

ROMAN CATHOLICISM IN LIGHT OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

III. Catholicism's Salvation By Mary Versus Hebrews' Salvation By Christ

(Hebrews 2:5-18)

I. Introduction

- A. A number of the members of our Church have come from Roman Catholic backgrounds, and they often seek support in Biblical truth to counter the strong, errant indoctrination they experienced in their past.
- B. The epistle to the Hebrews was written to counter the errant traditionalism of first century Judaism that was similar in theological thrust to much of Catholicism, so we study Hebrews for edification in this matter.
- C. We thus view Hebrews 2:5-18 on Catholicism's salvation by Mary versus Hebrews' salvation by Christ:

II. Catholicism's Salvation By Mary Versus Hebrews' Salvation By Christ, Hebrews 2:5-18.

- A. Roman Catholicism contrasts with the Epistle of Hebrews on the spiritual power to effect salvation:
 1. The Roman Catholic Church claims that Mary the mother of Jesus has the power to effect man's salvation:
 - a. It claims of her that "'All power is given to thee in Heaven and on earth,' so that 'at the command of Mary all obey – even God . . . and thus . . . God has placed the whole Church . . . under the domination of Mary' (pp. 180, 181)" (Lorraine Boettner, Roman Catholicism, 1978, p. 139, citing Bishop Alphonse de Liguori, The Glories of Mary (Redemptorist Fathers, Brooklyn), 1931, p. 180, 181)
 - b. The Catholic Church also claims, "Mary 'is also the Advocate of the whole human race . . . for she can do what she wills with God' (p. 193)" (Ibid., Boettner, p. 139, citing Liguori, p. 193).
 - c. In addition, the Catholic Church asserts that "'Mary is called . . . the gate of heaven because no one can enter that blessed kingdom without passing through her' (p. 160)" (Ibid., Boettner; Ibid., Liguori, p. 160).
 - d. Indeed, the Catholic Church claims, "'The Way of Salvation is open to none otherwise than through Mary,' and since 'Our salvation is in the hands of Mary . . . He who is protected by Mary will be saved, he who is not will be lost'" (Ibid., Boettner; Ibid., Liguori, p. 169, 170).
 2. However, Hebrews 2:5-18 teaches that Christ has power over all things regarding man's salvation:
 - a. God initially subjected the world to come not to angels, but He made man a little lower than the angels and set him over the creative works of His hands in Genesis 1:1-28 (Hebrews 2:5-8a; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Heb. 2:8).
 - b. However, man lost that dominion when he sinned (Romans 8:20), so we do not yet see all things subjected to man in his current fallen state, Hebrews 2:8b.
 - c. Nevertheless, we see Jesus Who was made a little lower than the angels that He might represent the human race to God in His substitutionary death on the cross for man's sin, and He is now crowned with glory and honor for tasting of death for every man, what His earthly mother Mary never did, Hebrews 2:9.
 - d. God the Father thus made Jesus and not Mary through His Incarnation and substitutionary death for mankind the means by which God could bring many spiritual sons of God to glory, making Christ and not Mary the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings, Hebrews 2:10.
 - e. Christ as man's sanctifier from sin and those who are sanctified by faith in Him and not Mary are united in a way that Christ is not ashamed to call them His brethren to the glory and praise of God, Heb. 2:11-13.
 - f. Far beyond Mary's ability or qualifications, Christ partook of flesh and blood that through His death He might destroy the Devil who had the power of death over man via Adam's fall, that He might deliver those who through the fear of death were all their lives subject to slavery of that fear, Hebrews 2:14-15 ESV.
 - g. In thus not taking on the nature of angels but being made of the seed of Abraham of the human race, Christ and not Mary was made like unto His spiritual brothers that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest for them in relating to God to make a reconciliation for the people's sins, Heb. 2:16-17.
 - h. In that Jesus himself suffered being tempted, He is able to do what Mary cannot do in helping those who are tempted to overcome their temptations, Hebrews 2:18.

***Lesson:* Though the Roman Catholic Church exalts Mary to the position of having power and authority over the human race to provide salvation by her intercessory work, Hebrews 2:5-18 teaches that Jesus as God took upon Himself a human body and nature that He by His substitutionary death for the human race might rescue all sinners from sin, including Mary, and through His suffering become a Captain of their salvation and the Helper for all believers who are tempted to sin.**

***Application:* May we not adopt Catholicism's exaltation of Mary to be man's savior but see Jesus as that Savior.**