

INTRODUCTION

1. Rome's teaching on justification differs from biblical Christianity.


The issue of justification pertains to the most important question facing humanity: how can unrighteous people stand righteous before a righteous and holy God?

From the Council of Trent, 6th session, Canon 30:

If anyone says that after the reception of the grace of justification the guilt is so remitted and the debt of eternal punishment so blotted out to every repentant sinner, that no debt of temporary punishment remains to be discharged either in this world or in purgatory before the gates of heaven can be opened, let him be anathema.

Put another way, if you believe that, by faith alone in Christ alone, all of your sin—past, present, future—is completely forgiven, with no guilt or punishment from God remaining, with the result that you stand satisfactorily righteous before God, then you are damned.

However, Scripture teaches precisely what Rome condemns:

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

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

Right standing with God is a gift granted on the basis of faith alone in Jesus Christ. His life really was that righteous. His death really that propitiatory. His resurrection really that vindicating. Sinners stand permanently righteous before holy God as a gift of his grace, not works, and by

faith alone in Jesus Christ, not grace-infused works. To assume that our works could contribute to a fraction of our justification is nothing short of monstrous pride.

While addressing the works-based gospel of the Judaizers several centuries prior to the Reformation, the apostle declared that a gospel which differs from that of Scripture is a damning system (Gal. 1:8-9). Consequently, Rome's teaching on justification itself renders it something other than Christianity.

2. Rome's teaching on the papacy differs from biblical Christianity.


Rome asserts that the pope (derived from a Latin word for "father") is a position of succession from the apostle Peter. The title refers to the Bishop of Rome exclusively as the universal bishop. Other titles for the pope include "Vicar of Christ," "Pontiff," "Holy Father," and "His Holiness." He is considered the head of the Church, who possesses power to pull from the treasury of merit to grant indulgences. When he speaks *ex cathedra*, he is considered to speak infallibly. For a time, there were three simultaneous popes and the papal seat was in Avignon, France.

Rome teaches:

The Pope, Bishop of Rome and Peter's successor, is the perpetual and visible source and foundation of the unity both of the bishops and of the whole company of the faithful. For the Roman Pontiff, by reason of his office as Vicar of Christ, and as pastor of the entire Church has full, supreme, and universal power over the whole Church, a power which he can always exercise unhindered (CCC #882).

Cardinal Gibbons wrote, "To be true followers of Christ all Christians...must be in communion with the See of Rome, where Peter rules in the person of his succession" (*The Faith of our Fathers*, 104).

In the 1894 encyclical, *The Reunion of Christendom*, Pope Leo XIII said that the pope holds "upon this earth the place of God Almighty."

Such statements are in grave contradiction with the Bible. Rome has effectively exalted her pope—a sinful man—to the position of Lord of the church. But there is one Lord (Eph. 4:5 ). And no pope has died for the church, risen for the church, and possesses sovereignty over the church. The only individual who possesses "full, supreme, and universal power over the whole Church," holds a "power which he can always exercise unhindered," with whom one "must be in communion" to be a Christian, and who has ever held "upon this earth the place of God Almighty" is the God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ alone has universal power over the

church (Matt. 16:18, Eph. 1:22-23). Christ alone holds a power which is exercised unhindered (Matt. 28:18). Christ alone is the one with whom one must be in communion for salvation (John 15:4-5, 7; Rom. 8:1; 1 Cor. 15:22; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 1:4; Phil. 2:9). Nowhere does Scripture teach that an individual as the pope serves as “Holy Father” (cf. Matt. 23:9), much less that one must be united to him for salvation. Scripture affirms Christ alone is head of the true Church (Eph. 1:22-23). That’s why he is called, “Lord” (Phil. 2:9-11).

Understandably, this was the primary issue for many of the Reformers.

Spurgeon rightly said:

Of all the dreams that ever deluded men and probably of all blasphemes that ever were uttered, there has never been one which is more absurd and which is more fruitful in all manner of mischief than the idea that the Bishop of Rome can be the head of the church of Jesus Christ. No, these popes die and how could the church live if its head were dead? The true Head ever lives and the church ever liveth in him.

The pope himself must turn from Rome’s papal teachings and put faith alone in Christ alone. Until he does, the pope is not an asset, but an affront, to Christ’s church.

3. Rome’s teaching on Mary differs from biblical Christianity.

Rome’s mariology speaks for itself. Mary is venerated with titles such as, “Queen of the Universe,” “My Sovereign,” “The Hope of Christians,” and “More Merciful than Jesus.” She receives greater veneration than all the other saints and angels.

The Immaculate Conception is the Catholic doctrine which teaches that Mary was conceived without a sin nature. Thus she was not a recipient of Jesus’ redemption, but instead was, and is, a participant in it (“co-redemptrix”).

Pope Leo XIII said in an encyclical on September 22, 1891, “As no man goeth to the Father by but by the Son, so no man goeth to Christ but by His Mother.”

In another encyclical from September 8, 1892, Leo said, “It is a great thing in any saint to have grace sufficient for salvation of many souls; but to have enough to suffice for the salvation of everybody in the world is the greatest of all; and this is found in Christ and the Blessed Virgin.”

In other words, Mary herself possesses the righteousness to save every soul. Thus, she holds a status equivalent to that of Christ.

John Paul II said in an encyclical, *Veritas Splendor*, “Mary is the Mother of Mercy because it is to her that Jesus entrusts his Church and all humanity.”

Alphonsus Ligouri, a saint and doctor of Rome, wrote one of the most popular mariolatry devotionals in Roman Catholicism, called, “The Glories of Mary.” Even a brief reading of this work sends chills up one’s spine at the biblical desecration. Here is a sampling of Rome’s mariology:

And when I shall find myself in the last agony of death, oh Mary!...May it be to thy eternal glory that thou hast saved from hell a miserable wretch, and brought him to thy kingdom, where I hope to console myself by being always at thy feet to thank, bless, and love thee throughout eternity (114).

With reason does the ancient writer call her ‘the only hope of sinners,’ for by her help alone can we hope for the remission of sins (83).

What poor sinners we should be if we had not this advocate [Mary], so powerful and so merciful, and at the same time so prudent and so wise, that the judge, her Son, cannot condemn the guilty, if she defends them (220).

Oh Mary, thy office is that of peacemaker between God and man (223).

Thou, oh great mother, art the beginning, the middle, and the end of our felicity...The beginning, because Mary obtains for us the pardon of our sins; the middle, because she obtains for us perseverance in divine grace; the end, because she finally obtains for us paradise (284).

All obey the commands of Mary—even God himself (202).

It goes without saying that these statements are the height of blasphemy. For Rome, Mary holds the functional place of God the Father (humanity is entrusted to her), God the Son (she is the hope of sinners and mediating peacemaker for God and man), and God the Spirit (she grants perseverance). In fact, Mary holds a place higher than God (“All obey...Mary—even God himself”).

But Scripture does not speak even remotely of Mary in this way. Mary understood herself to be a sinner in need of mercy and justification, just like all humanity (Luke 1:46-47, 50, 54). In reality, Mary, like the rest of us, is included in the “all” who have “fallen short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23), born with a deceitful heart (Jer. 17:9), inherently incapable and unwilling of pleasing God (Rom. 8:7-8), and utterly unrighteous (Rom. 3:10-12), apart from the saving work

of God. Finally, Mary can in no way accomplish “remission of sins,” serve as “peacemaker between God and man,” or participate in redemption. “For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5).

If there were ever a moment where Jesus would have affirmed her as high as Rome, it would have been here:

While Jesus was saying these things, one of the women in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, “Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts at which You nursed.” But He said, “On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it” (Luke 11:27-28).

Instead, Jesus considers the individual of a higher blessedness than Mary should they simply obey Scripture.

Finally, it should be noted that there exists remarkable and uncoincidental parallelism between Rome and Ancient Babylonian Paganism, particularly concerning the veneration of Mary, and the worship of Venus and the wife of Nimrod.

4. Rome’s teaching on purgatory differs from biblical Christianity.

In fact, purgatory is never mentioned in the Bible.

In some sense, purgatory holds Roman Catholicism together. A works-based salvation renders its adherents without assurance of heaven. Purgatory is a salvation-approaching implement which gives hope to devotees that *maybe* they will make it to Rome’s heaven.

On purgatory, Rome teaches: “Through indulgences the faithful can obtain the remission of temporal punishment resulting from sin for themselves and also for the souls in Purgatory” (CCC #1498).

This teaching alone renders Rome outside of Christ. The implication is that Christ’s substitutionary death was insufficient to eliminate punishment and condemnation for sinners, while placing them immediately in the presence of Christ at death. But Scripture teaches exactly that: upon death, sinners will stand immediately and righteously in the presence of God in heaven on the basis of faith in Christ with no need of punishment (2 Cor. 5:8, Phil. 1:23).

5. Rome’s teaching on the biblical canon differs from biblical Christianity.

God has given his church an immense gift in the 66 inspired, inerrant books of Scripture. By virtue of its God-breathed inspiration, all 66 books are inerrant, infallible, authoritative, and sufficient (2 Tim. 3:16-17, 2 Pet. 1:20-21).

Rome, however, abandons this treasure by failing to affirm sola scriptura. Her canon includes seven additional books, bringing the total to 73. As a magisterium, she not only holds apocryphal books as necessary, but encyclicals and councils, among other things. In his book, *Catholicism and Fundamentalism*, Karl Keating writes:

It is true that Catholics do not think revelation ended with what is in the New Testament. They believe, though, that it ended with the death of the last apostle. The part of revelation that was not committed to writing—the part that is outside of the New Testament and is the oral teaching that is the basis of Tradition—that part of revelation Catholics also accept (151).

The Catholic Catechism teaches:

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. Indeed, the apostolic preaching, which is expressed in a special way in the inspired books, was to be preserved in a continuous line of succession until the end of time (CCC #77).

So, Rome’s authority lies not only in Scripture, but in this succession worked out in “tradition.” Rome goes on to say:



This living transmission, accomplished in the Holy Spirit, is called Tradition, since it is distinct from Sacred Scripture, though closely connected to it. Through Tradition, the Church, in her doctrine, life and worship, perpetuates and transmits to every generation all that she herself is, all that she believes. The sayings of the holy Fathers are a witness to the life-giving presence of this Tradition, showing how its riches are poured out in the practice and life of the Church, in her belief and her prayer (CCC #78).

Thus, as her doctrines mentioned demonstrate, Rome’s rule of faith in practice is derived from places outside of the 66 books of God-breathed Scripture. In doing so, she distances herself from biblical Christianity.

6. Rome's teaching on the saints differs from biblical Christianity.

Climbing into Rome's hall of saints is no small accomplishment. First, one's life is evaluated after his/her death to determine if they possessed orthodox doctrine and heroic virtue. Upon Rome's approval, the individual is considered "venerable." Then, the nominee is typically beatified, on the condition that a miracle occurred *after* the individual's death and *consequent* of petition *to* that individual. According to Rome, this ensures that the venerable is both *in* heaven and *able* to intercede for those who pray to them. At this point, the individual is permitted by Rome to the status of beatification, though not yet canonized. Finally, the candidate will be declared a saint upon Rome's determination that they performed a second miracle.

Further, it is typically only the saints who are said to be in heaven for certain. "The title of saint tells us that the person lived a holy life, is in heaven, and is to be honored by the universal Church." Saints are thought to be special friends and servants of God whose holy lives have made them worthy of his special love. Once the pope canonizes the individual, the declaration is infallible and irrevocable. Saints are then prayed to as objects of petition and venerated as objects of reverence.

This teaching cannot be substantiated from Scripture. First, it is God alone to whom we are instructed to pray: "But when you pray...**pray to your Father...**" (Matt. 6:6), "Pray, then, in this way: '**Our Father** who is in heaven...'" (Matt. 6:9), and, "...will not God bring about justice for His elect **who cry to Him...**" (Luke 18:7). Not once do we see individuals in Scripture praying to those who have died, nor are we instructed to do so. Second, we are to venerate God alone (Exod. 20:4-5 , Matt. 4:10 ). Veneration given to a human is idolatry. Third, individuals are made saints by faith alone in the Person and work of Christ alone.

Sinners become saints, not by a heroic demonstration of works, but by the substitutionary death of Christ. We are made saints not by demonstrating that we are moral models before God, but declaring that we are moral mendicants. We arrive in heaven, not through a rigorous testing of Rome, but by repentant trust in Christ.

To be considered a saint in Catholicism is quite a feat. To be considered a saint by God is by simple faith. To be made a saint in Rome necessitates beatification. To be made a saint in Christ necessitates belief. Therefore, Rome's teaching on the saints renders her outside of biblical Christianity.

7. Rome's teaching on angels differs from biblical Christianity.

Rome's angelology deserves mentioning. Her angels are considered objects of veneration and recipients of prayer. People are to pray to their guardian angels. Parents are to pray to angels on

behalf of their children. September 29th celebrates the Feast of the Archangels Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael.

Pope Francis recently called on us to pray to them so that we are always reminded of God's presence. The Feast of Holy Guardian Angels is observed on October 2.

St. John Bosco taught, "When tempted, invoke your Angel. He is more eager to help you than you are to be helped! Ignore the devil and do not be afraid of him: He trembles and flees at the sight of your Guardian Angel."

This approach to angels is biblically untenable. When angels do appear, they present themselves merely as servants of Christ. And when veneration was directed towards them, they would not receive it, but directed worship to God alone (Rev. 22:9).

8. Rome's teaching on the mass differs from biblical Christianity.

Each time the mass is celebrated, Rome teaches, Christ is re-sacrificed for saving purposes.

"As often as the sacrifice of the Cross by which our Pasch has been sacrificed is celebrated on the altar, the work of our redemption is carried out" (CCC# 1364).

"In this divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the Mass, the same Christ who offered himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross is contained and is offered in an unbloody manner" (CCC #1367).

On the *Doctrine Concerning the Sacrifice of the Mass*, the Council of Trent reads:

If anyone says that the sacrifice of the mass is one only of praise and thanksgiving; or that it is a mere commemoration of the sacrifice consummated on the cross but not a propitiatory one; or that it profits him only who receives, and ought not to be offered for the living and the dead, for sins, punishments, satisfactions, and other necessities, let him be anathema (Canon 3, 22nd Session).

However, Hebrews teaches that Christ's death was sufficient, and, therefore, need not repeating:

"He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself" (Heb. 7:27).

“And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God” (Heb. 10:11-12).

Each time a Roman mass is held, Christ is, in effect, told, “Sorry, your substitutionary atoning death was not quite sufficiently atoning. Though you said, ‘It is finished,’ it is not quite finished. We priests must reconduct what you started in order to dispense redemption to sinners.”

Many faithful Christians, such as Lady Jane Grey, died refuting this heretical teaching. And rightly so. To assume Christ need repeated sacrificing for the completion of our redemption is to teach a way of salvation that differs from Scripture.

On the sufficiency of Christ’s death, Thomas Brooks wrote:

Were there but one farthing of that debt unpaid that Christ was engaged to satisfy, it would not have stood with the unspotted justice of God to have let him come to heaven and sit down at his right hand (Precious Remedies Against Satan’s Devices, 145).

Rightly did the Reformers scrap the altar as a necessary implement for Christian worship. The last altar was the cross of Calvary and the final sacrifice, Christ upon Calvary. Therefore, the mass should be abandoned in light of Christ’s once-for-all, sufficient sacrifice.

9. Rome’s practice of martyring Christians differs from biblical Christianity.

An incalculably long river of saintly blood cries from the Earth against the treacheries of Rome. Heaven only knows how many thousands of Christians Rome has slain for rising up against her heresies.

She has martyred faithful believers from the Waldenses, to the Inquisition victims, and to the some 10,000 Huguenots. Hus was burned at the stake. Sattler had his tongue ripped out and body parts torn. Tyndale was burned. Latimer and Ridley were burned. Several hundred were burned under Bloody Mary’s Catholic insistence. And all for what? Challenging Roman Catholic doctrines (e.g. papal authority and the mass) and translating the Bible into the vernacular. It would be a sinister insult indeed to tell faithful Christians from the past like Hus, Sattler, Tyndale, Ridley, Latimer, Bloody Mary’s martyrs, the Waldensians, Wycliffe, Luther, Knox, the St. Bartholomew’s Massacre victims, and many more that Roman Catholicism is biblical Christianity.

10. Rome's teaching on indulgences differs from biblical Christianity.

A popular error is that indulgences ended during the Reformation with Johann Tetzel and the completion of St. Peter's Basilica. While various uses of indulgences may have concluded post-Reformation, the doctrine was not dissolved.

An indulgence is akin to a spiritual withdrawal of righteousness and merit. Christ, Mary, and the saints, Rome teaches, have a surplus of merit, contained in the "treasury of merit." Through indulgences, a bit of merit can be withdrawn and added to one's spiritual account.

Pope Paul VI wrote in *Indulgentiarum Doctrina*:

This treasury includes as well the prayers and good works of the Blessed Virgin Mary. They are truly immense, unfathomable, and even pristine in their value before God...Mary had more merit than was required for her salvation; therefore, her excess merit goes into the same treasury.

He goes on to say that a chunk of merit can be dished out by the pope as he wishes for the furthering of one's salvation:

The only-begotten son of God...has won a treasure for the militant Church and has entrusted it to blessed Peter, the keybearer of heaven, and to his successors, Christ's vicars on earth, that they may distribute it to the faithful for their salvation.

The religious practice of indulgences reawakens trust and hope in a full reconciliation with God the Father.

Indulgences serve a critical purpose in Rome's works-based righteousness. Therefore, the doctrine propagates a gospel which contradicts that of faith alone in Christ alone by grace alone, demonstrating that Rome's gospel is unsavable.

Conclusion

When compared with Scripture, these ten Roman Catholic doctrines demonstrate that it cannot be considered biblical Christianity. Those who would take issue must provide objective doctrinal grounds for doing so. It will not do to counter, "Well, I know some great Catholics." The issue is not whether or not we know friendly Catholics, but what Rome teaches. Others might counter, "Yes, but Catholicism is different now. It's close enough to biblical Christianity." Again, due to the magisterial nature of Rome, this is simply not true. It's time for Christians to love God and Catholics enough to stop considering it biblical Christianity.

Though Roman Catholicism uses terms similar to that of biblical Christianity, it cannot be considered Christianity, due to its error concerning that which makes Christianity truly Christian. Whether a religion mentions Christian aspects (e.g. Christ, the Trinity, the Bible) is irrelevant if that religion's doctrine is not biblical.

Unless we depart from Christ, there can be no more coming together with Rome now than in 1517. The Reformers were forced to depart from Roman Catholicism in order to unite with Christ. Five hundred years later, evangelicals still cannot come together with Catholics. Those who desire true salvation in Jesus Christ must break from Roman Catholicism.