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Chapter 1: A Short Historical Review

Today there are several branches of "Christendom" – The Eastern Orthodox Church, the Roman Catholic Church, Liberal Protestantism and Bible-centered Christianity, or fundamentalism. These branches all claim to derive from the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the foundation stone of the Church, the root of the Christian faith. We believe that the apostles and writers of the New Testament were inspired by the Holy Spirit, and together with the God-breathed writings of the Old Testament we have God's complete, authoritative and eternal guide for the life of the church.

However, as time went past after the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus and the writings of the New Testament, errors of doctrine and practice began to creep into the church. According to a list made by Dr. Lorraine Boettner, these are some of the early deviations:

• Prayers for the dead began about 300 A.D.

• The making of the sign of the cross began about 320 A.D.

• The veneration of angels, dead saints and the use of images began about 375 A.D.

• The mass became a daily celebration about 394 A.D.

• The beginning of the exaltation of Mary (The term “Mother of God” was first applied to her
in the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D.)

Through the "Dark Ages" the organized church drifted further and further from the truth. There were still some individuals who tried to walk according to God's Word, but Bibles were very scarce and not in the people's vernacular.

In 1054 the "Great Schism" divided the Orthodox Church of the East (under the patriarch of Constantinople) and the Roman Catholic Church of the West.

The main reasons for the separation were:

• Resistance to the **claims of the Popes** to have absolute power in the East as well
as in the West. The Greeks were willing to honor the Pope, but not to give him
universal supremacy.

 • Differences of **culture, politics and economics**. Constantinople (or Byzantium or Istanbul, as the city was later called) was the second most important city of the Christian world,
next to Rome and there was constant rivalry between the two cities.

• Difference on the **doctrine of the Holy Spirit**.

• Minor differences such as **priestly celibacy** in the West (The Greeks allowed married clergy)

**The Doctrines of the Eastern Orthodox Churches**

Its doctrines are very similar to those of the Roman Catholic Church. It believes in the hierarchical structure of the church, apostolic succession, the episcopate and the priesthood. It believes in prayers to the saints and prayers for the dead; it accepts seven sacraments (including baptism by triple immersion). It lays great importance on ritual and the use
of icons (images).

It is estimated that 85% of Orthodox people live in "post-Communist" countries.

**Martin Luther and the Beginnings of the Protestant Churches**

Martin Luther (1483-1546) did not form a new religion – he simply rediscovered, preached and explained in many writings and commentaries the great truths of the Bible – specially the doctrine of justification by God's grace: the great truth that God in an instant declares righteous the repentant sinner who puts his faith in Christ's finished work on the cross. Luther saw from the Scriptures that the repentant sinner is not justified over a process of time by an accumulation of merits acquired through the doing of good works, performing ceremonies, going on pilgrimages or paying for indulgences as the Roman Catholic Church taught.

*"It was this great truth of justification by faith alone that flashed through the mind of Martin Luther, while still a monk on a pilgrimage to Rome. He was climbing the scala sancta, the "sacred stairway," one step at a time and on his knees, trying to find peace with God. Suddenly the truth burst upon him and he saw the real meaning of the verse, "The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17; Gal 3:11). Immediately he got up on his feet and walked down the steps. How wrong it was to think that he could earn salvation through works of penance! Although Luther did not make a formal break with the Roman Church until some years later, his action in Rome that day, was in reality the prelude to the Protestant Reformation."* (Boettner)

In 1501 Luther went to the University of Leipzig where he received his B.A. and M.A. degrees.

In 1505 He entered the chapter house of the Hermits of St. Augustine in Egburt as a novice.

In 1507 He was ordained a priest.

In 1508 He was transferred to the University of Wittenburg where he earned his D.D. (Doctor of Divinity) in 1512, and in the same year became Professor of Bible studies.

Sometime between 1508 and 1512 he rediscovered the great doctrine of justification
by grace and came to personal salvation and assurance through faith in Christ.

On the 31st of October 1517 he issued his famous protest against the scandals
of the indulgence traffic, the 95 Theses, which he nailed to the door of the Wittenburg Church.

In 1522 Luther stood before the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, at the Diet of Worms, and refused to recant his teachings and numerous writings unless he was proved wrong by Scripture.

In 1522 He translated the Greek New Testament into German and by 1534 translated
the whole Bible.

**Chapter 2: Some Reasons for Evangelizing
Roman Catholic Children**

It is important that we prepare ourselves to give the Gospel to Roman Catholic children
for various reasons:

**• The Lord commands us to take the Gospel to all creation** (Mark 16:15).

It is estimated that there are 1,200,000,000 Catholics in the world.

In many parts of the world, the Catholic Church is strong and growing, as in Africa
and Latin America.

In other parts of the world the number of Catholics is decreasing.

In 1970 it was estimated that 23.4 % of the population of the USA was Catholic but by 2015 in was only 21.3%.

Many foreign-born members, predominantly from Mexico and other Latin American countries, made up about 8% in 1975, but currently that number is almost 28%. ([graphics.wsj.com/catholics-us](file:///%5C%5Cfilesrv4%5Cdata%5CEducation%5CResource%20Development%5C4%20CMI%20Materials%5C2%20CMI%20Notes%5C3%20Understanding%20Today%27s%20Child%5C01%20Work%20in%20Progress%5CFall%202017%5CRCC%5Cgraphics.wsj.com%5Ccatholics-us))

Boston, MA has the highest percentage of Catholics (<graphics.wsj.com/catholics-us>).

**• Generally, children who attend the Roman Catholic Church do not hear a clear presentation of the message of salvation.**

It is true that the Catholic Church defends and teaches some doctrines that are biblical: the inspiration of the Scriptures, the doctrine of God the Creator and sustainer of all, the Divinity of Christ, His virgin birth, His miracles, the Deity of the Holy Spirit and many other biblical doctrines. In many ways true Christians can identify more with the teaching of the Catholic Church than that of liberal Protestantism, which can even go to the extreme of denying the existence of God, the inspiration of the Bible and the Deity of Christ, etc.

In moral matters the Roman Catholic Church has up to quite recently maintained the sanctity of marriage; has opposed divorce, homosexual practices, abortion etc. However the moral influence of the church has been greatly damaged by the sexual abuses by clergy that have been revealed in recent years.

Though there is some good teaching, one of the basic ideas of Catholicism is “salvation by works” which is totally contrary to biblical teaching. (Ephesians 2:8-9). Some Catholics live all their lives in fear that they will not reach Heaven and they also fear death thinking that they have not acquired sufficient good deeds to compensate for their sins and so they are not ready to meet God. Christ came to free us from this fear. (Hebrews 2:14-15)

In 1995 in a radio broadcast Dr. John McArthur said: “In all honesty [Catholicism] is…an apostate form of Christianity. It is a false religion.”

**• The Church of Rome adds to the Gospel**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| TRUTH | ERROR TAUGHT BY ROME |
| The Bible is the only infallible guide for our salvation and our spiritual life. | The truth is found in the Bible, but **also in oral tradition plus the interpretation of the church.** |
| Christ is the only Savior between a holy God and sinful man. | Christ **plus the virgin May and the saints** is the mediator between God and man. |
| We are saved by grace through faith in the finished work of Christ. | We are saved through faith **plus good works –** prayers, going to Mass, charity etc.) |

Liberal protestant theologians often SUBTRACT from the cardinal doctrines of the Bible. On the other hand, the Catholic Church ADDS its own false teachings to the Word of God.

We need to believe and to teach to the children the motto of the Reformation: “Sola scriptura, sola gratia, sola fide, solus Christus, soli Deo gloria.” (“Scripture alone,

grace alone, faith alone, Christ alone, glory to God alone.”)

**The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) did not really reform the church.**

Many people believe that great changes were introduced then into the Catholic Church. It is true that the Council gave a superficial change to the face of the church, but the basic false doctrines did not change.

*"The Second Vatican Council was aimed at liberating the Roman Catholic Church. No sooner was it over than the old bureaucrats took charge: they
have been in charge ever since, interpreting liberal decrees in an illiberal way.”* (Vicars of Christ, the Dark side of the Papacy, by Peter de Rosa)

Some modern Catholic theologians have been more Biblical in their teaching, but if they stray too far from the traditional doctrines that are acceptable to the church, they have been removed by the Pope from positions of influence and teaching. Pope John Paul II (1978-2005) was a strong conservative and rather than weaken some of the controversial, non-Biblical doctrines, like the veneration given to Mary, he strengthened them. For example speaking about Mary he said

*“Not only is she the mediator of all grace, but she is also involved in our redemption.”* Pope Francis (2013 - )

The Pope quotes Vatican II (which in turn quotes the Council of Trent) when he says that:

*“[I]t is not from Sacred Scripture alone that the Church draws her certainty about everything which has been revealed. Therefore both sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture are to be accepted and venerated with the same sense of loyalty and reverence”* (Dei Verbum, 9)

**Superstition holds a large place in the beliefs of many Roman Catholics.**

In common practice, Roman Catholicism is sometimes a mixture of biblical truth together with superstition, legends, folklore and paganism. For example, the Virgin Mary is supposed to have appeared on many occasions throughout history. The local people living in that place where she "appeared" seem to regard "their virgin" as more powerful than the virgin of other localities. They claim that "our virgin" can do more miracles than other virgins. In cities like Seville in Spain, there seems to be a whole pantheon of pagan goddesses who vie with each other for the worship of the people and who usurp adoration due to the only true and wise God.

In parts of South America, Roman Catholic images appear with a salute to Jesus or the Virgin Mary on one side, and on the other, worship to some heathen deity like the
sun-god.

Neither did the charismatic movement have an enduring reforming influence. In some parts of the Roman Catholic Church, the charismatic movement has had quite an impact.

It has promoted:

* More spontaneity in worship, prayer and singing.
* More importance given to a personal experience of knowing God
* More emphasis on the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
* More openness to fellowship with Protestants who manifest gifts like speaking in tongues and gifts of healing.
* More teaching from Scripture, though “experiences” and feelings (of love, fellowship, fullness) are given greater importance than
the Word of God.

The effects have been mixed. Undoubtedly there are examples of people who have been genuinely converted. Some have left the Church of Rome, but many others have remained as members of it. In other cases people have given testimony that through the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" (as they describe it) their devotion to Mary has deepened and they have become more faithful in attending mass. In other words it would seem that they have been confirmed in their errors and this experience could not have been given to them by God.

The charismatic movement goes hand in hand in many cases with an ecumenical spirit a desire for unity of all parts of the visible church. This unity is based on the experience of "renewal in the Spirit" rather than on the doctrines of the Word of God

In general this movement did not have the “imprimatur” of the church authorities. For various reasons it reached its peak of popularity from 1970-1980. After that there was a decline in numbers and influence.

In total we conclude that despite a more open spirit in some areas, the Catholic Church continues to teach and practice a religion that to a large extent is opposed to the Scriptures. The children who receive this teaching do not receive a clear explanation about how to be saved through faith in the finished work of Christ on the cross. Therefore, we must take the Gospel to them in every way that we can.

**• Many call themselves Catholics, but the Catholicism of their home and society is in name only.**

Children in such homes were born into a family with a catholic tradition, but in truth:

— They don’t attend church.

— It is very probable that they attend a secular school in which they learn very little about God or spiritual values. On the contrary they are exposed to teaching on atheistic evolution and materialism.

— In the home their parents do not teach them anything from the Word of God.

In reality they are little pagans. This is the situation in many countries in South America and in Europe (France, Belgium, Spain, Italy, Ireland etc.) Today many people have lost their faith in the church and are absorbed by materialism.

Evidently the spiritual state of a child in a “nominal catholic” home is no worse than that of “practicing Catholic child” who does not have a personal relationship with the God through the Lord Jesus. Both are lost and need to hear a clear presentation of the Gospel so that they may have the opportunity of receiving Christ as Savior.

It is possible that it may be easier to teach a child who is Catholic only in name because his mind is like virgin soil while for those who have been taught error, there has to be some teaching given against the false doctrine as well as a presentation of the truth.

On the other hand, children who have received some Catholic teaching, though some of it is false, may have more reverence for God and spiritual things than children who have received no spiritual teaching of any kind.

**Chapter 3: Some Erroneous Roman Catholic Doctrines,**

**Contrasted with Biblical Teaching**

**• Teaching on the Scriptures and Tradition**

In previous centuries the reading and publication of the Bible was condemned by the Roman Catholic Church. Men like John Wycliffe were condemned as heretics for their work in translating the Scriptures into the language of the common people. Wycliffe died in 1384, but his body was exhumed and burned in 1428. Tyndale likewise was strangled and burned at the stake in 1536 for a similar work of translating and disseminating the Bible.

In the 20th Century the Roman Catholic Church generally approves the reading of God's Word, subject to the interpretation and teaching of the church. This means that the authority of the church is superior to that of the scriptures.

Many of the Roman Catholic versions of the Bible have copious notes that "interpret" and "explain" the scriptures from a Roman Catholic point of view.

Since the Council of Trent (1546), Roman Catholic Bibles contain the books of the Apocrypha. There are 15 books in all in the Apocrypha – like I and II Esdras, Tobit, Judith, and I and II Maccabees, etc.

Written in the Inter-Testament period, they make no claim to be inspired by God. They were not previously recognized as part of the Canon of Scripture. Some of the false practices of the Roman Catholic Church are based on the interpretation of texts from the Apocrypha, for example – prayers for the dead.

**Oral traditions**

The Roman Catholic Church puts oral tradition on the same level as the authority of the Bible.

*“Sacred tradition and sacred scripture form one sacred deposit of the
Word of God, committed to the church”* (Const. on Divine Revelation, No. 10, V. II).

*“The task of authentically interpreting the* ***Word of God****, whether written****or handed on****, has been entrusted exclusively to the living teaching office
of* ***the church*** *whose authority is exercised in the Name of Jesus Christ”*(Const. on Divine Rev. No. 10).

*“It is clear therefore, that sacred* ***tradition****, sacred* ***scripture*** *and the teaching authority of the* ***church****, in accord with God’s most wise design, are so linked
and joined together that one cannot stand without the others, and all together, and each in its own way under the action of the Holy Spirit contribute effectively to the salvation of souls."* (Const. on D.V. Rev. No. 10).

**Warnings in the Bible as to the “tradition of men”**

*"In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men...Full well ye reject the commandments of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.... making the Word of God of none effect through your tradition." (Mark 7:7-9, 13)*

*"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." (Colossians 2:8).*

**The motto of the Reformers**

*"Sola gracia, sola fide,* ***sola scripture****"* echoes the words of **Jude**, "*Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints"* (Jude 1:3), and **John's**, *"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book"* (Revelation 22:18).

**• Teaching on the Virgin Mary**

She was given the title "Mother of God" in the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D. to emphasize the divinity of Christ against heretical teaching – not to glorify Mary.

**Perpetual virginity**

The belief that Mary was always a virgin, even after the birth of Jesus; (that she had no other children). This doctrine was proclaimed in 553 A.D.

***The scriptural teaching***

Matthew 1:25—Joseph *“knew her not till she had brought forth her* ***firstborn*** *son.”*

Matthew 12:46—*“His mother* ***and his brethren*** *stood without, desiring to speak with Him.”*

Matthew 13:55-56—*“Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren James and Joses and Simon and Judas? And his sisters are they not all with us?”* (Also Mark 6:3).

Galatians 1:19*—“But other of the apostles saw I none, save James
the Lord’s brother.”*

The Greek word used for brother is “adelphos.” There is a different word for cousin or relative—as in Luke 1:36. Nevertheless, against the evidence, the Roman Catholic Church insists that Jesus’ brothers and sisters were cousins.

**The Immaculate Conception**

The belief that Mary was born free of original sin. This was proclaimed as a doctrine by Pope Pius on December 8th 1854.

***The scriptural teaching***

Romans chapter 5 teaches us that all mankind is involved in the sin of Adam, the representative of mankind (Rom. 5:12).

Psalm 51:5*—“Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.”*

**The sinlessness of Mary**

The belief that Mary did not sin in practice. This is not a dogma, but it is upheld
by the Roman Catholic Church.

***The scriptural teaching***

But note Mary’s words in Luke 1:47, *“My spirit hath rejoiced in God,* ***my Savior****.”* She recognized her need of a Savior because she was a sinner like all mankind.

Luke 2:24—When Christ was to be circumcised, Joseph and Mary brought two turtledoves to sacrifice. According to Leviticus 12:8, one was for a burnt offering, and the other for a **sin offering**.

**The assumption into Heaven**

The belief that Mary was taken up into Heaven without dying. This doctrine was proclaimed in 1950.

***The scriptural teaching***

There is no Biblical proof whatever for this teaching.

**Co-redemption by Mary**

The belief that Mary shared in the work of the redemption of mankind.

In 1956, Pope Pius XII exhorted the faithful to venerate the immaculate heart of the Mother of God, *“Who was inseparably united to Christ in the accomplishment of the redemption of man, with the result that our salvation, derived as much from the love and sufferings of Jesus Christ, as the love and pain of His Mother.”*

*“The blessed Virgin is invoked in the church under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress and* ***Mediatrix****”* (Vatican Council II Lumen Gentium).

Pope Paul II*—“In Mary is effected the reconciliation of God with humanity”* (on reconciliation and penance).

*“Death through Eve; life through Mary”* was aslogan from the early church fathers, taken up again during the Vatican Council II.

*“Taken up into Heaven she did not lay aside this salvific duty, but by her constant intercession continued to bring us the gifts of eternal life”*(Vatican Council II Constitution on the church).

***The scriptural teaching***

This teaching is contrary to verses like:

**1 Timothy 2:5***—“For there is one God, and one mediator between God
and men, the man Christ Jesus.”*

**Acts 4:12***—“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other 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:
no man cometh unto the Father but by me.”*

**Worship of Mary**

The Roman Catholic Church distinguishes between three different types of worship:

Latria—due only to God

Hyperdulia—due to Mary

Dulia—due to the Saints

But in effect Mary is put on the same plane as God. Mary is given titles such as “Mother of Grace,” “Mother of God,” “Mother of Mercy,” “the door of Paradise,”
“the Gate of Heaven” etc.

**Questions that children ask about Mary**

Question: “Do you believe in our Lady (the Blessed Virgin)?”

Answer: “Yes, I believe in the Virgin Mary and believe all that the Bible has
to teach about her.”

Question: “Do you love her?”

Answer: “Yes, she was chosen by God to be the mother of the Lord Jesus.
And we listen to her.”

***The scriptural teaching***

She once said*, “Whatever He (Jesus) says to you, do it.”* He said that He was the only way to Heaven—that is why we do not pray to Mary.

**Some references to Mary in the Scriptures**

• The birth narratives in Matthew and Luke.

• In Luke 1:28 the angel said to Mary *“Blessed art thou* ***among women***”
(not above women).

• John 2:1-10—the wedding at Cana. The Roman Catholics lay great emphasis
on this passage showing that the servants came to Mary first, and then Mary interceded with Christ. They maintain that this is a pattern for us to go to Mary that she might then pray to Christ for us. But notice, verse 4 is a gentle rebuke given publicly to Mary. In Good News for Modern Man, it is rendered *“You must not tell me what to do.”* John 2:5 is Mary’s only instruction—*“Whatever HE says to you, do it!”*

• Matthew 12:46-50 and Luke 11:27, 28—Christ teaches that spiritual relationships are more important than family ties. He plays down the relationship of Mary as His physical mother.

• John 19:25-27—Mary at the cross. The Church of Rome gives great importance
to this passage too. They interpret Christ’s words symbolically—Mary is to be
the mother of all humanity (represented by the disciple John). But our Lord was simply taking care of Mary. He commended her into the care of John, because His own half-brothers did not believe in Him up to that time.

• Acts 1:14—Mary was present after the Ascension, in prayer with the disciples.
This is the last mention of Mary in the Scriptures. She is not even mentioned
in the preaching of the Apostles in Acts, nor in any of the New Testament Epistles.

**The “appearances and miracles of the Virgin Mary in modern times”**

The Virgin Mary is supposed to have appeared on numerous occasions; to have given messages; to have done many miracles in response to the prayers of devout Roman Catholics. For this reason much devotion is given to her. How do we explain these “appearances” and “miracles?”

• “Appearances” were often made at twilight or the very early morning when
the visibility was poor. They were often made to simple, credulous people—such as peasant women or children.

• Miracles of healing, for example, may have been done by God. God in His grace and sovereignty heals the person, though the credit is given to Mary.

• Many illnesses are psychosomatic and when the patient believes in his **mind** that Mary has cured him, the **body is healed**.

• There have been deliberate deceptions at times. For example, statues that weep blood have been found to have a hidden mechanical device.

• Some miracles may have been done through the power of Satan to deceive
and delude. (Revelation 16:14; 19:20; 2 Thessalonians 2:9).

**Our attitude when speaking to Roman Catholic children about the Virgin Mary**

• Be respectful. She was chosen by God for a very special task. It is not wrong
to refer to her as the “Blessed Virgin Mary.”

• Give her the correct place as shown in Scripture as the mother of the Lord Jesus, according to His human nature. She has an important place in the early lessons in the life of Christ.

• Stress that there is only one Savior, one Way to Heaven, one Mediator, one Savior from sin (Acts 4:12, John 14:6 etc.) Salvation is through trust in Jesus alone.

**• Invocation of the Saints**

As well as sealing in Mary an intermediary between God and man, Rome teaches
the importance of the “saints.”

*“Exercise of devotion towards her (The Virgin Mary) are to be treasured . . . and those decrees issued in earlier times regarding the images of Christ, the Blessed Virgin and the saints are to be religiously observed.”* (Vatican Council II The Church 8:67).

According to Rome a saint is a person who led a pious life and who after his death
is canonized by the Pope and thereafter may be prayed to for help in many situations.
There are many saints—for example: St. Christopher, St. Francis, St. Joseph, St. Elisabeth, St. Anne, etc.

But the New Testament does not use the word “saint” in that way. “Saints” is used with regards to all believers. There is no special group known in the Bible as “saints.”
(See 1 Cor. 1:2; Eph. 1:1; Phil. 1:1, etc.) “Saints” being addressed were the living saints, not dead ones!

Over and over again in the Scriptures, God teaches us that there is only one Mediator (1 Tim 2:5). *“There is* ***no other Name under*** *Heaven”* (neither Mary nor Saint Peter, nor Saint Perpetua…) *“given among men whereby we must be saved”* (Acts 4:12).

God also forbids the worship of graven images of gold, silver or stone, etc.
(Exodus 20:4; Deut. 4:15-16; Isa. 44:14-17; Ps. 115:4-8; Rom. 1:21, 23).

**Note:** When we use pictures of Christ in our lesson materials, they are for teaching purposes. This is completely different from having a “holy picture” before which one adores.

**• The Doctrine of the Church**

Roman Catholics believe that salvation is found only within the church. Cyprian of Carthage (3rd Century), “No one can have God as Father who does not have the church as his mother.”

*“The Roman Catholic Church ... is necessary for salvation. Christ presented to us in His body, which is the Church, is the one Mediator and the unique way of salvation - through Baptism as through a door, men enter the Church. Whosoever therefore, knowing that the Catholic Church was made necessary by Christ, would refuse to enter or remain in it, could not be saved”* (Constitution of the Church N. 14, V.II).

**The Papacy**

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that he is the visible head of the church
on earth, the Vicar (or substitute) of Christ.

*“In virtue of his office, that is as Vicar of Christ, as Pastor of the whole Church,
the Roman Pontiff has full, supreme and universal power over the church.”* (Constitution of the Church, Vatican Council II).

**The Roman Catholic Church proclaims the infallibility of the Pope** (proclaimed as late
as 1870) when he speaks “ex-cathedra,” that is from his papal throne on questions
of faith and morals. Of course, this is contrary to Scripture. John 14:25-26 teaches that the Holy Spirit, not a man, is the Vicar or representative of Christ on earth.
(See also John 16:13, 14.) Matthew 23:9 *“Call no man your (spiritual) father on earth,
for one is your Father, which is in Heaven.”*

It is surprising how this doctrine of papal infallibility has grown despite the many errors and failures of the popes down through history.

• Doctrinally Calixtus 1 (221-223 A.D.) was a Unitarian.

• Liberius (358 A.D.) was Arian.

• Zosimus (417-418 A.D.), pronounced Pelagius, was an orthodox teacher.

• Honorius (625-630 A.D.), a monothelite, was condemned by the Roman Catholic Church as a heretic for at least the next 800 years.

• Gregory I (590-604 A.D.) referred to anyone who claimed to be Universal Bishop as antichrist.

• John XI (931-936 A.D.) an illegitimate son of Pope Sergius III.

• Alexander VI (1492-1503 A.D.) had six illegitimate children, two of which were born after he became pope.

• Pope John XXIII was accused of *simony (buying or selling of ecclesiastical privileges)* and was later deposed. In 1947 his name was dropped from the official list of Popes.
(Quoted from the Evangelical Presbyterian magazine, October 1989).

• In the 14th century there was a Pope in Rome, one in Avignon, France and
at one stage, another in Peniscola, Spain—all contending for the supremacy!

**The Roman Catholic Church bases the doctrine of the supremacy and authority
of the Pope on a false interpretation of Matthew 16:18-19**—*“on this rock I will build my church.”* What church? The Roman Catholic answer is that the rock refers to Peter. The real answer is that the rock refers to the truth that Peter had just stated—*“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God”* (Matt. 18:16).

To support this affirmation, notice:

There are two similar, but different words in verse 16.

Peter = petros, masculine gender, a stone.

Rock = petra, a feminine gender, a rock.

Peter and other apostles understood the reference to the Rock to apply to Christ, and not to Peter.

1 Cor. 3:11—*“No other foundation but Jesus Christ.”*

Eph. 2:20—*“…Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone.”*

1 Peter 2:5-8—*“I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious:
and he that believeth in Him shall not be confounded.”*

In the Old Testament, the word “rock” is ascribed to God dozens of times,
but not to man.

Psalm 31:3—*“Thou art my rock and my fortress.”*

Psalm 71:3; 89:26; 95:1

1 Cor. 10:4—*“That rock was Christ.”*

Matthew 16:19 has also been interpreted incorrectly*. "I will give unto thee (Peter) the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”*

Peter did have an important historical role. He opened the kingdom to the Jews by preaching the Gospel (Acts 2), and to the Gentiles, when he preached the Gospel to Cornelius (Acts 10).

But notice that the same authority to loose (to open the door) or to bind (to close the door of the kingdom through the preaching of the Gospel) was also given to the other apostles (Matthew 18:18), and to all believers who proclaim Christ as the only Savior. Christ alone has the key of Heaven and death. (Revelation 1:18; Revelation 3:7). When a sinner believes in Christ, we can declare that the door of salvation is open to him. If he turns from Christ, we can declare that the door of the kingdom is closed to him.

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that Peter was the first bishop of Rome,
but...the Bible does not mention the presence of Peter in Rome. However, Paul's visit to Rome is given prominence. Paul wrote the Epistle to the Romans in A.D. 58. According to the Church of Rome, Peter was supposed to be in Rome from
A.D. 42-67. Paul gives greetings for 26 people, but does not mention Peter!
It seems strange that he does not even mention Peter, their pastor.

The New Testament presents Peter as the apostle to the Jews, while Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles.

As far as other historical evidence is concerned, Dr. Di Rosi, an eminent Italian archaeologist, worked for 40 years in the catacombs of Rome, but was not able to find any evidence of Peter's presence in Rome.

**Bishops and Priests**

The Roman Catholic Church teaches the need for a duly appointed priest of the church to act as intermediary between God and the sinner.

*"These ministers in the society of the faithful are able by the sacred power of orders to offer Sacrifice and to forgive sins and they perform their priestly office for men in the name of Christ."* (Ministry and life of Priests N.2 Vatican II).

• The Bible teaches the work of Christ our great High priest (Hebrews 8:1) who offered His own blood as a perfect sacrifice forever for sin (Heb. 7:23-28).

• The Bible also teaches the priesthood of all believers—each believer has direct access to God without the need of any other intermediary but Christ (1 Peter 2:5, 9; Revelation 1:6-5:10).

• In the New Testament, the word “priest” is never used in reference
to a church leader or pastor, other than in the general sense in which
it is applied to all believers.

**Confession to a priest**

The Roman Catholic Church teaches the need for the sinner to confess orally
to a priest to receive pardon for his sin.

The Bible, however, teaches that we confess our sins directly to God (1 John 1:9).

It is God alone who forgives our sin.

**The Sacraments**

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that there are seven sacraments through which God’s grace is transmitted:

1. **Baptism**

Baptism is supposed to wash out all previous sins both mortal (original and personal) and venial. Through baptism, Rome teaches that the infant becomes a child of God and a member of the church.

2. **Confirmation**

Usually this ceremony takes place about the age of 12-14. The priest lays his hands on the head of the young person (who has previously been baptized). It is believed that the Holy Spirit is thereby received.

3. **The Eucharist** (the Mass)—see separate notes

A child will often take mass for the first time, *"First communion,"* at age 8 or 9. This is a very important day when, in some countries, the girls dress in white like little brides, and the boys in white suits. Previous to the first communion they will attend catechism classes. Often the family and friends are invited to a banquet and expensive presents are given. The child believes that he receives Christ upon taking the wafer of bread.

4. **Penance** (Sometimes now referred to as the sacrament of reconciliation)

A recognized catechism teaches: *"Penance is a sacrament in which sins committed after baptism are forgiven by means of the absolution of the priest ... the priest gives a penance after confession that we may satisfy God for the temporary punishment due to our sins. We must accept the penance which the priest gives to us.”* (Quoted Roman Catholicism by Loriane Boettner, page 248).

5. **Extreme Unction** (Anointing of the sick)

This is the anointing with oil and the offering of prayer for those in danger of death by sickness*. "But no matter how good the priest or his prayer, he still cannot assure the dying person of heaven. The best he can do is to get him into purgatory, there to suffer the pains of fire."* (Boettner, page 191).

6. **Priestly (holy) orders**

Men are ordained as bishops, priests, and deacons through a bishop’s laying on of hands and prayer. These men are given the grace to live out their lives in service to the church and to God’s people (<study.com/academy/lesson>)

7. **Matrimony**

The last two sacraments are optional, though very desirable. The others are necessary to be assured of reaching Heaven one day.

**• The Doctrine of Sin**

**The Categories of Sin**

The Roman Catholic Church divides sin into the following categories:

*Original sin*—which we inherit from Adam and Eve’s original fall.

*Mortal sin*—serious or deadly sin that kills the soul and subjects it to eternal punishment. All mortal sins must be confessed to the priest

or they cannot be forgiven.

*Venial sin*—lighter or less serious sin. Technically venial sins do not need to be confessed to a priest, and can be expiated by good works, prayers, etc.

But no one is quite sure which sins are *venial* and which are *mortal*.

The Bible makes no distinction between the different categories of sin. For example, in Colossians 3:8 the list includes sins of thought, word or action and each is equally grave in God's sight. (See also Matthew 5:27,28). All sin is "mortal" (Romans 6:23).

**Confession**

Sin must be confessed to a priest who gives forgiveness in God’s name.
For confession to be effective, there are five steps:

1. The one who confesses must find out what sins he has committed.

2. He must be sorry for them.

3. He must be determined not to fall into that sin again.

4. He must confess the sins to the priest.

5. He must do the penance that the priest gives to him.

Priests can forgive sin, even if they themselves are in mortal sin, but their “intentions” must be right or their service is null and void.

**Penance**

Penance must be done to atone for the guilt and eternal punishment in Hell due to mortal sin, but temporal punishment (on earth or in purgatory) may remain. Penance very often takes the form of repeating the rosary or prayers like the Lord's Prayer.

**Punishment for Sin**

**Hell** exists for those who die in mortal sin.

**Purgatory** is for those who die in venial sin. (This dogma was proclaimed by the Council of Florence in 1439).

*"Sin must be expiated. This may be done on this earth through 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 torment or purifying punishment."* (Indulgentuarum Doctrina, Vatican Council II).

The fires of purgatory are considered to be like Hell, but not eternal. However, a person may have to spend many years in purgatory. Hence the living can offer many prayers and pay for masses that his time in purgatory may be shortened.

The supposed biblical basis for this doctrine is 1 Peter 3:18 20. This is not an easy passage. We understand that Christ by His Holy Spirit preached to the people in the time of Noah **while they were alive**. All were disobedient except eight, and hence their spirits were in eternal prison (Hell) at the time Peter was writing, and are still there.

1 Peter 4:6—*“For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead”* means that the Gospel was preached to those people **in their lifetime,** but they are now dead.

There is also a passage in the apocryphal book of 2 Maccabees which speaks of praying for the Jews who died in a battle because of their disobedience to God that they might share in the resurrection of the dead. The actual word "purgatory" is not used, however.

The result of this terrible teaching is uncertainty, fear, and in many cases real financial suffering. It would appear that the richer you are, the quicker you and your loved ones get out of purgatory.

The Bible teaches with great clarity that we can **know** that we have eternal life through faith in the work of the Lord Jesus (John 5:24; Luke 23:43; John 19:30;
1 John 1:7, 9; Philippians 1:21, 23; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Romans 8:1).

**• The Doctrine of Salvation**

Rome teaches that salvation is:

1. **Through the Church**

2. **Through the observance of the sacraments, especially the MASS**

• Its definition

*“The Holy Mass is one and the same Sacrifice with that of the Cross, inasmuch as Christ, who offered Himself a bleeding victim, on the cross to His Heavenly Father, continued to offer Himself in an unbloody manner on the altar, through the ministry of His priests”* (Catechism).

• Explanation of the ceremony

The priest bows over the altar, holding the bread in his hands, saying the words of the consecration. He then elevates the “sacred host” for the adoration of the people and likewise the cup of wine. The people are taught that the bread actually becomes the body of Christ, and the wine becomes His blood. (This is the doctrine of “transubstantiation,” promulgated in 1215). Christ is sacrificed again each time Mass is celebrated, but “in an unbloody manner.”

The people then come forward to eat the wafer (the host). They believe that Christ's body and blood are both present in the wafer. (Only the priests drink
the wine). In this way they are taught that they are “receiving Christ.”

• Biblical teaching

Matthew 26:26, 28—When Christ said, *“This is my body and this is my blood”* He was speaking figuratively, as when He said, *“I am the door,”* and *“I am the vine.”* He was physically present when he said these words. At that moment obviously the bread was **not** His body.

John 6:53-55 must also be understood figuratively (see verse 63). In verse 35, Christ explains that “eating” = “coming” and “drinking” = “believing.”

1 Corinthians 11:26—We remember the Lord *“till He come.”*
We are remembering our **absent** Lord. He is not physically present
in the elements of bread and wine.

Hebrews 7:27; 9:28; 10:12-14 teach that Christ offered **one**, **complete**, **perfect** sacrifice of His own blood that needs “no addition and no repetition.”

He sat down, signifying that His work was finished. We need no altar now.

3. **Salvation by means of Ceremonies and Works**

• Through the reciting of the **rosary**

This is a string of beads with a cross attached which the Roman Catholics use for prayer. The beads are of different sizes, shapes and colors. As the person counts his beads, he says an “Ave Maria” for one kind of bead and a "Pater Noster" for another and a “Gloria” for another. Roman Catholics are frequently ordered to say so many Ave Maria’s, etc. as a penance, and so to receive forgiveness for their sins.

**Biblical teaching**—God warns against vain repetitions (Matt. 6:7).

Prayer is a joy and privilege, not a punishment!

Salvation can never be gained by works (Eph. 2:8, 9; Gal. 2:16).

• Through **indulgences**

Indulgences may be granted by the church for performing good works, or for a donation of money to the church, etc. In the preface to the Douay Version of the Bible, which is authorized by Rome, the Pope has granted an indulgence of so many days to the faithful who read the Scriptures. An indulgence means that the time the departed soul must spend in purgatory has been diminished by so many days.

At the time of the Reformation under Luther, indulgences were granted in the church for a small sum of money. These indulgences gave full remission of sins and insured entrance into Heaven. The purchaser was then free to sin with impurity as much as he liked. The funds gained by the sale of the indulgences at this time were used to build St. Peter's in Rome.

• Through the use of **scapulars** (invented by an English monk in the 13th century)

It consists of two pieces of brown cloth about four inches square, on which are pictures of the Virgin Mary. It is worn next to the skin and is never to be taken off. Boettner gives the example of scapulars that were sold during the Second World War.

• Through the veneration of **relics** and undertaking of **pilgrimages**

There are hundreds of relics of the cross, the nails, the robe of Christ, pieces of bone of the saints and martyrs. The veneration of these relics brings spiritual blessing and access to God.

Pilgrimages have been made, and are still made to acquire favor with
God—Croagh Patric in Ireland, Santiago in Spain, Lourdes in France, the Scala Sancta in Rome where pilgrims mount the steps on their knees, saying a prayer on every step to gain indulgences.

• Through all kinds of **good works**

Roman Catholics believe that by giving alms to the needy, paying money to the church and Christian charities, being kind, etc. they build up a treasury of merit that will help them to reach Heaven.

The consequence of these erroneous teachings on “salvation by works” is that the devout Roman Catholic has never any real assurance of salvation. He thinks that it is presumptuous to claim to know that you have eternal life and that you are sure of Heaven. According to his religion, you cannot be sure that you have done enough good deeds; that you have shown enough devotion; that you have confessed all your sins; that you have acquired enough merits to get to Heaven.

Even after death, relatives through fear and anxiety for their loved one, continue to say prayers, and have masses performed for the dead, to deliver him from purgatory, even long years after his death.

**Bible teaching**—God’s Word makes it clear that justification (the act by which God declares the sinner to be just in His sight) is instantaneous. It takes place the moment
the repentant sinner puts his faith in Christ as his only Savior. It is not a long process.

We are justified by God’s grace (Rom. 3:24)—the source

We are justified by Christ’s blood (Rom. 5:9)—the basis

We are justified by faith (Rom. 3:28)—the means

In Galatians 2:16, God teaches us that salvation is not through works or merits which we accumulate to balance out the faults in our lives, but by faith in Christ.

In Ephesians 2:8-10, it is clear that we are not saved by good works, but by *“grace through faith.”* Works follow salvation as a consequence; they are not
a means of salvation (See also Titus 3:5). Hence the believer can know that he has eternal life (John 5:24; John 20:31; 1 John 5:11, 12; 2 Tim. 1:12).

**Chapter 4: Some Practical Points in Teaching**

**Roman Catholics**

1. Pray in detail and with faith. This is the most important and the most practical thing that you can do. Through prayer God can open doors, break down opposition and bring light and understanding to darkened minds.

2. Be aware that bringing the Gospel to Roman Catholic children may cause conflict for them. Don't be afraid of that. Christ said, *“Think not that I am come to send peace on earth, I came not to send peace, but a sword, for I am come to set a man at variance with his father ...”* (Matthew 10:34).

3. Do not go behind the backs of the parents to contact their children. Be friendly and straightforward. In your invitation to a *Good News Club*® stress what is taught in the classes: Bible lessons and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ. Children will be taught to memorize Scripture. Share that you are concerned about the moral tone of modern society and you are doing what you can to help. You want to provide good, clean Christian company for all children, no matter what denomination or religion they may belong to.

4. If the children have been taught Roman Catholic error, you will have to correct it. It is not sufficient to teach positively with no reference to what they have been wrongly taught beforehand. You must present the “truth in love.”

Use phrases like:

“You may have been told that…but God says…”

“Maybe you thought that…but the Bible teaches…”

“Many people believe (it might even have been said to you that)…but God’s Word says...”

“People imagine that…but they don’t know the truth, because God clearly teaches us…”

5. Continually stress the importance of God’s Word. Constantly teach the Bible is inspired
by God—explain what that means.

Keep in mind that the Church of Rome does not give much importance to the authority of God’s Word. Therefore, it can come with great impact to say, “Here in the **Bible, Jesus** said…” or “…**God** said…” or even “…**Peter** said…”

If a controversial question comes up, for example on the use of images, pick up the Bible and find the appropriate verse to read it to the child, or better still have him read it.

6. Encourage the children to think and participate through questions.

• For example if you are teaching the story of the Philippian jailer, and you come to his question, *“What must I do to be saved?”* (Acts 16:31). Stop and ask:

“What do you think Paul answered?

*Let’s imagine that you were in the jail that night. What would you have answered?*

*Let’s think of some answers. Go to church every Sunday. Is that the right answer? No, that was not the answer Paul gave. Say lots of prayers? Give lots of money to the church and to the poor?” (Etc.)*

• When explaining *The Wordless Book* BEFORE moving on to explain the remedy for sin, ask the child, “How do you think we can have your sin forgiven?” His answer will tell you a lot of what he is thinking. He may reply, “By being good,” “By keeping the commandments,” etc. On the basis of those replies you can then continue to share what the Scripture teaches.

• When explaining a verse like Acts 4:12*, “There is no other name under heaven ... whereby we must be saved,”* ask the children to think of and suggest names of people who are supposed to be Saviors. They may suggest Buddha, Mohammed, some Roman Catholic saint, or the Virgin Mary. Gently, but with authority, show that only Christ can save.

• When explaining the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16), show from the Bible that there are only two places where the soul may go—Heaven or Hell. But as you explain that, you might ask “How many places are there for a person to go to after death? How many have you heard of—2, 3, 4? What does the Bible say?”

7. Continually emphasize salvation is though faith in Christ. Roman Catholic children have very deep rooted indoctrination on "salvation by works." Use illustrations to explain this very important doctrine, for example:

• The child being rescued from drowning by a life guard. At first his struggles to save himself, instead of helping to save him, simply make it harder for the life guard to do so.

• Illustrate salvation as a gift. For example, offer candy to your pupils. The candy must be received by faith. The children don't have to pay for it or work for it. The candy had
to be paid for by someone. In a far greater way, God paid a very high price for our
salvation—the death of His only Son.

• The story of an Indian pearl fisher who wanted to give a beautiful pearl to John, his missionary friend. John says he will buy it, gradually increasing his offer. The Indian is offended because the finding of the pearl caused the death of his son. The pearl is beyond any price.

8. Avoid confusing terms or Bible verses that may be understood in an incorrect way.
For example:

• In leading a Roman Catholic child to Christ it would be better not to use a verse like
John 1:12, with the concept of “receiving Christ.” The child may associate that with receiving Christ through the wafer at Mass, especially in the first communion. A better verse would be John 5:24. Explain very carefully the concept of "believing" as “trusting in.”

John 6:37 is also a good verse. *“Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out.”* The verb “come” is very graphic and easy for the child to understand, though you would need to explain again that he does not “come” physically, but by faith to Jesus Christ.

Romans 10:13*—“Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved"* is also an excellent verse. The idea of calling on the Lord is easy to understand. No doubt the child has often called on his mother or some adult to help him. So we call on Jesus to save us. You could put the child's name in place of whosoever—“If ... David calls ...”

• If using the term “repentance”, explain it very carefully. It means a change of mind and an inner turning from sin. It does not mean the same as “penance”, which may be in the child's mind. In some Roman Catholic versions of the Bible, the word “penance” appears where we have repentance. Penance is an outward work, while repentance is something that takes place in the inner man.

• When you speak of the “blood of Christ”, be sure that the child is not thinking of the wine in the communion service, which is supposed to turn into blood in the chalice (cup).

• Even the word “pray” may mean something different to the Roman Catholic child. He is thinking of reciting prayers by heart. Teach him carefully that praying is talking to God, and expressing what is in our hearts.

• Avoid the use of the word “confession”, or if you do use it, explain that you do not mean confession to a man, but directly to God who alone is able and willing to forgive all our sins.

• Use with care the phrase “you need to be converted.” The Roman Catholic child may think that you mean "converted to the Protestant religion from Roman Catholicism." You mean to be converted to Christ from sin, to turn round from the wide road that leads to destruction to the narrow path which leads to life. But it might be better to use a phrase like “you need to trust in Christ so that He may save you,” to avoid any confusion.

9. Be careful with pictures of Christ, especially Christ on the cross. Explain it is simply a drawing; it is not a holy image that we worship. (Also adults who have been saved from a Roman Catholic background may be offended to see you using pictures of Christ and His crucifixion as you teach children. Be sensitive to their feelings.)

10. Stress the positive blessings of salvation. We can know with assurance that we are saved and are going to Heaven. We can have peace and joy in our salvation.

11. As saved children grow older, it is good to begin to teach them that they should marry
a believer. (2 Cor. 6:14-17).

12. Roman Catholics are taught that to understand the Scriptures they need help from the authorized teachers of the church. From the very beginning stress that even a child can learn directly from God's Word (Acts 4:13; Matt. 11:25).

13. Roman Catholic children usually between the ages of 8 and 9 need special help when they come under pressure from both teachers and parents to have their first communion. This pressure is both spiritual and social because of the big family celebration that accompanies the religious ceremony.

The first communion is preceded by catechism classes taught by a catechist or local priest. Some children may attend the catechism class as well as the *Good News Club*!

If children in your *Good News Club* are also attending catechism classes, both the children and teacher need special prayer and encouragement.

The converted Roman Catholic child needs to be taught that he does not need to “receive Christ” in the first communion, as he already has the Lord living in his life.

14. If a child attending your club trusts in Christ for salvation, do not encourage him right away to go home and tell his parents what he has done. (Naturally do not commit the double error of urging him to tell them that he "has been converted.")

Of course, do not forbid him to testify at home, but don't push him to witness too fast. All you may achieve is that the parents forbid him to return to the class.

15. Don't jump to conclusions about how much the children understand of spiritual truths.
They can easily say “yes” to questions like the following:

“Do you believe in Jesus?”

“Do you believe that Jesus is the only way to Heaven?”

But they may be thinking consciously or unconsciously:

“Yes, I believe in Jesus…and in Mary, Joseph, and St. Christopher…”

“Yes, I believe that Jesus is the only way to Heaven, if I do lots of good things…”

16. On some occasions it may be a good thing to ask the local Roman Catholic priest if he would encourage the children to come to your meetings: or ask his permission to teach God's Word in the parochial school.

17. Have a Roman Catholic version of the Bible and be familiar with it. Know which verses have been translated accurately, and perhaps use it to help children you talk to or counsel.

18. You may be asked by a converted Roman Catholic child or young teen:

“Should I continue to attend the Roman Catholic Church?”

Ask—“*Do you* attend with your mother/father?” If so, you could advise the child to continue to attend the church. Otherwise severe problems may arise, and this young convert may be cut off from all contact with the Gospel and evangelical believers. Tell him that in church he can pray to God alone, and not to Mary
or the saints.

If the child attends by himself, possibly you could encourage him to go with you to your church. But you would need the consent of his parents. Be prudent as the result could be that the child would not be allowed to have any further contact with you or come to your club.

**Chapter 5: Using *The Wordless Book* to Evangelize**

**Roman Catholic Children**

In explaining the Gospel illustrated by the Wordless Book, keep in mind the doctrines you need to stress in view of the error that the Roman Catholic children may have been taught.

**Introduction**

As you begin to teach the Roman Catholic child, show him that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, and our final authority (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:19 21; Matt. 5:18,19; Revelation 22:18,19).

*The Roman Catholic child has been taught to believe what the Roman Catholic Church says.*

**Gold page**

• The pre-eminence of God who provides salvation and a home in Heaven for those who trust in Christ (Rev. 21:22, 23; 22:1, 3).

The Roman Catholic Church gives much importance to Mary as the “Gate of Heaven,” and “The Queen of Heaven.” But it was NOT Mary who gave the Savior to the world
but God (John 3:16).

*God is love—He provides a Heavenly home, but God is just and holy.*

• The assurance of Heaven for the believer (John 14:1-3; Phil. 3:20-21).

 A Roman Catholic has no assurance of salvation.

• The immediate departure of the soul of the believer upon death, to be with Christ
(Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:21-23).

*Purgatory is a false doctrine—Matthew 25:46; John 5:29.*

**Dark page**

• God is holy and all sin is equally evil in His sight (Jeremiah 17:9; Mark 7:20-23; Romans 3:10; James 4:17).

*The Roman Catholic Church distinguishes between “venial” and “mortal” sin.*

• All sin deserves God’s judgment and eternal separation from Him. (Ezek. 8:4; Rom. 6:23; James 2:10; Rev. 21:8, 27).

*The Roman Catholic Church teaches the false doctrine of atoning through suffering
in purgatory for our sins, and thus reaching Heaven.*

• The helplessness of the sinner to atone for his sin (John 3:36; Eph. 2:1-3; 12; Heb. 9:27).

*The Roman Catholic Church teaches that we can do good works to help atone
for our sin.*

**Red page**

• Christ is the only Savior (Mark 2:7; John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 5:31).

*To counteract the Roman Catholic Church’s teaching concerning the role of Mary, the church, penance, etc.*

• Christ died on the cross ONCE for our sin (Heb. 7:27; 9:28; 10:10-14; 1 Peter 2:24)

*To counteract the Roman Catholic Church’s false teaching of the “sacrifice of the mass.”*

• Nothing can be added to Christ’s sacrifice on the cross (John 19:30; Heb. 7:25; 10:17, 18).

*The Roman Catholic is taught that more is needed.*

**Clean page**

• To have salvation and forgiveness of sin, we must repent of our sin and invite Christ
into our lives as Lord and Savior (Acts 3:19; Romans 10:13; Revelation 3:20).

*The Roman Catholic believes that he receives Christ at the mass.*

• Justification by faith alone (Acts 13:38, 39; Romans 3:28; 4:5; 5:1; Galatians 2:16).
Teach that when we trust in Christ as our Savior, God declares us to be just. He now sees us as clean and pure before Him. We don’t deserve it, but He treats us just as if we had never sinned against Him. All our sins were put on Christ who died for us.

*The Roman Catholic is taught that justification is a long process of accumulation of merit by human effort.*

**Return to Gold page**

Because God sees as just and clean those who have trusted in Christ, we can emphasize:

• The assurance of Heaven for the believer (John 14:1-3; Phil. 3:20-21).

*A Roman Catholic has no assurance of salvation.*

• The immediate departure of the soul of the believer upon death, to be with Christ
(Luke 23:43; 1 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:21-23).

*Purgatory is a false doctrine* (Matt. 25:46; John 5:29).

**Green page**

• God gives His children the Bible, prayer, witness, and Christian fellowship to strengthen them in the Christian life (Ps. 40:8; Jer. 31:33; 2 Cor. 9:8).

*The Roman Catholic believes he has to do these things to gain favor with God.*

• The Bible is our infallible guide (Ps. 119:105; Gal. 1:8; Rev. 22:18, 19; Acts 17:11).

*The Roman Catholic is taught that the Church and tradition are needed as well.*

• Prayer is talking to God, our Heavenly Father (Matt. 6:6, 7; 1 Peter 5:7; Phil. 4:6).

*The Roman Catholic child is taught to recite little memorized prayers.*

For further reading:

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Herbert Carson—*Dawn or Twilight;* Inter-Varsity Press, revised 1976.

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