

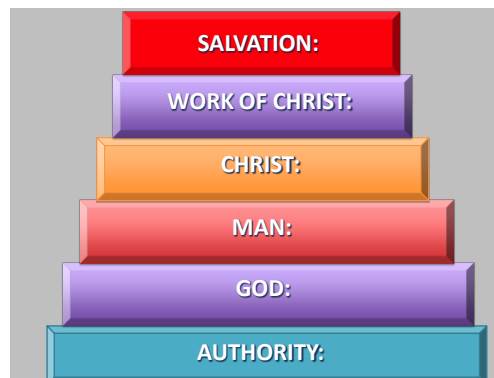
## Reflections on Salvation

In this lesson I'd like for us to look at and compare doctrines pertaining to salvation; from our biblically orthodox position and from the Roman Catholic position, along with some observations, personal comments, and reflections from the first 35 years of my life as a Roman Catholic. This is by no means a complete analysis, nor is it a technical paper on these doctrines. The point of this presentation will be to show some of the contrast and what the results look like, along with some of the consequences. During my 15 years here in this Bible church I have come to understand what is commonly called "Free Grace Theology"; and it is only now that I can look back on the Roman church with any perceptive objectivity. The results of this study and reflection made me both sad and angry, and you may sense some of this as we go through the lesson.

Renald Showers, in his book entitled The Foundations of Faith, writes about an article he had read many years ago. He writes, "At the beginning of a seminary course on New Testament studies, an instructor told his students that they would work together on one major project that semester. They would move systematically through the New Testament to categorize every area of truth and determine how many times each area is addressed. Their goal was to find the one truth emphasized more than any other in the New Testament. When they completed the project, they were amazed to see that warning against "false" doctrine is emphasized more than any other issue – even more than love, unity, and experience."

And how do we come to "false" doctrine? It's usually through misinterpretation of Scripture through poorly defined, and/or inconsistent usage of the rules used for interpreting Scripture. This is the discipline of hermeneutics.

Let's begin to look at these doctrinal themes.



This picture shows the doctrinal themes needed to understand how salvation is brought about. Reading from the bottom-up our foundation block is AUTHORITY, then GOD, MAN, CHRIST, the WORK OF CHRIST, and SALVATION.

We start with:

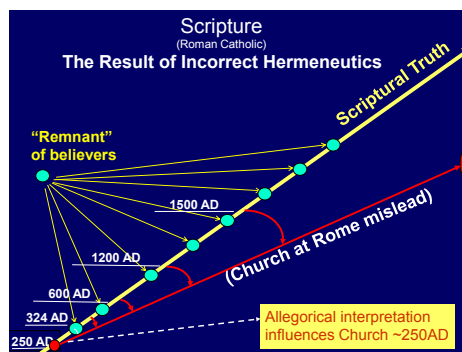
### **Authority**



Where is our base for authority? How can we speak with authority? Where does that come from? What is our base and basis for truth?



From a Biblically orthodox position we believe in Scripture alone as the final authority, obtained through careful exegesis, using a plain, normal, historical-grammatical hermeneutic for interpreting Scripture. Pretty simple concept. The early church fathers used a literal method of Biblical interpretation, and as various heresies came about, they began to form the beginnings of a guideline for Biblical interpretation. The Reformers returned to that simple concept in the 1500s. Church historian Dr. John Hannah places the development period of the doctrine of the Scriptures, or Authority to be from 150–400 AD.



Unfortunately, somewhere around 250AD, the Greek influence of Origen at the School of Alexandria won the day with his allegorical method and it was adopted and remained the only sanctioned method of interpretation until the Reformation. Once that decision was made, mysticism, subjectivism, asceticism, perfectionism, and prideful “holiness” set in.

With regard to the question of Authority, the early Church Fathers struggled to understand what “church” authority meant. In the beginning, the truth of Scripture was the authority, no matter who was in charge. And that would be our position. But over time this thought of authority gradually shifted as various models of hierarchy were introduced, until finally the authority of the truth of Scripture was laid aside and the hierarchical structure of the church clergy became the authority. So we see this go from a “handing off of Scriptural truth” to a handing down the “office of authority”, and a shift from God’s Authority to man’s authority.

### **The misinterpretation of Scripture has major consequences.**

Augustine (354-430AD) highly regarded for his insights, defending doctrine, and in a position of authority, mistakenly translated the Greek word **dikaioō** as “make righteous” instead of “declare righteous” which put the Church clearly on path of a works oriented theology. He also changed his approach to eschatology from where he started (Premillennial) to Amillennial; both of which affected his interpretation of passages like

Mt 10:22 “You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is **the one who has endured to the end who will be saved.**” Jesus shifts from speaking of sending His disciples out to the “lost sheep of Israel” to living in the terrible time of the Tribulation.

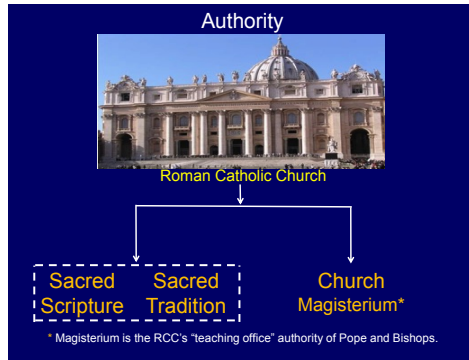
The same Tribulational view is in Mt 24:10-13 “At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. Because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold. **But *the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.***”

However well thought of Augustine was, he did more harm than good, even though he is touted as being a Doctor of the Church by Rome. The mistranslation and his change in eschatology set the course of theology in another direction.

It set the direction of understanding Scripture toward subjectivism, introspection, works, and would endorse the hermeneutical approach of Origen, which he (Augustine) approved. This then, became the Church’s theological foundation for building itself for the next 1000+ years. (See last page for a summary of Augustine’s theology)

### **Now let's look at the Roman Catholic Church's authority**

The first thing you must remember with Roman Catholics is that they have been taught and accepted the proposition that the **Roman Catholic Church is the only true church established by Jesus Christ with complete and absolute authority over spiritual matters.** That is their basic and foundational premise, albeit from faulty hermeneutics. Once you believe that premise, then your trust is in the organization, and not in Scripture, and the foundation is laid for accepting the complete authority structure, dogma, tradition, culture, language, liturgy, and the whole package.



Here are the sources of authority in the Roman Church; Scripture/Tradition, and the Church's Magisterium (Magisterium is the RCC's "teaching office" authority of Pope and Bishops).

Now, let's take a look at each of them separately and how the Roman Catholic Catechism explains them.

(CCC = Catechism of the Catholic Church and each paragraph of the Catechism is numbered; to the total of 2865 paragraphs).

**Sacred Scripture**  
(Roman Catholic)

Hermeneutical approach:  
(Condensed from CCC #115, #116, #117)

1. **Literal** (through exegesis)
2. Consider the **spiritual** sense (signs):
  - a. **Allegorically** (significance in Christ) – Faith  
(Also called typology, this sense is the idea that all scripture is an allegory for Christ and all the events are related to him.)
  - b. **Morally** (events that lead us to act justly) - Morals
  - c. **Anagogically** (their eternal significance) - Destiny  
(The parting of the Red Sea, for example, is like God bridging the gap to bring us from our earthly home to our heavenly home.)

## Sacred Scripture

How do they "study" Scripture?

Their Hermeneutical approach: [#115, #116, #117]

**Literal** (through exegesis)

Then consider the *spiritual* sense (signs):

**Allegorically** (significance in Christ) - Faith

(Having hidden spiritual **meaning** that transcends the literal sense of a sacred text.)

**Morally** (events that lead us to act justly) - Morals

**Anagogically** (their eternal significance) – Destiny

(The parting of the Red Sea, for example, is like God bridging the gap to bring us from our earthly home to our heavenly home.)

## Mixing Sacred Scripture and Tradition

**Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition**  
(Roman Catholic)

**CCC# 77** "In order that the full and living Gospel might always be preserved in the Church the apostles left bishops as their successors. They gave them their own **position of teaching authority**". . . .

**CCC# 78** This living transmission, accomplished in the Holy Spirit, is called **Tradition**, since it is distinct from Sacred Scripture, though closely connected to it. . . .

**CCC# 80** "**Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture**, then, are bound closely together, and communicate one with the other. For both of them, **flowing out from the same divine well-spring**, come together in some fashion to form one thing, and move towards the same goal."

**CCC# 82** "Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honoured with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence."

Here's how Rome explains this:

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**CCC# 82** *As a result 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 honoured with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence."*

## Magisterium

**Magisterium**  
(Roman Catholic)

**CCC# 85** "The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition, has been entrusted to the **living teaching office of the Church alone**. Its authority in this matter is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ." This means that the task of interpretation has been entrusted to the bishops in communion with the successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome.

**CCC# 119** ". . . all that has been said about the manner of interpreting Scripture is ultimately **subject to the judgment of the Church** which exercises the divinely conferred commission and ministry of watching over and interpreting the Word of God."

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**CCC# 119 “.... all that has been said about the manner of interpreting Scripture is ultimately subject to the judgment of the Church which exercises the divinely conferred commission and ministry of watching over and interpreting the Word of God.”**

Let me reiterate; The first thing you must remember with Roman Catholics is that they have been taught and accepted the premise that the **Roman Catholic Church is the only true church established by Jesus Christ with complete and absolute authority over spiritual matters.** That is the most basic and foundational premise. This is expressed best by considering their Prologue to the Catechism:

Prologue to the Roman Catechism

**CCC# 1** God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life. For this reason, at every time and in every place, God draws close to man. He calls man to seek him, to know him, to love him with all his strength. He calls together all men, scattered and divided by sin, **into the unity of his family, the Church.** To accomplish this, when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son as Redeemer and Saviour. In his Son and through him, he invites men to become, in the Holy Spirit, his adopted children and thus heirs of his blessed life.

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*Personal Observation:*

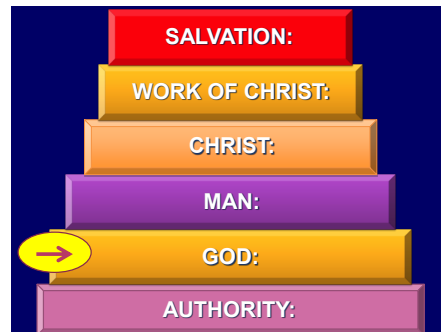
Here's my observation on Matthew 16:18-19 concerning the "church", "keys", and "authority":

By the time we get to Matthew 16:18, the "seed of the woman" of Gen. 3:15, the Messiah, has been rejected by the leadership of Israel. We know that Jesus has to "die" for the sins of humanity, so in hindsight, he has to go to the cross. So what is this "ekklesia" (assembly) that He speaks to Peter about? Will this be an "institution"; a "corporation"? Or will this be an assembly of "**grace alone through faith alone in Christ's cross work alone**" believers; a like-minded group of indwelt believers, directed by Scripture (OT/NT) and superintended by Christ Himself? Yes, Peter was recognized as the "first" among the apostles and with the "keys" of Mt 16:19, he opened this "**assembly**" to Judea (Jews) in Acts 2, Samaria (the "mixed" Jews) in acts 8, and finally to the rest of the world (Gentile nations) in Acts 10, as Jesus had foretold in Acts 1:8 so that the good news of mankind's "salvation" would be spread to all the

world; and the Jews could understand that another part of the Abrahamic Covenant was being fulfilled (the world wide blessing). But the “**ekklesia**” or “assembly” is a body of believers who have placed their faith alone in Christ alone, not an “institution” like the Roman church believes, even though they call it the “mystical body of Christ”... We walk by faith in the Word of God (Scripture alone), constantly learning and teaching because we rejoice at the foot of the Cross for the salvation provided for us by Christ alone and are ambassadors for Christ crucified and risen.

The problem is: what does this “ekklesia” or “assembly”, “church”, look like externally? Scripture alone is the “authority”, the clear interpretation of Scripture is crucial, and as far as a name, “Bible church” seems appropriate. It is simply a gathering of believers shepherded by Scripturally competent, mature, and doctrinally oriented leadership.

Now let’s look at the next theme



## God

The doctrine of the Trinity is orthodox on both sides.

Rome confesses the Apostles’ Creed....

“I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only son, our lord... I believe in the Holy Spirit...”

However, the overall perception of God in the Roman Church seems to be more of a “man-God” instead of a Creature-creature distinction. This makes God more human-like than divine, closer to our emotions, feelings, and reactions, such that we don’t want to “hurt” or “offend” Him by our sin.

On the biblically orthodox view we see the doctrine of Aseity – that God is self contained, self sufficient, perfectly content i.e. that He doesn’t need anything or anyone except His Triunity for His happiness or well being. By contrast to Rome, we see God’s attributes of Justice and Righteousness as a “white hot shield”; Sin is a very serious thing and we see the consequences everyday in the suffering and misery of life.

One of the obsessions with the Roman Church theology is that they are either trying to prove to someone that He (God) exists, or bending over backward to accept other gods as OK because the followers are “sincere”. The thinking being, since these people believe in a “god” even though they call him or it by another name, perhaps Allah, their intentions are good and therefore ....our heavenly Father will accept their sincerity and right intentions as honoring Him by proxy! I’m sorry, but Baal is still Baal. The challenge of Elijah still stands from **1Kgs 18:21**, “Elijah came near to all the people and said, “How long [will] you hesitate between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.” I don’t see any inclusiveness here. Exodus 30:3 makes it clear: **“You shall have no other gods before Me.”**

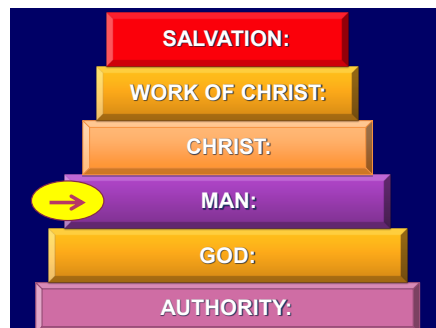
Observe Rome's position regarding the Muslim community:

***CCC# 841 The Church's relationship with the Muslims. "The plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator, in the first place amongst whom are the Muslims; these profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and together with us they adore the one, merciful God, mankind's judge on the last day."***

Their plan of salvation is much more inclusive than the one I see Jesus talking about in **John 14:6**, “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.” Muslims deny Christ’s deity! Sincerity doesn’t save you!

As far as proving God exists, our Biblical presupposition is that everyone knows that the Creator God exists. That’s a given, so we don’t argue with foolishness. Romans 1:18-20 and Eccl 3:11 clearly tell us they know that God exists; they’re just trying to suppress that knowledge because they don’t want to be accountable to Him.

Now, let’s look at the doctrine of:

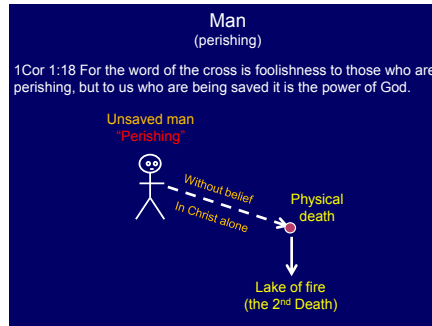


### **Man**

The doctrine of the depravity of man from the Fall event, made a big impression on me once I began to understand it.

1Cor 1:18 For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.





I began to realize the impact of that doctrine – that all of us are in a desperate situation from which we have no way out; helpless and hopeless on our way to the Lake of Fire; that we were condemned before we were born. It gave me a greater understanding of the seriousness of sin and deeper respect for God’s attributes of Justice and perfect Righteousness i.e. His Holiness, as well as a deep understanding and appreciation of what true GRACE is!

### Roman Catholic view of man.

***CCC# 405 Although it is proper to each individual, original sin does not have the character of a personal fault in any of Adam's descendants. It is a deprivation of original holiness and justice, but human nature has not been totally corrupted: it is wounded in the natural powers proper to it, subject to ignorance, suffering and the dominion of death, and inclined to sin - an inclination to evil that is called "concupiscence". Baptism, by imparting the life of Christ's grace, erases original sin and turns a man back towards God, but the consequences for nature, weakened and inclined to evil, persist in man and summon him to spiritual battle.***

This turns out to be a “semi-Pelagian” position.

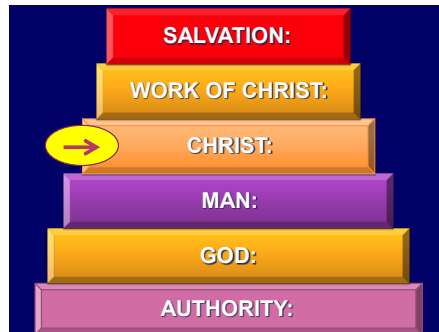
Here is a fitting comment taken from John Hannah’s book *Our Legacy*.

He writes, “...Pelagius and his followers taught that there was no connection between what Adam did and the state wherein we are born into the world... each person being born into the same state as Adam before the Fall and voluntarily falling from grace... that people have the ability to choose between good and evil... the will is defined as a determining power, not as a selecting agent of the available options presented to it... grace is an assisting gift from God if one chooses to avail oneself of it. This ‘illuminating grace’ influences humankind toward voluntary cooperation with God.”

And Paul Enns writing on the conflicting views of Pelagius and Augustine states that Semi-Pelagianism, attempted to follow a mediating position between the two views. He says, “Followers of this new mediating theology stressed that both the grace of God and the free will of man were operative in salvation. Man could cooperate with God in salvation because his will was weakened but not fatally injured in the Fall...”

We’ll see how this plays out in the doctrine of Salvation

Let’s go on to the next theme:

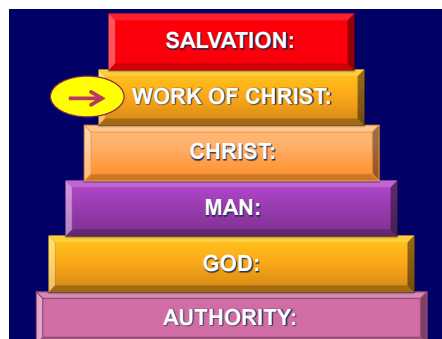


### Christ

The doctrines of the Virgin birth, the Hypostatic union, and Resurrection are all orthodox on both sides.

However, in the Roman church, the perception of Christ is much more subjective, personal, and mystical. It's hard to see the objective, legal reasons why Jesus had to die to "save" mankind, because it's all muddled up with the mystical (spiritual) approach taken to interpret Scripture, and the emotional emphasis placed on the "passion of Christ", particularly the scourging, plus the emotional mixture of the pious tradition of "stations of the Cross"; along with their doctrine of transubstantiation in the *Paschal Mystery* (Mass), not to mention the mystical union between Jesus and His Mother, and all the "saints" in heaven, pilgrims on earth, and those suffering in Purgatory.

Let's continue into the next theme:



### Work of Christ

(These are notes taken from a course on Christology: The doctrine of Christ by Paul Enns.)

The work of Christ on the cross consisted of:

**Substitution, Redemption, Reconciliation, Propitiation, Forgiveness, and Justification.**

## Substitution

The emphasis of the New Testament is that Christ died a substitutionary death on behalf of sinners. His death is also called vicarious, meaning, "one in place of another." Isaiah 53 stresses the substitutionary nature of Christ's death:

"But He was pierced through for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed." The tenor of 1 Peter 2:24 is similar: "and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed."

By dying on the Roman cross Christ died as a substitute for each of us (mankind).

2 Cor. 5:21 "He made Him who knew no sin [to be] sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

1 Pet. 3:18 "For Christ also died for sins once for all, [the] just for [the] unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;"

This doctrine of substitution is important inasmuch as the righteous demands of a holy God were met completely through Christ's complete payment for sin. It is on this basis that God may declare believing sinners righteous and accept them into fellowship without any compromise on His part. All the believer's sins are placed on Christ, who completely atoned for them and paid for them through His death.

## Redemption

1 Cor. 6:20 states that believers "have been bought with a price". (cf. 1Cor 7:23; Gal. 3:13; Gal 4:5; Rev. 5:9; 14:3-4)

1Cor 7:23 "You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men."

Gal 3:13 "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, 'CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE'—"

Gal 4:5 "so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons."

## Reconciliation

Christ's death reconciled man to God, meaning that man, who was estranged and alienated from God, is now at peace with Him. Through his rebellion in the garden, man moved out of fellowship with God and needed to return to fellowship. Reconciliation is God providing peace where previously there was enmity, and God restoring man to fellowship with Himself.

**Rom 5:10** “For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”

**2 Cor.5:18-20** “Now all [these] things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.”

### **Propitiation**

The death of Christ also provided propitiation, meaning that the righteous demands of a holy God were fully satisfied. (Christ had provided restitution)

Romans 3:25 explains that “God displayed (Christ) publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith.” Christ provided a satisfactory payment for sin through His death. God was satisfied, His holiness was upheld, and His divine wrath was averted.

### **Forgiveness**

Christ’s death resulted in forgiveness for sinners. God could not forgive sin without a proper payment; Christ’s death provided the legal means whereby God could forgive sin.

Colossians 2:13 declares that God has “forgiven us all our transgressions.”

### **Justification**

A further result of Christ’s death is justification for the believing sinner. Justification is also a legal act in which God the Judge declares the believing sinner righteous.

Romans 5:1 explains: “Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...”

The word “justified” has both a negative and positive aspect. Negatively, it means the removal of the believer’s sins; positively, it means the bestowal of Christ’s righteousness upon the believer (cf. Rom. 3:24, 28; 5:9; Gal 2:16).

Rom 3:24 “..being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;”

Rom 3:28 “For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.”

Rom 5:9 “Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath [of God] through Him.”

Gal 2:16 “nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so **that we may**

be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.”

**Roman Catholic catechism claims:**

***Jesus substitutes his obedience for our disobedience***

***CCC# 615 "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous." By his obedience unto death, Jesus accomplished the substitution of the suffering Servant, who "makes himself an offering for sin," when "he bore the sin of many", and who "shall make many to be accounted righteous", for "he shall bear their iniquities". Jesus atoned for our faults and made satisfaction for our sins to the Father.***

***CCC# 616 It is love "to the end" that confers on Christ's sacrifice its value as redemption and reparation, as atonement and satisfaction. He knew and loved us all when he offered his life. Now "the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died." No man, not even the holiest, was ever able to take on himself the sins of all men and offer himself as a sacrifice for all. The existence in Christ of the divine person of the Son, who at once surpasses and embraces all human persons, and constitutes himself as the Head of all mankind, makes possible his redemptive sacrifice for all.***

Sounds pretty good, with the exception of the emphasis on LOVE and not on God's demands of RIGHTEOUSNESS and JUSTICE. Let's see how the Council of Trent explains this.

***CCC# 617 The Council of Trent emphasizes the unique character of Christ's sacrifice as "the source of eternal salvation" and teaches that "his most holy Passion on the wood of the cross merited justification for us." And the Church venerates his cross as she sings: "Hail, O Cross, our only hope."***

Jesus is substituting His “obedience” for our “disobedience” to satisfy (appease) God, but not a penal substitutionary payment to fully satisfy God’s Justice and Righteousness that grants us forgiveness of all sin at the time of faith alone in Christ alone at the cross! Notice that justification is “merited” for us, which means that it is held aside for a future time - that would be for the time when Christ would establish the Roman Church as the only true church along with its “sacraments”, which would allow her to be the only way to receive justification. The words “faith”, “grace”, and “justification” have just been redefined.

***Faith*** is now belief in all of the theological dogmas defined by the Council of Trent, Vatican I, and Vatican II.

***Grace*** is now that which is infused into the soul of man through the sacraments, enabling him to do personal works of expiation and righteousness.

***Justification*** is not a once-for-all declaration of righteousness based upon the imputed righteousness of Christ, but is now a process that is dependent upon the righteousness

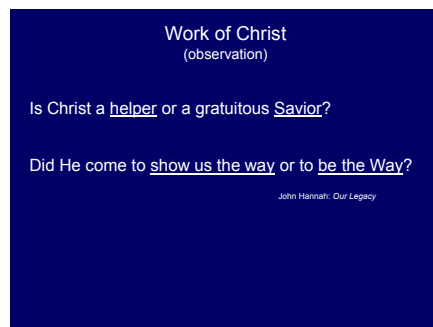
of man produced through infused grace from the sacramental system.....**The grace purpose of the Cross has just been nullified and denied!**  
**Salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone has just been hijacked!**  
**It's no longer faith in Christ alone, it is faith in the Roman Catholic Church alone!**  
**This is blasphemy against God's Word and the purpose of Christ's death!**

***Our participation in Christ's sacrifice***

***CCC# 618 The cross is the unique sacrifice of Christ, the "one mediator between God and men". But because in his incarnate divine person he has in some way united himself to every man, "the possibility of being made partners, in a way known to God, in the paschal mystery" is offered to all men. He calls his disciples to "take up [their] cross and follow [him]", for "Christ also suffered for [us], leaving [us] an example so that [we] should follow in his steps." ..... Apart from the cross there is no other ladder by which we may get to heaven.***

The "ladder" reference is a "works" operation and a picture of the "semi-pelagian" position the Roman Church took that man can cooperate with the grace of God using his "free will" in his salvation.

*My observation:* Very mystical; Christ suffered for you. You can "partner" with Christ through the "Paschal Mystery" (the Mass) and suffer with Him. He set the example..., now take up your cross daily and follow Him. You can do it with His help.  
.....I've been there, done that. It just wears you out over the long haul.



Dr. Hannah perceptively asks,  
"Is Christ a helper or a gratuitous Savior?  
Did He come to show us the way or to be the Way?"<sup>1</sup>

If He is a helper, then we work hand in hand with Him (cooperate in salvation).  
If He is a gratuitous Savior, then it's His work alone....a Grace gift. He is the Way.

***CCC# 2010 Since the initiative belongs to God in the order of grace, no one can merit the initial grace of forgiveness and justification, at the beginning of***

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<sup>1</sup> Hannah, J. D. (2001). *Our Legacy: The History of Christian Doctrine* (p. 203). Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress.

**conversion. Moved by the Holy Spirit and by charity, we can then merit for ourselves and for others the graces needed for our sanctification, for the increase of grace and charity, and for the attainment of eternal life.....**

**CCC# 2020 Justification has been merited for us by the Passion of Christ. It is granted us through Baptism. It conforms us to the righteousness of God, who justifies us. It has for its goal the glory of God and of Christ, and the gift of eternal life. It is the most excellent work of God's mercy.**

This is an example of great sounding words and pious phrases, signifying the promotion of the Roman church, which in my opinion, is the most self-serving, pharisaical church on the planet:

The Roman Catholic Jesus is “the savior of the world” through the Roman Church.

The Roman Catholic Church becomes the front and center instrument of the “Gospel”.

In fact, the Roman Church is the “Gospel” to be preached, because “there is no salvation outside the true Church” (the Roman Catholic Church).

So, remember, when you're dealing with a Roman Catholic that the words may sound familiar: "I believe Christ died for my sins"; "I have been saved from the penalty of sin, I am being saved from the power of sin, and I will be saved from the presence of sin"; even Eph 2:8-10 will be acceptable to the Roman Catholic.....but always in the context of the interpretation of the Roman church! This is where I struggled because in some places in the Catechism I would find statements that would make me think that I was being too harsh in my thinking; that maybe people could be "saved" in that church. However, Dr. Hannah's insight into this got me back to my original position of: no, if people will be saved in that church, it will be in spite of the church's teaching, not because of its teaching. Support for this idea is well stated in Hannah's Our Legacy book:

“.....official confessions are one thing and the interpretation of them by the teachers of the church is another, particularly in the light of the theological liberalism and hermeneutical promiscuousness that have been permitted to spread within the Roman Church....”

Let's reiterate some of the work of Christ according to Roman Catholic Church doctrine (Council of Trent):

His passion and death appeased the Father enough to open the gates of heaven.

Christ Instituted His church (which the “church at Rome” claimed for herself).

The inauguration of Peter as the first Pope.

Peter given the “keys to the kingdom” (who will enter; who will not).

The treasury of “merited” grace for the church has been secured by Christ' death.

Christ has instituted the sacraments of the church.

Christ has established the “priesthood”.

Christ has bestowed upon the Roman church the power to forgive sins.

Christ made the Roman church custodian of salvation, and

Granted full authority to the church in matters of Faith, Morals, Scripture, and Tradition.

Let's go to the last theme:



### Salvation

Having seen the Roman Church perspective of AUTHORITY, GOD, MAN, CHRIST, and the WORK OF CHRIST, we come to “SALVATION”.

Dr. Hannah says it well on his chapter on salvation, “The issue before us in this chapter is that of what the sinner is to do, or can do, to receive this gracious forgiveness. It’s all about sin and grace—the sin that is in humankind and the grace that flows from Christ. These are profoundly interrelated doctrines.”<sup>2</sup>

Let me make a few observations, reflections, and comments about Roman Catholic “salvation”.

Because of their liberal use of typology, allegory, and mystical use in their poor hermeneutical approach and no sense of dispensationalism, the Roman Church presumes authority she doesn’t have. However, once this authority (of God) is wrestled away from Scripture, she is free to do as she will; presume authority over the nations, raise up kings, depose kings, interject herself into international affairs, set policy, define doctrines that line up with this first presupposition that she is divinely “chosen” to lead the world in how to find God and lead a virtuous life; even to the point of establishing a “country” for herself called “the Vatican” with its own government. It would appear that she has unlimited power, which makes sense if you see yourself as representing Christ on earth and claim to have His mind. This reminds me of the delusion that Lucifer had of being like Most High!

So, in line with this delusional thinking, we find that Christ came to earth to prepare a plan for a “potential” salvation; not an “actual” salvation. Therefore, there is no salvation granted “at the cross”, only the collection of Christ’s “merits” for a “potential” salvation, which the Roman Church doles out through her sacraments.

So, let me see if I understand this. The Roman church confiscates Substitution, Redemption, Propitiation, Reconciliation, Forgiveness, and Justification; refusing to acknowledge and grant the actual purpose and intent of Christ’s death on the cross? I find that despicable!

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<sup>2</sup> Hannah, J. D. (2001). *Our Legacy: The History of Christian Doctrine* (p. 202). Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress.



But let's continue with the Catechism:

**CCC# 845** *To reunite all his children, scattered and led astray by sin, the Father willed to call the whole of humanity together into his Son's Church. The Church is the place where humanity must rediscover its unity and salvation. The Church is "the world reconciled." She is that bark which "in the full sail of the Lord's cross, by the breath of the Holy Spirit, navigates safely in this world." According to another image dear to the Church Fathers, she is prefigured by Noah's ark, which alone saves from the flood.*

**CCC# 846** *How are we to understand this affirmation, often repeated by the Church Fathers? Re-formulated positively, it means that all salvation comes from Christ the Head through the Church which is his Body: Basing itself on Scripture and Tradition, the Council teaches that the Church, a pilgrim now on earth, is necessary for salvation: the one Christ is the mediator and the way of salvation; he is present to us in his body which is the Church...."*

Paragraph 1949 sums up their position of man's way to salvation:

**CCC# 1949** *Called to beatitude but wounded by sin, man stands in need of salvation from God. Divine help comes to him in Christ through the law that guides him and the grace that sustains him: Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*

That's why the Roman Church can agree with the humanist - "Man is basically good". He just needs a little help. So if I understand this part of the catechism properly, the implication of what the RCC is saying is: you don't receive a gift of eternal life i.e. a "new" nature at Justification, what you receive at Baptism into the RCC is the grace to "transform" your own nature back into that nature which Adam had at creation by cooperating with the sacraments of the "true" church.

### **Biblical Orthodox Position**

In answer to "How can I be saved?",

Dr. Lightner writes, "To be sure, there are essentials the sinner must know before he can be saved -

- he is a guilty sinner (Rom 3:23),  
(Creator-creature distinction and the Fall event),
- sin's wages is death (Rom 6:23),  
(The Fall, the depravity of man-born spiritually dead and will die physically),
- Christ died in the sinner's place (Rom 5:8; 1Cor 15:3),  
(Voluntary Substitutionary Blood Atonement)
- the sinner must trust Christ alone as his sin bearer (John 3:16; Acts 16:31)."

(By Grace alone through Faith alone in Christ alone as my substitute)

I think the last two, “Christ died in the sinner’s place” and “the sinner must trust Christ alone as his sin bearer” are where Roman Catholics will have their biggest challenge. They’ve bought into the “cooperating with God” orientation and it will take time for them to come to terms with the truth that their sins have already been forgiven at the Cross in 33 AD when God dealt with the sin issue through His Son. Then they will let go and just accept the true meaning of Christ’s death on the cross and the free grace of salvation!

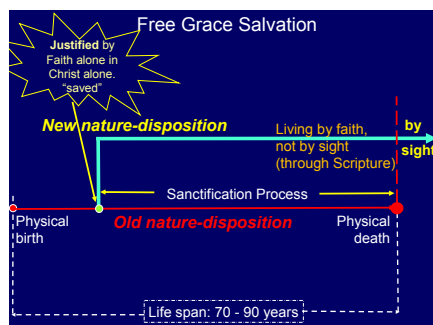


From a Biblical orthodox position, we see salvation as a judicial act of God. Justification is a judicial declaration. We are “declared” righteous by faith alone in Christ's Cross-work alone. Justification is a change in *standing* (a state), not a change in *character*. We are regenerated, become a child of God and begin to grow in sanctification.

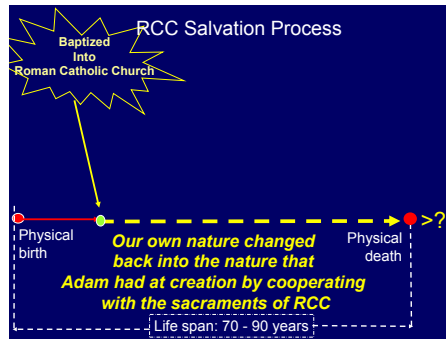
Am I upset with Rome’s twisted take on salvation? You bet I am! But my heart goes out to the members of that church, especially those who were “born Catholic”, because they have been carried along with the tide of DOs and DON'Ts, rules, laws, and precepts that bind them “hand and foot” to a church of bondage, hoping for something that will give them peace of mind (assurance of salvation), but it’s always out of reach.

Let’s see if these slides will help us see our differences.

Free Grace Salvation:



Roman Catholic Salvation:



## Conclusion



Let me conclude with some final observations, reflections and a bit of speculation. From a Biblical look at church history, I can see where Satan, the Father of lies and deception, hates and wants to disrupt the Scriptural church that Jesus is building. After all, there were at least six events in the Old and New Testaments where he tried to destroy “the seed of the woman”. When Satan began to understand what Christ was doing in His “church”, he (Satan) had to create a “counterfeit “church, because he was losing people from his kingdom to Christ’s kingdom! So, how does he go about it? First of all the “early church fathers” were vague and faltering in their attempts to define, understand, and articulate Scripture and doctrine. They got some things right, but they got some things wrong; this was a learning curve. However, once the decision was made to interpret Scripture from an allegorical and mystical hermeneutic - subjectivism, asceticism, perfectionism, and prideful “holiness” set in and this is something that Satan could and would use to his advantage.

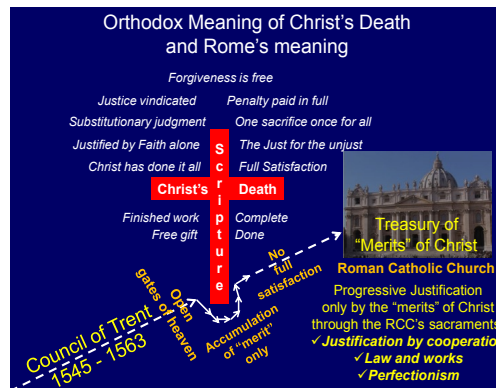
### **Satan’s deception and his Counterfeit Church**

I think the formation of the “church at Rome” was skillfully fashioned and maneuvered by Satan into a “counterfeit” church by the fact that it is built on and plays to man’s weakness - his pride (with its counterpoint of fear). The tension between “achievement and failure” fits well with the concept of “good and evil”, and fosters a morally-driven religious system. Rather than Scripture alone for authority, he will set up another kind of authority to lead men away from the truth of salvation!

A misinterpretation here, a misdirection there, and by 100 AD many in the church were adopting dualism, asceticism, and a type of “Galatianism” (adding works to faith alone).

Fostered by a multi leveled, allegorical/mystical interpretation of Scripture, he introduced the element of “Sacred Tradition” (a wishful Scriptural speculation mixed with mysticism and sentimentalism). He went on to set up its hierarchy; institutionalized the organization; promoted Rome as its headquarters, and integrated the Church into international politics, along with the accumulation of power, prestige, wealth, and authority. He redefined words like “faith” (Rome’s dogmatic package) and “grace” (infused into the soul) – all supported from especially chosen, but misinterpreted and/or out of context, Scripture verses (John 6:35ff; Matthew 16:19; Matthew 10:22; Matthew 24:13). First, and foremost, this would a visible organization, well structured, well defined through the Council of Trent, surrounded with all the solemnity and dignity possible, and would put that organization in complete control of a worldwide, well knit, religious system.

Let’s look at the meaning of Christ’s death from a Biblically orthodox view and Rome’s view:



Then we have a religious system that takes you to the Cross, shows you a dying Savior, but will not grant the full pardon of sin that took place in those three hours of darkness: the imputation of all sin to Christ; restitution paid in full; justice satisfied so we could be rightfully justified by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone. No, that’s the one thing Satan couldn’t let happen! That would free mankind by faith alone in Christ ALONE, and his hatred for Christ wouldn’t allow that. Satan’s “look alike” church must have the same or similar vocabulary, common non controversial doctrines; everything lined up except for the climactic moment of Christ’s death. **The meaning of that death must be such as not to fulfill the purpose of Christ’s coming and dying (Justification by Faith alone)!** So, Satan’s ploy is to deny the “once for all”; never to be repeated “sacrifice” of Christ. It will become an “almost right” substitutionary atonement, but he substitutes the legalism of the Roman Church in place of God’s free gift of juridical pardon. Christ only partially paid the penalty for sin (because the Roman church teaches that God has been personally offended and expects a personal restitution). Therefore, Christ “merited” grace for man so he can “do his part” and find forgiveness and salvation through the Roman Church (the Ark of Salvation) ... a “close to”, “look alike”, “almost right” , but counterfeit atonement. By this “bait and switch” maneuver, ever prideful man will be allowed to cooperate with the “merits” of Christ, through Rome’s “sacraments” for the expiation of his own sins; he can do penance, and perform “good works”; thereby offering personal

restitution and gain more merit and grace to improve his standing before God, please Him, and perhaps, at death, obtain the prize of “Beatific Vision”. The stealth, subtly, and deceitfulness with which the "god of this world" moved to counter attack and blind men to the truth of salvation by faith alone in the Cross-work of Christ alone in 33AD, circumventing that salvation to an institution that he had formed throughout the centuries gave me an understanding of his intelligence, determination and his hatred for Christ and His Church.

Satan, in his rebellious mind, thought that he was overshadowing and defeating Christ’s work of building His elect church. The process seemed to be working well until 1517 AD. Once he saw the Reformers’ direction unfolding (i.e. Justification by Faith alone in Christ alone), he needed to stop it ... enter the Council of Trent ... and the “Roman Catholic Church” is born, defined, and calcified with its “Deposit of Faith” from 1545 to 1563. The Reformers insisted on Scripture alone as the final authority. The Council of Trent would have none of it and sealed the fate of those who choose to follow the cooperative, works-oriented ways of the Roman church. Now, let’s view a similar slide and watch as the counterfeit church is revealed.



In the presence of rightly understood Scripture, this “counterfeit” church will fall just as Dagon fell before the Ark of the Covenant in 1 Samuel 5:2-4, because it is built on self indulgent scriptural straw.

Unfortunately, Protestantism isn’t fairing much better. Once you get away from the correct hermeneutical method of interpretation of Scripture, your doctrine will change and your theology, through that error, will suffer a domino effect. We see this in the popularity of the Spiritual Formation Movement, where, through proper meditation methods, you can hear God speaking to you personally, leading and guiding you in your spiritual journey. Don't be fooled! This self indulgent "movement" will lead them right back to the Roman church with its mystical seductions. God has spoken through Scripture. Self deception is so easy to fall into; God speaking truth to me....but how do I know it's God and how do I know truth? The objective truth of Scripture is better than the self deception of the sin nature!

Words are important, sentences are important, context is important, language is important, hermeneutics is important, dispensations are important, exegesis is important! And discernment is more important than ever before! This can only be

obtained through faithful discipleship in orthodox teaching; reading and the study of Scripture; with “iron sharpening iron”. By this we guard, protect, and teach our families. By this we develop generational loyalty to God.

One last reminder for you when dealing with Roman Catholics with regard to evangelizing. Many of the words, phrases, concepts, and doctrine may seem to be the same....but you must remember to place what they say within the context of the Roman church, which has nothing to do with Free Grace Theology.

Let's pray.....

**History of Doctrine Course**  
(Sin and Grace: The Theologians: lessons 19-20)

**E. Summary of Augustine's Theology.**

Despite Augustine's valiant attempt to preserve the depravity of man and the imputation of Adam's original sin and guilt to all mankind, he overstates his case and also has an equally heretical soteriology as Pelagius.

1. He believed in the inspiration and canonicity of the apocrypha, and the inspiration of the Septuagint. He quoted from Baruch, Bel and the Dragon, Susana, and the Song of the Three Children as authoritative. He had no knowledge of Hebrew and little of biblical Greek.

2. Augustine held to an allegorical interpretation of the Scripture.

3. Augustine rejected his early Chiliasm in favor of a sort of amillennial and postmillennial synthesis. He rejected a literal thousand year reign of Christ and believed that in the present conflict between the City of God and the City of Man, the City of God would be victorious before Christ returned.

4. He believed the devil is currently bound.

5. He equated the Church with the kingdom.

6. He interpreted the Bible within his neo-platonic grid.

7. He believed a person could be regenerated but not elect .

8. He believed that a person was regenerated through water baptism.

9. He believed that salvation was kept through perseverance. He wrote in *On Rebuke and Grace*:

We, then, call men elected, and Christ's disciples, and God's children, because they are to be so called whom, being regenerated, we see to live piously; but they are then truly what they are called if they shall abide in that on account of which they are so called. (22). It is, indeed, to be wondered at, and greatly to be wondered at, that to some of His own children—whom He has regenerated in Christ—to whom He has given faith, hope, and love, God does not give perseverance also (18). But they who fall and perish have never been in the number of the predestined (36).

10. He believed in limbo for those who died in infancy and finalized the form of purgatory.

J. A. Neander (1789-1850) concluded that Augustine's theology "contains the germ of the whole system of spiritual despotism, intolerance, and persecution, even to the court of the Inquisition."