

BIBLICALLY TESTING THE SPIRITS
"Part VI: Testing MAJOR Beliefs In Catholicism With John 1:1-18"
(John 1:1-18)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

The Catholic Church has a different view of Biblical **truth** as we Evangelicals view it. Consider the following evidence:

(1) On the **one** hand, Catholicism seems to promote good truths. An ad in an area paper some years ago was placed by the New Haven Chapter of the Knights of Columbus. It **doctrinally correctly STARTS** to read: "What Catholics believe about Mary: No, Catholics do not believe that Mary is equal with God. They do not worship her. They do not adore her images. They do not consider her in any way as the rival of Christ, 'the one Mediator between God and man.'"

What then *do* Catholics believe about Mary? They believe that all she is, she owes to the goodness of God. He chose her for a unique place in his plans for the redemption of the human race."

Now, if the ad were to stop there, we would find nothing erroneous about it, and would heartily agree with its view.

(2) However, the ad **continues** to say, ". . . **And for her [Mary's] allotted vocation he [God] endowed her with special graces . . . Mary, as a responsible human being, responded so perfectly . . . Catholics believe that God's power on the one hand and Mary's cooperation on the other made her the kind of person whom all later generations would call 'blessed.'**" However, Mary **herself** admitted in her "Magnificat" that as one who had "God" as "my Savior", **God's** considering her low estate to let her bear the Messiah would be what **caused** all generations to "call me blessed." (Luke 1:47-48) Also, she was **not** endowed with special graces and did not gain perfection by a **meritorious cooperation** with God at the **annunciation!** In fact, Mark records Mary's **post-annunciation SIN** of **unbelief** when she came with Jesus' brothers to gain custody of Him, for she joined them in **FAITHLESSLY** thinking Jesus was **insane**, Mark 3:21, 31-32 NIV! Mary was a sinner in need of God's grace in salvation, a salvation gained by faith as God's gracious gift, Eph. 2:8-9!

Well, since many of us at Nepaug are former Catholics, and are concerned about associates still in that Church, should we view its teachings as simply omitting truth or as being Biblically errant? We want to know so we understand just how to interact with our friends still in it!

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section as follows . . .)

Need: "As an ex-Catholic, I care about friends who are still in that Church. So I can know how to reach them, (a) would the Bible treat Catholicism as a Christian group merely containing error, or (b) as an actual CULT?! (c) Why, and (d) where should I stand on it?!"

- I. **We must test ALL beliefs, for there is much error around, 1 Jn. 4:1**
- II. **GOD via Scripture GUIDES the WAY for us to do so (as follows):**
 - A. We must see that a group believes in Christ's Incarnation, that He is the Creator God come in the flesh, 1 John 4:2-3; 1 Cor. 12:3.
 - B. We must see that a group believes salvation is by faith alone in Christ or if it wrongly makes man's merit a means of salvation, Gal. 1:8-9; 3:3
 - C. In viewing errant beliefs, we must examine Scripture with each error:
 1. Paul tells us to be wise in the truth and to stay "unmixed" with error, Rom. 16:17, 19 (Bible Knowledge Com., N.T., p. 501).
 2. This way God gives us victory over Satan's effort to deceive us, 20.
 3. So as an aid to keep ourselves **unmixed** with error, we examine **Scripture WHILE EXAMINING each ERRANT view!**
- III. **We thus discern MAJOR ERRORS in Catholicism in light of what John 1:1-18 says, and discern what our STAND on it should be:**
 - A. Regarding Christ's deity, Roman Catholicism **on the one hand CORRECTLY** holds that Jesus is the Creator God Incarnate while **on the other hand** making **Mary** errantly lord it **over Christ!** John 1:1-3 with 14 and 17 asserts Jesus Christ to be the Creator God Incarnate, and thus **Lord of Mary**, the mother **ONLY** of Christ's **HUMANITY!**
 1. Catholicism **MINGLES truth** with **cultic error** on Christ's deity:
 - a. It **correctly** holds to the **upright** Nicene Creed which states Christ is "true God of true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father..." (Bettenson, Documents of the Chr. Church, p. 36f; Loraine Boettner, Roman Catholicism, p. 148)
 - b. Yet, Catholicism **also** uses **cultic** error in exalting **Mary over Jesus** in **post-Nicene** writings: (a) Alphonse de Liguori, sainted by the Catholic Church (Boettner, *Ibid.*, p. 138), wrote of Mary: "'She is truly a mediatrix of peace between sinners and God. Sinners receive pardon by...Mary alone... He fails and is **lost** who has not recourse to Mary.'" (The Glories of Mary, Redemptorist Fathers, 1933, p. 82, 83, 94 as cited by Boettner, *Ibid.*, p. 138) (b) The same work by Liguori, p. 180, 193 as cited by Boettner, *Ibid.*, p. 139, states:

"All power is given to thee in Heaven and on earth...at the command of **Mary** all obey -- **even God**...she can do what she wills with God." (c) Liguori, *Ibid.*, p. 254, 257 as cited in Boettner, *Ibid.*, p. 139-140, wrote: "We often more quickly obtain what we ask by calling on the name of MARY, than by invoking that of Jesus." "She...is our Salvation, our Life, our Hope, our Counsel, our Refuge, our Help."

2. In response, we cite John 1:1-3, 14, 17 that shows **Christ**, as God come in the flesh, is the **Creator** of *all*. This makes Jesus **Mary's God!** Thus, Catholicism, though asserting Christ's deity in the Nicene Creed, *counters* it by elevating Mary **above Jesus!**
 3. In so *mingling* truth with error on Christ's deity, Catholicism fails to heed Romans 16:19, meaning it exists as a **syncretism**. As 2 John 9-10 teaches on relating with those who **teach a departure** from Christ's **deity**, we must **separate from** the Catholic Church.*
- B. Regarding the Gospel, Roman Catholicism errantly **MINGLES cultic "sacraments"** with **faith** for salvation. John 1:12-13 asserts salvation by faith alone in Christ alone apart from any human work or merit:
1. Catholicism teaches baptism, confirmation, the mass, penance and last rites to be "indispensable to salvation", Boettner, *Ibid.*, p. 189. Also, at the 1439 Council of Florence, this Church decreed: "If any one saith that the sacraments...were not instituted by Jesus Christ, our Lord...let him be **anathema** [i.e., be excommunicated]." (*Ibid.*)
 2. Yet, in writing to the Galatians who added circumcision to faith for salvation (Gal. 5:2; 1:8-9 with Acts 15:1), Paul said making eternal salvation come by faith **plus human works** was an **errant Gospel**. **That** was to result in excommunication's "**anathema**", Gal. 1:8-9!
 3. John 1:12-13 shows John **labored** to say salvation is by faith apart from merit: if one trusts in Christ, he is made God's child apart from natural descent ("not of blood"), parental choice ("nor of the will of the flesh") and **even a husband's** will (lit. **andros** in "nor of the will of man") where the wife may **not** will it (UBS Grk. N.T., p. 321).
 4. Roman Catholic dogma holds a faith-**plus-works** gospel that Paul penalizes in Gal. 1:8-9 with an excommunication "**anathema**". We must then have **no fellowship with** the Roman Catholic Church.*

Lesson Application: (1) **Opposite Catholicism's MINGLING of truth with error, (a) Jesus is Mary's Creator and hence LORD over her, and (b) salvation is by faith WITHOUT any SACRAMENTS. (2) Hence, Gal. 1:8-9 with 2 Jn. 9-10 tells believers to SEPARATE from the SYNCRETISM that is Catholicism.** *(3) **HOWEVER, as many INDIVIDUAL Catholics are merely misinformed, we must reach out to enlighten them (see Gal. 1:8-9 in light of 1:1-5; 6:18)!**

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . .)

In reaching a Catholic friend with the Gospel, recall that Luke 23:39-43 shows Jesus **on the cross** telling the thief that he would be with Jesus in heaven **that day** due to his confession of faith in Christ. Explain this thief was **worthy** of **death** by his **own** admission (Lk. 23:41), and that he had **recently mocked Jesus on the cross**, a **great** sin, Mtt. 27:44! Yet, he entered heaven that day **without any** of the **sacraments** as follows: (a) Baptism, communion, confirmation and good living didn't help save this man -- he could not do any of these while on the cross! (b) The thief went to Paradise without penance, for he only confessed Christ -- not his sins -- to Jesus, Luke 23:42-43. (c) The thief was saved without last rites, for the only **qualified** and **willing** Priest of God present to serve him last rites would have been Jesus, and He died **before** the thief did acc. to John 19:30, 32-34! (c) The thief bypassed any purgatory: though he admitted he was worthy of death and had that day also mocked Jesus, a bad sin, Christ said he would join Jesus in heaven **that day**, Luke 23:43! (d) The thief went to heaven apart from the help of Mary, the mother of Jesus! John 19:26-27 shows Jesus assigned Mary to be subject to John's oversight. She then had no Church authority, so only **God** could save this thief!

(2) There is another way to reach our Catholic friend: we may quote the **alleged** first "Pope", Peter, using the 1986 authorized **Roman Catholic Bible**, the **New American Bible** on the **way** to be saved! Peter there relates the salvation of Cornelius' household recorded in Acts 10:44-48 as cited in Acts 15:9-11 at the Jerusalem Council. Using **that** Catholic Bible, we quote Peter: "(9) **He made no distinction between us and them, for by faith he purified their hearts. (10) Why, then, are you now putting God to the test by placing on the shoulders of the disciples a yoke that neither our ancestors nor we have been able to bear? (11) On the contrary, we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they.**"

Well, Cornelius and his household was saved when they merely heard and believed the Gospel Peter preached **as he proclaimed** it (see Acts 10:44 in the 1986 Catholic Bible)! Thus, according to the first alleged "Pope" as cited in the 1986 authorized Catholic Bible, one is saved by **faith alone**. **That means that alleged "papal authority" has declared that faith without the sacraments ALSO saves us!**