

ROMAN CATHOLIC BELIEFS IN VIEW OF THE APOSTLE PETER'S WORDS
Part V: Roman Catholicism's Confessional And Priesthood In View Of The Apostle Peter's Words
(1 Peter 2:9; 5:3; 2 Peter 3:15-16 with 1 Timothy 2:5)

I. Introduction

- A. Unlike Protestant believers who confess their sins to God, the Roman Catholic is taught to enter a confessional booth and confess his sins to a priest, Dr. Henry M. Woods, Our Priceless Heritage, p. 129.
- B. We examine this issue in light of the words of the Apostle Peter in Scripture as follows:

II. Roman Catholicism's Confessional And Priesthood In View Of The Apostle Peter's Words.

- A. Roman Catholicism teaches the following dogma on the confessional:
 - 1. Beginning around age seven, every Roman Catholic must attend a confessional at least once a year under pain of mortal sin so he can confess his sins to the priest so the priest can absolve his sins, Boettner, Roman Catholicism, p. 196-198 [Boettner cites the Baltimore, New York and French Catechisms and Instructions for Non-Catholics, p. 93.]
 - 2. The penitent must confess every mortal sin, a mortal sin being a violation of the Ten Commandments and of the alleged seven deadly sins' of pride, covetousness, lewdness, anger, gluttony, envy and sloth, Ibid., Boettner, p. 200. Venial sins (any other violation of God's commandments) do not have to be confessed although they should be confessed if the penitent has no unconfessed mortal sins!
 - 3. The alleged basis for the confessional is the Matthew 16:19 prediction of Peter's use of the kingdom keys to "bind and loose" and the John 20:21-23 theme of "whose sins ye forgive, they are forgiven."
- B. The Priesthood in connection with the confessional is arranged in Roman Catholicism as follows: Catholicism teaches "the priest does not have to ask God to forgive sins. The priest himself has the power to do so in Christ's name. Your sins are forgiven by the priest the same as if you knelt before Jesus Christ and told them to Christ Himself," Instructions for Non-Catholics, p. 93 as cited in Boettner, Ibid., p. 197.
- C. Yet, Peter's words in Scripture correct Catholicism's erroneous views on the confessional and priesthood:
 - 1. Regarding the priesthood, the Apostle Peter wrote **every** believer is a priest who goes directly to God for his sins rather than depending on another earthly believer for this, 1 Peter 2:9 with 1:1-2.
 - 2. Also, Peter taught no elder is to lord it over other believers as in an earthly priesthood, 1 Peter 5:3.
 - 3. Peter also condoned Paul's epistles as Scripture in 2 Peter 3:15-16, and Paul in turn stated Christ is man's sole mediator with God, 1 Tim. 2:5. No man on earth today can forgive another man's sins!
 - 4. Regarding the interpretation of Matthew 16:19 and John 20:21-23, Peter in 1 Peter 3:15 commands believers to defend the faith by use of logical reasoning. In so doing, we examine Matthew 16:19 and John 20:21-23 to find them **not teaching** a basis for a confessional as is taught in Roman Catholicism:
 - a. The future passive verb forms in both texts for "bind," "loose," "remit" (forgive) and "retain" (not forgive) (KJV) show the apostles **reflecting** God's decisions, **not authoring** them! (Ryrie St. Bib., KJV fn. to Mtt. 16:19; UBS Grk. N.T., p. 63 and 409 with Zondervan's The Analytical Grk. Lex., p. 85 and p. 250 respectively for Mtt. 16:19; and p. 61 and p. 228 respectively for John 20:21-23.
 - b. Also, in Mark 2:5-12, a passage Peter would condone as canonical by way of his word about the author of Mark's Gospel (in 1 Peter 5:13b), we read only **God** can actually **forgive sins**! The **sole exception** involves a confession given to another one has wronged, and the wronged man forgives the penitent of the infraction against himself **aside from GOD's forgiveness**, cf. Matt. 6:12, 14-15!
 - 5. Besides, there is no historical precedent in Augustine, Origen, Tertullian and other conscientious Church Fathers for the existence of the confessional. Rather, it was introduced as a **voluntary** practice by Pope Leo the Great (5th cent. A. D.) and made mandatory in 1215 A. D. under Pope Innocent III when Roman Catholicism was broadening the power of its hierarchy, Ibid., Boettner, p. 199.

Lesson: The Roman Catholic confessional and priesthood err according to Peter's words as they counter God's role in forgiving sin, Christ's role as Sole Mediator and the priesthood of every believer.

Application: (1) When the believer sins, he must confess it in prayer to God the Father ALONE through the name of his Sole Mediator, Jesus Christ, 1 John 1:9; John 14:13. (2) Then, as EVERY OTHER believer, he prays to God for the world and to goes to the world in God's behalf, 1 Peter 2:5 (1:1-2).