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C0545 – 11/30/2005 – The Terms of Salvation
Roman Catholicism-Part 3

Let's review the basic goals of this course.

1. To discover what the human condition is for salvation (faith alone)
2. To define biblical terms often associated with the human condition for salvation and place them in their proper relation (depravity, grace, faith, repentance, baptism, confession, discipleship, justification, sanctification, et. al.)
3. To apply what we've learned to some gospel messages to determine if they are consistent with the biblical gospel (Church of Christ, Lordship Salvation, and Roman Catholicism)
4. To discover what the gospel message is

At present we are evaluating Roman Catholicism. To do this I've combined several factors: historical fact, exegetical insight, personal challenge to understand other religious viewpoints, and a heart plea for compassion. Hopefully, by now I have communicated to you that Roman Catholicism is another religion; that the Protestant Reformation was not just over semantics. There are real differences between what Rome teaches and what the Bible teaches. When I listed the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, I hope you realized that it is not Christian at all.

Prayers for the dead	~ 300
Making the sign of the cross	300
Veneration of angels and dead saints and use of images	375
The Mass, as a daily celebration	394
Beginnings of the exaltation of Mary, the term "Mother of God"	431
Priests began to dress differently from laymen	500
The doctrine of Purgatory, established by Gregory I	593
Latin language used in prayer and worship	600
Prayers directed to Mary, dead saints and angels	~ 600
Title of Pope, or universal Bishop (Boniface III)	607

College of Cardinals established	927
Fasting on Fridays and during Lent	998
The Mass developed gradually as a sacrifice, attendance obligatory	11 th century
Celibacy of the priesthood	1079
The Rosary, mechanical praying with beads (Peter the Hermit)	1090
Sale of Indulgences	1190
Transubstantiation	1215
Auricular Confession of sins to a priest rather than to God	1215
Bible forbidden to laymen (Council of Toulouse)	1229
Purgatory proclaimed as dogma (Council of Florence)	1439
Doctrine of Seven Sacraments affirmed	1439
Jesuit order founded by Loyola	1534
Tradition declared of equal authority with the Bible (Council of Trent)	1545
Apocryphal books added to canon (Council of Trent)	1546
Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary (Pope Pius IX)	1854
Syllabus of Errors...condemned freedom of religion, conscience, speech, press, and scientific discoveries which are disapproved by the Roman Church; pope's temporal authority over all civil rulers ⁱ	1864
Infallibility of the pope (Vatican Council)	1870
Assumption of the Virgin Mary (her bodily ascension into heaven)	1950
Mary proclaimed Mother of the Church	1965

It is not just a little different from biblical Christianity but differs and even contradicts with almost every point of Christianity. From this you ought to gather, that even though there are different kinds of Catholics, they nevertheless are caught in a human system of thought and not in Christ.

I'm not going to even get close to teaching you everything about Catholicism. So, I've chosen only a subset of their doctrines to evaluate. If you want more, I suggest the book *Roman Catholicism* by Loraine Boettner. If you have Catholic friends that you'd like to witness to then I highly suggest that you get this book, study their doctrine and look at the Protestant answers from Scripture. The two that we have evaluated so far are

1. The Priesthood
2. Was Peter the First Pope?

II. ROMAN CATHOLIC TEACHINGS AND THE BIBLE'S TEACHING

A. The Priesthood

The Roman Catholic Church has an elaborately appareled and ordained priesthood that offers a sacrifice during mass that takes away sin. The mass that is officiated by the priest is a sacrifice that takes away sin. Archbishop of Ottawa said,

Without the priest the death and passion of our Lord would be of no avail to us. See the power of the priest! By one word from his lips, he changes a piece of bread into a God! A greater fact than the creation of a world.

This is blasphemous for biblically there is no priest besides the sinless high priest Jesus Christ who comes between God and men.

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

The Roman Priests who offer mass that supposedly takes away sin is a denial that Christ alone has taken away sin and therefore directly contradicts the word of God!

Hebrews 10:10-12 By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. ¹¹ Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; ¹² but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD,

B. Was Peter the First Pope?

The Roman Catholic Church claims that Peter was the first pope and that his power and authority were transferred to his successor. The main passage used to support this is

Matthew 16:18-19 "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. ¹⁹ "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven."

On this passage, the late Cardinal Gibbons, former archbishop of Baltimore and representative of American Roman Catholicism said,

“The Catholic Church teaches that our Lord conferred upon St. Peter the first place of honor and jurisdiction in the government of His whole church, and that the same spiritual supremacy has always resided in the popes, or bishops of Rome, as being the successors of St. Peter. Consequently, to be true followers of Christ all Christians, both among the clergy and laity, must be in communion with the See of Rome where Peter rules in the person of his successor” (*Faith of our Fathers*, p. 95)

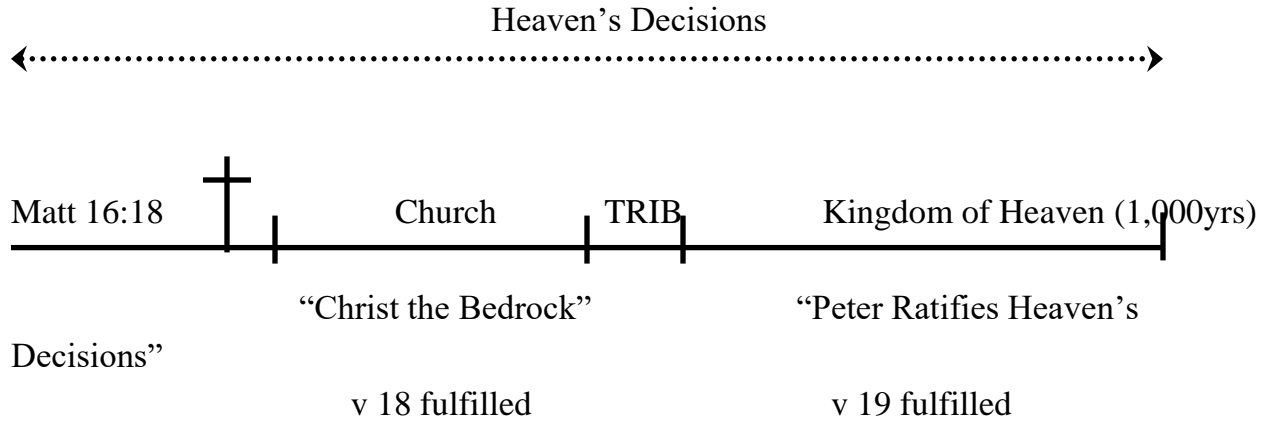
But the very basis of this false doctrine is rooted in a poor translation and false interpretation of Matt 16:18-19. Matt 16:18 does not teach that Peter was the rock upon which Christ would build His church. The word for “Peter” (*petros*) and “rock” (*petra*) have completely different meanings!ⁱⁱⁱ *petros* means “a small stone or pebble” and *petra* means “a massive bedrock” out of which a tomb would be hewn or upon which a house would be built. There is no way to equivocate “a small stone” with “a massive bedrock”! It is therefore impossible for Peter to be the rock upon which Christ would build His church. If Christ had wanted to say Peter was the rock he would have said, “You are Peter and upon you I will build My church.” But that’s not what Christ said. To identify the “rock” we turn to the genius of the Greek grammar. First, Jesus carefully places the near demonstrative pronoun “this” before “rock”, signifying that Jesus is pointing to something. Thus, Jesus is pointing to the object that is “the rock” and it is very near. Second, Jesus carefully places the definite article before “rock” which is absent from every English translation. It would literally read, “upon this, the rock, I will build My church”. When the definite article is placed before a noun it signifies that Jesus is not pointing to an impersonal object (such as a rocky cliff) but to a personal object. Since *petros* is not *petra* He must be pointing to His own chest. Thus, Christ is the rock and the only firm foundation upon which the church could be built. The Hymn writer couldn’t have been more accurate when he composed the words,

The Church’s one foundation Is Jesus Christ her Lord;
She is His new creation By water and the Word:
From heav’n He came and sought her To be His holy bride;
With His own blood He bought her, And for her life He died.

I would summarize the verses this way:

“You, Simon, are a stone; but upon this very bedrock [pointing to Himself] I will build my church; and death will not prevail against it. I will give you [Simon the

stone] authority in the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you forbid on earth during the kingdom shall have already been forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth during the kingdom shall have already been permitted in heaven.”



Thus, there is no foundation for Rome’s central text of Peter’s Primacy, the Papacy, Papal Succession, or Priestly authority to forgive sins.

C. The Seven Sacraments

Tonight, I want to look at the seven sacraments, several of which are required for justification. In Catholicism justification is a process not a once for all declaration of God. Rome claims that Christ’s righteousness is *not* imputed to your account at the time of faith in Christ but that Christ’s righteousness is infused into the sinners’ heart over time as the sinner partakes of the sacraments. As a result of compliance with the sacraments grace is released from the treasure chest of merit in heaven and conferred upon the sinner who gradually becomes righteous. At physical death the Catholic enters purgatory for further cleansing which time, of course, can be shortened by penance done and indulgences purchased by those still alive on earth. When all the sin has been paid for and they are cleansed then they are pronounced righteous, *but not before*. Thus, Roman Catholicism rejects justification by faith alone and makes justification by faith + works. The Council of Trent said,

If anyone saith that justifying faith is nothing else but confidence in the divine mercy which remits sin for Christ’s sake alone; or, that this confidence alone is that whereby we are justified, let him be anathema” (Sess. VI, Can. 12).

There are seven sacraments within Roman Catholicism.

1. Baptism
2. Confirmation
3. Eucharist (Mass)
4. Penance (Confession)
5. Holy Orders
6. Marriage
7. Anointing the Sick (Extreme Unction)

What is a “sacrament”? Rome defines a sacrament as “an outward sign instituted by Jesus Christ to give grace” (Robert J Fox, *The Catholic Faith*, 181). Fulfillment of these sacraments is required to confer grace and righteousness in the process of justification, apart from which eternal fire is one’s destiny.

Baptism. Normally administered to infants unless a convert, this sacrament removes original sin and guilt and makes the person a member of Christ and His church. The Council of Trent affirmed that water baptism is essential to salvation and that faith alone is inadequate.

Confirmation. Whereas the priest administers baptism and makes the person an “infant Christian”, the bishop administers confirmation when he imparts the Holy Spirit to the person and makes them an “adult Christian”.

Eucharist/Mass. The Eucharist or Mass is the entire service wherein the priest participates in the sacrifice of the actual body and blood of Christ. During this ceremony the priest miraculously changes the bread and wine into the complete body and blood of Christ. The bread and wine are the Lamb of God and must be received for salvation.

Marriage. Marriage is a sign of the union of Christ and His church which is entered by water baptism. Attached to marriage are three goods: procreation, faithfulness to one’s spouse, and permanence of relationship. Divorce is forbidden and artificial birth control as well as abortion rejected.

Anointing the Sick/Extreme Unction. This sacrament is administered by the bishop when he anoints a sick person near death with oil. It is the earthly completion of penance and takes away the infirmity left by sin. Vatican II declared that this sacrament should also be for those who are not on their deathbed but are sick.

Holy Orders. This sacrament is the ordination to the offices of deacon, priest, or bishop conferring on that man the spiritual power and grace to sanctify others. The deacons assist the priests in baptisms, mass, etc. The bishop is of the line of the apostles and has the power to ordain the priests, perpetuating the priesthood of Christ. The priest has the power to forgive sin in the name of God. He is called a priest after the order of Melchizedek and thus takes the place of Jesus Christ in the Mass. During Mass the priest

says, “This is My body” and in confession he says to the sinner “I absolve you from your sins.”

Confession/Penance. “Penance is the sacrament by which sins committed after baptism are forgiven through the absolution of the priest” (Baltimore Catechism). A good confession has several elements defined by the Council of Florence in 1439.

“penance...consists of the action of the penitent which are in three parts. The first of these is contrition of heart, which consists of sorrow for sin committed and the intention not to sin in the future. The second is oral confession, whereby the sinner confesses to the priest all the sins he remembers in their entirety. The third is satisfaction for sins according to the judgment of the priest, which is mainly achieved by prayer, fasting and alms deeds...The effect of this sacrament is absolution from sins.”

“The penance given to me by the priest does not always make full satisfaction for my sins” (New Your Catechism). Thus, “You should perform other acts of penance also so that you can make up for the temporal punishment due to sin and to avoid a long stay in purgatory” (*Instructions for Non-Catholics*, 95).

So, the sinner is left at the mercy of the priest. By demanding works of penance before giving forgiveness Rome implies that Christ’s sacrifice was not sufficient to fully atone for the sin of the world and therefore must be supplemented by our good works. Thus, salvation is not by faith alone but by faith + works. This is confusing justification with sanctification and quite literally placing the cart before the horse. Rome teaches that salvation ultimately depends on what we do, our works, and through them we can “earn salvation” by being obedient to the priest’s judgments. Throughout history some people store up extra merit beyond what they need for their own personal salvation. This excess merit is deposited in a treasure chest of merit in heaven.ⁱⁱⁱ From here the pope may draw merit and dispense it to the faithful when they perform the works assigned to them by the priests. The bottom line to this complex system is that Christ’s satisfaction for sin on the cross did not fully atone for the sins of the whole world. It is not Christ alone who provides satisfaction but it is Christ plus our works. “Thus, many have tried to earn salvation by fastings, rituals, flagellations, and good works of various kinds” (Boettner, *Roman Catholicism*, 257). I would suggest that this is the reason so much emphasis was placed on Christ’s sufferings in the movie *The Passion of Christ*. The emphasis was totally mis-centered. It focused on His sufferings, particularly the flagellation. From the Roman perspective Christ was building up merit to be placed in the treasure chest of merit in heaven. But it is not Christ’s merit alone. Mary and other saints have added their

excess merit by fastings, prayers, wearing of scapulars^{iv}, crucifixes^v, medals, etc., to this same treasure chest and those who are in need of their merits receive them through the power of the pope who releases them upon obedience to the priests or indulgences. Dr. C.D. Cole says, “The fatal error of Romanism is the denial of the sufficiency of Christ as Saviour. It denies the efficacy of His sacrifice on the cross. Romanism has a Christ, but He is not sufficient as a Saviour. What He did on Calvary must be repeated (in the mass) and supplemented (through works of penance)...Romanism is a complicated system of salvation by works. It has salvation to sell, but not on Isaiah’s terms—without money and without price (Is. 55:1). It offers salvation on the installment plan, and then sees to it that the poor sinner is always behind in his payments, so that when he dies there is a large balance unpaid, and he must continue payments by sufferings in purgatory, or until the debt is paid by prayers, alms and sufferings of his living relatives and friends. The whole system and plan calls for merit and money, from the cradle to the grave, and even beyond. Surely the wisdom that drew such a plan of salvation is not from above, but is earthly and sensual” (Sermon delivered in the Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto).

This is not grace folks, this is works. The Bible says,

Romans 4:5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,

From this we learn that faith is the opposite of works so that Paul can go on and say:

Romans 4:16 For this reason *it is* by faith, in order that *it may be* in accordance with grace,

Only faith (and that *faith must be alone* not having anything tied to it like unconditional surrender, absolute submission, etc.) is in accordance with grace. Any other addition destroys grace. Thus, the formula:

grace + any human work = destruction of grace

How could we ever provide any satisfaction to God? Isaiah says,

Isaiah 64:6 But we are all as an unclean *thing*, and *all our righteousness deeds are* as filthy rags;

Did not Christ die once for all?

Hebrews 10:10-12 By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ *once for all*. ¹¹ Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; ¹² but He, having offered *one sacrifice* for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD,

Did not Christ provide full satisfaction for all?

1 John 2:2 He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *those of* the whole world.

Did not Christ provide full reconciliation for all?

2 Corinthians 5:18-19 Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹ 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.

Did not Christ provide forgiveness of sin for all?

Colossians 2:13-14 When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, ¹⁴ having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Then all that remains is that Christ's provision be applied to you. And the Bible declares 198 times that it is applied by means of faith alone in Christ alone. He is our Propitiation, He is our reconciliation, He is our forgiveness for He who knew no sin became sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Thus, we must reject the complex Roman system as a way of salvation. Let us lay down the truth of the matter. "Because of His absolute moral perfection God requires spotless purity and perfect obedience in His intelligent creatures. This perfection is provided...in that Christ's spotless righteousness is imputed to them, so that when God looks upon" those who have believed "He sees them clothed not with anything properly their own, but with this spotless robe. We are told that Christ suffered as a substitute, "the just for the

unjust.” And when man is encouraged to think that he owes to some power or art of his own that salvation which in reality is all of grace, God is robbed of part of His glory. By no stretch of the imagination can a man’s good works in this life be considered a just equivalent for the blessings of eternal life. We are, in fact, *nothing but receivers*; we never bring any adequate reward to God, we are always receiving from Him, and shall be unto all eternity” (Boettner, *Roman Catholicism*, 259).

You may be a member of this religion but let us not confuse this religion with biblical Christianity. It is a distortion of biblical teaching, which would not be a deception at all if it were not similar. Satan is not so stupid as to try and deceive with obvious errors. He plays on the power and money lust of men and the irresponsibility of their captives to challenge the so-called authorities. By not teaching the Bible and forbidding it to its followers, it keeps hidden the truth of the gospel and darkens the minds of those who ultimately bend the knee to the Roman See and not to the only source of salvation, Jesus Christ! It should be no surprise that 1 billion souls worldwide follow such a deception for “All men naturally feel that they should earn their salvation, and a system which makes some provision in that regard readily appeals to them.” But Paul lays the ax to such reasoning when he says,

Galatians 3:21-22 “For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law. ²² But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.”

Justification is by faith alone in Christ alone. “It was this great truth of justification by

ⁱ The full *Syllabus of Errors* if accessed on the internet (<http://www.geocities.com/militantis/syllabus.html>) demonstrates that one cannot be at the same time a member of the Roman Catholic Church and a loyal American citizen. It must always be kept in mind when reading a positive affirmation of the syllabus that each point was condemned by the Roman Catholic Church under Pope Pius IX.

ⁱⁱ See the world’s leading Greek Lexicon, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd Edition, revised and edited by Frederick William Danker based on Walter Bauer’s, 2000.

ⁱⁱⁱ Works of “supererogation”.

^{iv} A scapular is a long piece of cloth worn over the shoulder.

^v The crucifixes sold to Catholics have Christ still on the cross, a reminder of the perpetual sacrifice of Christ in the Mass contrary to the Biblical teaching that Christ died once for all (Heb 9). Christ is no longer on the cross and His grave is empty! He sits in the heavens as the sole mediator between God and men (1 Tim 2:25).

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