



WHY WE  
ARE NOT  
ROMAN  
CATHOLIC

Sundays in July

# KEY QUESTION

**What makes a false form of Christianity heretical and false?**

What are the marks of cult groups and apostate forms of Christianity that identify them as false religions—such that we can and should label them as *heresies*, rather than simply classifying them as different denominations?

# NT WRITERS

In **Matthew 7:15**, **Jesus** warned: “Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.”

In **Acts 20:28–31**, the apostle **Paul** said: “I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; . . . speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be on the alert.”

# NT WRITERS

Peter told his readers this in **2 Peter 2:1**, “But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.”

In **2 John 7**, the apostle John explained that, “Many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.”

# NT WRITERS

And **Jude** warned about “certain persons [who] have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ” (**Jude 4**).

# CHARACTERISTICS

Doctrinally speaking, false forms of Christianity can be identified by these three characteristics.

1. They have a wrong view of **salvation**

*They minimize the work of Christ on the cross.*

2. They have a wrong view of **the Scripture**

*They distort or deny the Word of Christ.*

3. They have a wrong view of **the Savior**

*They undermine the worship of Christ.*

# SALVATION

## A Wrong View of Salvation

False forms of Christianity are marked by a wrong understanding of salvation. In particular, they attempt to add good works to the gospel of grace.

Rather than trusting in Christ alone for salvation, they seek to earn God's favor on their own through some form of self-righteous works and human effort.



# SALVATION

## Acts 15

(vv. 7–11) Peter stood up and said to them, “Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of **the gospel** and believe. And God, who knows the heart, testified to them giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us; and He made no distinction between us and them, **cleansing their hearts by faith**. Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But **we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus**, in the same way as they also are.”



# SALVATION

**(Gal 1:6–9)** I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!

# SALVATION

**(Rom 3:28)** A man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law.

**(Rom 5:1)** Having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**(Eph 2:8–9)** For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

# SALVATION

**(Phil 3:8–9)** Believers do not rest on “a righteousness of [their] own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith.”

**(Titus 3:5–7)** He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us.

# ROMAN CATHOLICISM

Does Roman Catholicism teach the biblical gospel, that sinners are saved by grace through faith alone?

**Romans 11:6** – “But if it [salvation] is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.”

The Roman Catholic Church finds itself in the impossible position of advocating a gospel that is supposedly both “by grace” and also “on the basis of works.”

# ROMAN CATHOLICISM

1. According to the RCC, justification is not by grace through faith alone.



**Council of Trent, Canons on Justification, Canon 9:**  
“If anyone says, that by faith alone the impious is justified . . . let him be anathema.”

The Council of Trent was the Roman Catholic Council that responded to the Protestant Reformation.

# ROMAN CATHOLICISM

2. Consequently, good works (such as baptism and keeping the Ten Commandments) are added to faith as being necessary for salvation.

**Catholic Catechism:** The Council of Trent teaches that the Ten Commandments are obligatory for Christians and that the justified man is still bound to keep them; 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” (P 2068; ellipsis in original)

# ROMAN CATHOLICISM

3. Heaven is viewed as both a *gift* of God's grace and as a *reward* for human effort. (This is an impossible contradiction that the RCC is forced to try to maintain.)

**Catholic Catechism:** 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 (P 1821).



# ROMAN CATHOLICISM

**Ludwig Ott:** The Council of Trent teaches that for the justified eternal life is both a gift or grace promised by God and a reward for his own good works and merits. . . . According to Holy Writ, eternal blessedness in heaven is the reward. . . . As God's grace is the presupposition and foundation of (supernatural) good works, by which man merits eternal life, so salutary works are, at the same time gifts of God and meritorious acts of man.

*(Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma, 264).*

# ROMAN CATHOLICISM

4. The good works necessary for salvation have been codified in the sacramental system. The seven sacraments (baptism, confirmation, eucharist, penance, extreme unction, marriage, and the priesthood) were officially codified by the RCC at the 16<sup>th</sup> century Council of Trent.

**John Hardon:** Are the sacraments necessary for salvation? According to the way God has willed that we be saved the sacraments are necessary for salvation.

*(The Question and Answer Catholic Catechism [Garden City: Image, 1981], # 1119).*

# ROMAN CATHOLICISM

5. The RCC insists that sins committed after baptism must be paid for in some way through acts of penance.

**Catholic Catechism:** 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 the ecclesial communion. It is to them that the sacrament of Penance offers a new possibility to convert and to recover the grace of justification.

(P 1446)

# ROMAN CATHOLICISM

**Catholic Catechism:** 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” (P 1459).

**John Hardon:** We must expiate and make reparation for the punishment which is due our sins. . . . We make satisfaction for our sins by every good act we perform in the state of grace but especially by prayer, penance and the practice of charity (#1320).

# ROMAN CATHOLICISM

6. According to the RCC, sins for which believers do not perform sufficient penance in this life must be paid for after death in Purgatory.

*Handbook for Today's Catholic:* If you die in the love of God but possess any stains of sin, such stains are cleansed away in a purifying process called Purgatory. These stains of sin are primarily the temporal punishment due to venial or mortal sins already forgiven but for which sufficient penance was not done during your lifetime (p. 47).

# ROMAN CATHOLICISM

**Catholic Catechism:** [Purgatory is for] 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.

(P 1030)

# ROMAN CATHOLICISM

The Catholic system of human effort and moral achievement stands in direct contrast to the biblical gospel, in which Christ perfectly and completely accomplished our salvation on the cross.

**Cf. Rom. 8:1; 2 Cor. 5:18-21; Col. 2:13–14**

When Roman Catholics insists that (1) baptism; (2) keeping the Ten Commandments; (3) observing the Sacraments; (4) and performing acts of penance are all necessary for salvation, they place themselves in the same category as the Judaizers.



# CHARACTERISTICS

Doctrinally speaking, false forms of Christianity can be identified by these three characteristics.

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2. They have a wrong view of **the Scripture**

*They distort or deny the Word of Christ.*

3. They have a wrong view of **the Savior**

*They undermine the worship of Christ.*

# THE SCRIPTURES

## 2 Peter

**2 Pet. 3:15–18:** Just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, **which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.** You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

# THE SCRIPTURES

*Because Jesus is the Head of the church, His Word is the authority in the church.*

**Col. 3:16** – Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

**Cf. 2 Timothy 3:16–17**

# ROMAN CATHOLICISM

The Roman Catholic Church exalts human tradition and the magisterium of the church in order to maintain unbiblical teachings about Mary, the sacraments, prayers to the saints, papal authority, and so on.

A denial of biblical authority and a distorting of Scripture is at the heart of the problem.

# ROMAN CATHOLICISM

1. Regarding biblical authority, the Catholic Church claims that the Pope is the head of the church.

**Catholic Catechism:** The Roman Pontiff and the bishops are “authentic teachers, that is, teachers endowed with the authority of Christ, who preach the faith to the people entrusted to them, the faith to be believed and put into practice.” The ordinary and universal Magisterium of the Pope and the bishops in communion with him teach the faithful the truth to believe, the charity to practice, the beatitude to hope for. (P 2034)

# ROMAN CATHOLICISM

2. Consequently, the Catholic Church claims that it alone possesses the authority to interpret Scripture accurately:

**Catholic Catechism:** The task of interpreting the Word of God authentically has been **entrusted solely** to the Magisterium of the Church, that is, to the Pope and to the bishops in communion with him. (P 100)

# ROMAN CATHOLICISM

3. Yet, many Catholic doctrines do not come from Scripture. Thus, Catholics are forced to elevate their own traditions on a level equal with Scripture:

**Catholic Catechism:** The Church, to whom the transmission and interpretation of Revelation is entrusted, does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the holy Scriptures alone. Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence. (P 82)



# ROMAN CATHOLICISM

Roman Catholicism views church tradition as an equal authority to Scripture. Furthermore, it subjects both under the authority of the Catholic church.

As a result, human tradition is allowed to supersede the authority of God's Word.

**Mark 7:8** — “Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men.”

# ROMAN CATHOLICISM

It was this issue that primarily fueled Martin Luther's response during the Reformation.

**Martin Luther:** The chief cause that I fell out with the pope was this: the pope boasted that he was the head of the church, and condemned all that would not be under his power and authority. . . . Further he took upon him power, rule, and authority over the Christian church, and over the Holy Scriptures, the Word of God; [claiming that] no man must presume to expound the Scriptures, but only he, and according to his ridiculous conceits; so that he made himself lord over the church.

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*They undermine the worship of Christ.*

# THE SAVIOR

**1 John 1:1:** “What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life”

**1 John 2:22–23:** Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also.

# THE SAVIOR

**1 John 4:1–3:** Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.

# THE SAVIOR

**1 John 5:10–12:** The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself . . . And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

**1 John 5:20:** And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

# THE SAVIOR

**2 John 7–11:** For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward. Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son.

# ROMAN CATHOLICISM

We have already seen how the work of Christ is diminished through the RCC system of sacraments; and how the authority of Christ is undermined when the pope is regarded as the head of the church.

But the Person of Christ is further distorted through the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation.

Moreover, the worship of Christ is attacked by the elevation of Mary to the status of Mother of God and Queen of Heaven.



# ROMAN CATHOLICISM

The RCC doctrine of transubstantiation claims that Jesus is being continually sacrificed for sin through the Mass.

**John Hardon:** [The Mass] is no mere empty commemoration of the Passion and death of Jesus Christ, but a true and proper act of sacrifice. Christ, the eternal High Priest, in an unbloody way offers himself a most acceptable Victim to the eternal Father as He did upon the Cross. . . . In the Mass, no less than on Calvary, Jesus really offers His life to His heavenly Father. . . . The Mass, therefore, no less than the Cross, is expiatory for sins (#1265, 1269, 1277).

# ROMAN CATHOLICISM

This is in direct contrast to the biblical teaching about Christ's death:

**Hebrews 7:26–27:** For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.

Cf. Hebrews 10:10–14

# ROMAN CATHOLICISM

The Catholic Church also devalues the worship of Christ through the elevation of Mary to an unbiblical position, making her an object of idolatrous worship.

Mary is named co-redeemer with Christ.

**Catholic Catechism:** Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked in the Church under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix. (P 969)

# ROMAN CATHOLICISM

Mary is credited, at least in part, with the salvation of sinners.

**Catholic Catechism:** 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. (P 969)

**Catholic Catechism:** You [Mary] conceived the living God and, by your prayers, will deliver our souls from death. (P 966)

# ROMAN CATHOLICISM

Thus, Catholics are encouraged to venerate, pray to, and trust in Mary:

**Catholic Catechism:** 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. (P 2677)





# ROMAN CATHOLICISM

The veneration of Mary and the saints within the Catholic system constitutes a serious attack on the true worship of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Catholic doctrines such as the “Immaculate Conception” (that Mary was conceived without sin in her mother’s womb), the sinlessness of Mary (that she lived without committing any sin), and the “assumption of Mary” (that Mary was received into heaven like Enoch or Elijah) compete with what the Bible exclusively reveals about the birth, life, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ.

# CONCLUSION

Many reasons could be given, but at the most fundamental level, we reject the Roman Catholic Church because...

1. They have a wrong view of **salvation**

*They minimize the work of Christ on the cross.*

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# CONCLUSION

**2 Tim. 3:14–15:** You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known **the sacred writings** which are able to give you **the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith** which is in **Christ Jesus**.

