christ kept it perfectly; and when He died on the cross, He died for the sins of all those the Father had given Him to save.

In contrast to what the Roman Catholic institution says, the Bible, the very Word of God, declares that salvation is by grace through faith. What does this mean?

Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). When we entered the world, we were born physically; but to be born again means to be born *spiritually*. In the sight of God, sinful man is *dead* in sins, and in such a state he cannot enter heaven. A person needs to become a new creature before he or she can live forever with the Lord. The new birth is the work of God alone, who opens the heart (Acts 16:14), and gives the gift of faith (Ephesians 2:8,9), enabling the sinner to believe on Christ.

The Bible declares, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). If the Lord has made you conscious of your sinfulness, then by faith, flee to Christ! "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" (John 3:16). Christ died for the sins of His people, and rose again from the dead for their justification (Romans 4:25).

Repent of your sins. Cry out to the Lord to forgive you your sins, and forsake them. The Word of God says, "REPENT, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). Jesus said, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17). In 2 Corinthians 7:10 we read, "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation". True sorrow for sins brings about true repentance, which results in salvation.

Repent, and receive Christ by *faith* as Lord and Saviour. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). "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: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12,13). "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). This is the sure Word of the Lord!

Salvation is a gift. It is NOT something we can earn by doing certain things. "For by grace [God's grace, His undeserved favour] are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves [we cannot earn it]: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast [none will ever be able to boast of having earned salvation by his own works]" (Ephesians 2:8,9). Salvation is a gift of God (Romans 6:23). What is more, if you truly come to the Lord in faith and repentance, you can have the *assurance* that you are saved! "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" (1 John 5:13).

The ONLY way to be saved from sin and death – that death which means total separation from God, and eternity in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:15) – is through faith in Jesus Christ, in His shed blood (Romans 3:25).

The way to heaven is not a complicated system. It is a *Person*. Call upon the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ!

A Roman Catholic who is converted to Christ must (and will) leave the Roman Catholic institution. The reason is clear. This false religion does not teach that a person is saved by grace through faith. It teaches salvation by *works*. All that Romanism teaches about salvation is contrary to God's Word. It

says that no-one can have the assurance of salvation; the Bible says that those who are truly saved *can* have this assurance. It divides sin into two classes (mortal and venial); the Bible makes no such distinction. ALL sin brings death (Romans 6:23). It teaches that baptism is essential to salvation; the Bible teaches that baptism is simply a sign to show outwardly what has happened inwardly. A Christian is to be baptized, not in order to be saved, because he already *is* saved (Acts 2:38-41: repentance comes before baptism).

Roman Catholicism teaches that one must do penance; but the Bible says that one must *repent*. Penance is some external work, which is not good enough: God requires a change of heart. Roman Catholicism teaches that men must confess to a priest, who forgives them; but the Bible says that only God can forgive sins (Luke 11:4; Matthew 9:6).

The Roman Catholic religion teaches transubstantiation; but the Bible declares that the Lord's table is something Christians are to partake of simply in *remembrance* of the Lord (1 Corinthians 11:23-26). The bread and wine do not really become His flesh and blood. They simply *represent* it. Rome teaches, in effect, that Christ is re-sacrificed in the mass; but the Bible says that Christ does not offer Himself often, but has offered Himself once, and once only, on the cross (Hebrews 9:25-28).

Rome teaches that one must be confirmed; but nowhere is confirmation mentioned in the Bible. It is a human invention. Likewise, there is no scriptural foundation for what is called "extreme unction."

As for the doctrines concerning Mary: 1 Timothy 2:5, as was seen, makes it clear that Jesus is the ONLY Mediator between God and men. Mary herself admitted that she was a sinner, by calling God her Saviour (Luke 1:47). So she could not have been conceived without original sin. Nor are we to pray to her, for she was only a mere mortal, and men are to pray to God alone (Luke 11:2, etc.).

Tradition is equal in authority with the Bible, according to the Roman Catholic religion. But how can human traditions be as authoritative as the Word of Almighty God? God's Word is the final authority (2 Timothy 3:15-17; Isaiah 8:20, etc.).

As for purgatory: nowhere in the Bible is this mentioned. Heaven, yes; hell, yes; but not purgatory (John 14:2; Revelation 21:8; etc.). The saved shall go to heaven, the unsaved to hell. This is God's revelation. Purgatory is a human invention.

Receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, by faith! Repent with all your heart of your sins! And leave the Roman Catholic institution! It is not a Christian church, but an impostor, described in Revelation 17 and 18, and called the Great Whore. "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13).

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If you have repented of your sins and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, or if you would like to know more about Him, His Gospel, and the true Christian life, please contact us.

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ENDNOTES:

1. Council of Trent, Session VI, "Decree on Justification", chapters 9 and 12, and Canons 13 and 15.

2. Council of Trent, Session VII, "Decree on the Sacraments", Canon 4.