

ROMAN CATHOLICISM — PART ONE

FOUNDATIONAL THEOLOGICAL PILLARS

INTRODUCTION

This paper is Part One of a two-part series on Roman Catholicism. The purpose of this first paper on Roman Catholicism is to describe the foundational theological pillars held by the Roman Catholic (RC) church.

As a “Christian” religion, Roman Catholicism still embraces much basic truth supported by Scripture. These truths include belief in an omnipotent, creator God in three persons — Father, Son and Holy Spirit; man’s inherited, sinful nature through Adam’s fall; the virgin birth of the eternal Christ; His dual nature as both God and man; His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension; His future second-coming; and the final judgment. However, over the centuries of church history Roman Catholicism has developed into a very complex religious system. This is especially true in its soteriology, the doctrine of salvation. Of special concern is the answer to questions such as these: How can a sinner be justified and accepted by our Holy God? What must the sinner do to be saved? Or what are the conditions for the sinner’s forgiveness, salvation and certainty of heaven?

Such questions were debated during the great Protestant Reformation. To some extent doctrinal distinctions between Roman Catholic (RC) and Protestant believers were clarified. In those days the “infallible” RC Magisterium¹ at the Council of Trent (1545-63)² anathematized the “protesters” as heretics. Many were martyred for their faith. But especially since the Vatican II Council (1962-65), we *heretics* are now referred to as *separated brethren* even though we remain in the camp of those who, as heretics, are cursed with eternal damnation. Under Pope Paul VI (1963-78) the Magisterium went so far as to state that all those “who have been justified by faith in Baptism³ are incorporated into Christ; they therefore have a right to be called Christians, and with good reason are accepted as brothers in the Lord by the children of the Catholic Church” (#818).⁴ This most certainly does not indicate that we are saved, have eternal life, or even that we are a part of “the Church.” It only indicates two things: 1) the extent to which the RC Church is willing to go in their deliberate use of the ambiguous language of the ecumenical movement; and 2) the deliberate Vatican II change in purpose and focus, not basic RC doctrine.⁵ Although both the Council of Trent and Vatican II were “Ecumenical Councils” concerned for Church unity, a major purpose of the former was to *restrain* the “heretics” of the

¹ The Magisterium is the teaching authority (the reigning Pope and Bishops) of the RC Church.

² The sessions were conducted during three time periods (1545-47, 1551-52, and 1562-63) under five Popes.

³ The “separated brethren” tag is generally applied to all “Protestants,” but technically, from this statement, it appears to apply only to protestant groups that practice baptismal regeneration. In contrast, Scripture teaches that our hope of justification and the object of our faith is Christ alone, not baptism or anything or anyone else.

⁴ In this paper, all quotes cited from the latest *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)* will be followed by the numbered article/paragraph in parenthesis. One website (of several) for the CCC is: <http://www.kofc.org/publications/cis/catechism/contents.cfm>

⁵ Numerous other changes were made by the Vatican II Magisterium, especially in the liturgical administration of the Sacraments. It seems that all such reform was intended to make the RC Church more user-friendly for contemporary society, especially the backslidden Catholics and *separated brethren*. However such “modernistic” changes have deeply troubled many RC ultraconservatives. For one example see: <http://www.dailycatholic.org/>

Reformation. A major purpose of the latter was to *restore* us “separated brethren” back into the fold of “the one and only true Church.” By Vatican II the RC Church could see the benefits that their involvement in the ecumenical movement⁶ could have for their cause.

Prior to Vatican II, Pope Pius XI (1922-39) had resisted ecumenical pressure stating that “it is clear why this Apostolic See has never allowed its subjects to take part in the assemblies of non-Catholics: for the union of Christians can only be promoted by promoting the return to the one true Church of Christ of those who are separated from it, for in the past they have unhappily left it.”⁷ Pope Pius XII (1939-58) clarified, “We must not pass over in silence, or veil in ambiguous terms the truth... that the only true union is by the return of separated Christians to the one true Church of Christ.”⁸ Although Vatican II has also changed the extent and manner to which they involve themselves in ecumenical gatherings, they certainly still insist that its purpose is for all others to unite with them. Pope John XXIII (1958-63), who instigated Vatican II, officially confirmed that “the Bishop of Rome, as Peter’s successor and Christ’s Vicar on earth, is the focal center of the entire visible unity of the Catholic Church.... [And he was] fully confident that this solemn [Vatican II] assembly of the Catholic Hierarchy will... reinforce that unity in faith, worship and discipline which is a distinguishing mark of Christ’s true Church.... Assuredly, then, we must believe that this Church has always been, and still is, one, holy, catholic and apostolic; for thus was it founded.... We therefore beg and implore Christ... to give all Christians the grace to recognize those marks by which His true Church is distinguished from all others, and to become its devoted sons.”⁹ His successor, Pope Paul VI, also clearly declared, “The restoration of unity among all Christians is one of the principal concerns of the Second Vatican Council. Christ the Lord founded one Church and one Church only”¹⁰ under Peter, the first RC pope. This is basic, RC “infallible” doctrine that cannot change!

This deep-seated RC purpose and dream for the one, unified, world Church under the headship of the Roman Pope is the real motivation for the strong RC commitment to the ecumenical movement and the “new evangelization” of our times. And the RC church has reaped the benefits of many years of programmed RC involvement with “evangelicals” in social and political activism, in evangelistic campaigns and in dialogue with Protestants on many different levels.¹¹ All this has resulted in many prominent evangelicals taking a firm position on accepting Roman Catholics as “brothers and sisters in Christ.” The 1994 document, “Evangelicals and Catholics Together” (ECT) is only one illustration. The ECT joint declaration clearly states: “We [Evangelicals and Catholics] affirm together that we are justified by grace through faith because of Christ.... All who accept Christ as Lord and Savior are brothers and sisters in Christ. Evangelicals and Catholics are brothers and sisters in Christ.”¹² A subsequent document, “The Gift of

⁶ See the introduction to the paper on “The Ecumenical Movement.”

⁷ Pope Pius XI, “*Mortalium Animos*, Encyclical on Religious Unity” (1/06/1928). One website (of several) for papal documents is: <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/all.htm>.

⁸ Pope Pius XII, “*De Motione Oecumenica*. <http://www.cathinsight.com/apologetics/catholic.htm>

⁹ Pope John XXIII, “*Aeterna Dei Sapientia*, The See of Peter as the Center of Christian Unity” (11/11/1961) #41.

¹⁰ Pope Paul VI, “*Unitatus Redintegratio*, Decree on Ecumenism” (11/21/1964) #1.

¹¹ Ecumenical dialogue has continued for years between official RC reps and “evangelical” groups, small and large. Included in the latter: The WEA, the WCC, the LWF, the MWF, and the Church of England. This includes the Pope Paul II dialogue with 5 Archbishops of Canterbury — Ramsey, Coggan, Runcie, Carey and Williams.

¹² www.firstthings.com/ftissues/ft9405/articles/mission.html Signers include Chuck Colson, Bill Bright, J. I.

Salvation” (1998) declares that “we [Evangelicals and Catholics] can together bear witness to the gift of salvation in Jesus Christ.... [We are] in agreement with what the Reformation traditions have meant by justification by faith alone (*sola fide*).”¹³ After some 30 years of ecumenical dialogue between the Lutheran World Fellowship (LWF) and the Vatican, the “Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification” was written. In it they declared, “Together we confess: By grace alone, in faith in Christ’s saving work and not because of any merit on our part, we are accepted by God and receive the Holy Spirit, who renews our hearts while equipping and calling us to good works.... Through Christ alone are we justified, when we receive this salvation in faith.”¹⁴ What real meaning do such statements have? Surely, they can hardly mean the same thing by theologians on both sides of the dialogue. And the participants must obviously realize this — or do they? Blurring semantic distinctions only muddies the water, distorting, if not negating, any real communication.

The RC “gospel” is NOT the gospel of justification by grace through faith alone, without the deeds of the law. In official RC teaching all sorts of essential conditions, requirements and/or means for one’s salvation are added to the simplicity of the gospel message. The RC doctrine of salvation (soteriology) is built on several, foundational, theological pillars concerning the doctrine of The Church (ecclesiology), the doctrine of Holy Scripture (bibliology) and the RC doctrine of Mary (Mariology). The purpose of this paper is first to discuss a few of these RC “Foundational Theological Pillars” in Part One. This paper is followed by another with a discussion of the RC “Conditions for Salvation” in Part Two.

Our primary sources for RC information will be the latest *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) and official papal documents often cited in the CCC. This official CCC was published with the *Imprimi Potest* authority of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI (2005-2013). In 1992 Pope John Paul II (1978-2005) ordered the publication of the CCC with his introductory “Apostolic Constitution, *Fidei Depositum*.” A 2nd Edition was published in 1997 with some modifications.¹⁵ “Its principal sources are the Sacred Scriptures, the Fathers of the Church, the liturgy, and the Church’s Magisterium...” (#11).¹⁶ All official RC documents, including the CCC, almost exclusively refer to the RC Church as simply “the Church.” And why is this? Because the RC Church insists that there is no other real Church of God. This claim is one of the main foundational pillars on which the whole RC religious system is built.

1. The RC Church Is the One and Only True Church.

RC View: The CCC clearly identifies “the Church” as the one universal Church, the one

Packer, Pat Robertson, Ralph Reed, Richard Mouw (Fuller), Richard Land (SBC) and Larry Lewis (SBC), John White (NAE), (Geneva) Kent Hill (Nazarene), Brian O’Connell (WEA) and many others.
<http://www.nccusa.org/about/cctusa.html>

¹³ www.firstthings.com/ftissues/ft9801/articles/gift.html

¹⁴ <http://www.ewtn.com/library/CURIA/pccujnt4.html> Another group, The Christian Churches Together in the USA (CCT), has been recently established composed of communions from five major groupings: Evangelical or Charismatic, Historic Protestant, Orthodox, Racial or Ethnic, and Roman Catholic. Its stated purpose “is to enable churches and national Christian organizations to grow closer together in Christ in order to strengthen our Christian witness in the world.” http://www.christianchurchestogether.org/organizational_plan.htm

¹⁵ The purpose: To bring the texts of the modern language editions into conformity with the 1997 Latin text.

¹⁶ “Prologue,” CCC, (#11). The numbered article/paragraph (in parenthesis) will follow all CCC quotations.

and only Church of Christ, the People of God, the Household of Faith. “This is the sole Church of Christ, which in the [Apostles] Creed we profess to be one, holy, catholic and apostolic” (#811). “The sole Church of Christ [is that] which our Savior, after his Resurrection, entrusted to Peter’s pastoral care, commissioning him and the other apostles to extend and rule it.... This Church, constituted and organized as a society in the present world, subsists in (*subsistit in*) the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the bishops in communion with him.” (#816). It is boldly claimed that “the ‘one true religion’... subsists in the Catholic and apostolic Church” alone. (#2105).¹⁷ It is also claimed that “Christ bestowed unity on his Church from the beginning. This unity, we believe, subsists in the Catholic Church as something she can never lose...” (#820). And, according to RC *replacement theology*, the [RC] Church is the *new Israel* and the Kingdom of heaven/God that “was inaugurated on earth by Christ.... The Church is the seed and beginning of this kingdom.¹⁸ Her keys are entrusted to Peter,” (#567) and all his successors including the present Pope. For centuries of church history, official RC documents have made it abundantly clear that there really is no other Church. And they passionately want the whole world to know this and be convinced of it.

Protestant View: Much of the RC teaching on “the Church” sounds correct. But, as understood in RC ecclesiology, it isn’t! This RC claim of exclusive ownership of “the Church” is extremely serious. It means that all Scripture which speaks of the glorious truths of the “church” has reference *only* to the RC Church. If true, then verses such as Ephesians 5:23-32 have no application to any of us poor “separated brethren” who are “outside the fold” of the so called “true church.” However, there is coming a time when Christ will “present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing” (Eph. 5:27). That is no reference to the RC Church or any other particular church group. It simply expresses the hope of all of us who are true believers, who may or may not be associated with a certain organizational group.

All true believers trusting in Christ alone as their only hope are members of the true universal church. One’s denominational tag has nothing to do with it. Any unbiased reading of the New Testament epistles should make this clear. The cultic claim of the RC Church to be the one and only true and universal Church of Christ is absolutely and absurdly false. This false claim is rooted in another false claim that Peter was the first Roman pope.

2. The Apostle Peter Was the First RC Pope With Supremacy Over the Apostles and the Church.

RC View: Peter, “the Church’s foundation” (#442), is thought to be the first Roman Pope. Partly on the basis of Matthew 16:18-19 and John 21:15-17, these RC claims are made: “Simon Peter holds the first place in the college of the Twelve” apostles.... The ‘power of the keys’ designates authority [given to Peter] to govern the house of God, which is the Church. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, confirmed this mandate after his

¹⁷ Pope Paul VI, “*Dignitatis Humanae*, Declaration on Human Freedom,” (12/07/1965) #1.

¹⁸ This whole area of RC hermeneutics, including *covenant* and *replacement* theologies, constitutes another RC foundational theological pillar not covered in this paper. See our “Amillennialism” paper, much of which applies to RC hermeneutics.

Resurrection: 'Feed my sheep.' The power to 'bind and loose' connotes the authority to absolve sins, to pronounce doctrinal judgements, and to make disciplinary decisions in the Church. Jesus entrusted this authority to the Church through the ministry of the apostles and in particular through the ministry of Peter, the only one to whom he specifically entrusted the keys of the kingdom." (#553). "When Christ instituted the Twelve, 'he constituted [them] in the form of a college or permanent assembly, at the head of which he placed Peter, chosen from among them.'" (#880). "The Lord made Simon alone, whom he named Peter, the 'rock' of his Church. He gave him the keys of his Church and instituted him shepherd of the whole flock." (#881, 936). The sacred Magisterium of Vatican I (1869-70) under Pope Pius IX (1846-78) emphasized the absolute necessity of faith in the supremacy of Peter with these sobering, "infallible" words: "Therefore, if anyone says that blessed Peter the apostle was not appointed by Christ the lord as prince of all the apostles and visible head of the whole Church militant... let him be anathema."¹⁹

Protestant View: Traditionally, protestants reject the RC doctrine of Peter's supremacy even though we are under the RC curse of "eternal damnation" for doing so. According to RC doctrine, this means that we cannot be saved unless we accept the RC claim of Peter's supremacy. In Matthew 16:18a, the Holy Spirit intentionally made a clear distinction between the masculine *Petros* (Peter) and the feminine *petra* (rock). *Petros* indicates a detached stone and *petra* generally indicates a rock mass or bedrock as in Matthew 7:24-25. The focus of the immediate context (Matt.16:13-16) is Christ, not Peter. The Holy Spirit inspired both Peter (1 Pet. 2:8) and Paul (Rom.9:33) to apply Isaiah 8:14 to Christ as being that "*petra* of offense"²⁰ in a figurative sense. Likewise, Paul, in 1 Corinthians 10:4 referring to Exodus 20:8-11, states clearly that spiritually Christ was the *petra* from which the Israelites drank.²¹ Because of the manner in which God is figuratively referred to as "rock" in the Old Testament, it would be only natural for Jewish believers in Jesus as their Messiah to understand Him, not Peter, to be the *petra* on which the church was to be built.²² God prophesied through Isaiah (Is. 28:16) that He would lay in Zion a precious cornerstone as a sure foundation that could be trusted. The Holy Spirit, through Peter, applied this verse as referring to Jesus Christ. He alone is that "precious cornerstone," a sure foundation of a "spiritual house" being built up of believers who are "living stones" (1 Pet. 2:4-7). Paul laid the foundation of God's building, the church. And that foundation was and is Jesus Christ, and no other (1 Cor.3:9-11). Jesus Christ, Himself, not Peter, is the chief cornerstone even though the prophets and apostles, not just Peter, were also foundational in the building of the church (Eph. 2:20). The word *petra* of Matthew 16:18 refers to the divine Christ of Peter's confession.

Peter had a prominent role among the apostles with "apostolic authority." But there is neither biblical nor historical evidence that Peter, as Bishop in Rome, was the first Pope. If he were serving there as the Pope during the alleged period of 42-67 AD, why is the Scripture

¹⁹ *First dogmatic constitution on the Church of Christ*, "On the institution of the apostolic primacy in blessed Peter," Vatican I, Session 4, (18 July 1870) Ch. 1, #6. www.ewtn.com/library/COUNCILS/V1.HTM#6

²⁰ This possibly comes from the Septuagint (LXX) which uses *petra*.

²¹ The LXX translators also used *petra* in OT texts referring to this incident in the wilderness. (See Ex. 20:8-11; Neh. 9:15; Ps. 78:15; 105:41; 114:8; Is. 48:21).

²² See 2 Sam. 22:2 (Lord, my *petra*, LXX); Deut. 32:4,15,18,30,31; Ps. 18:2,31,46; 31:2,3; 42:9; 62:7, 21; etc.

so silent about it? And why would Paul (writing around 58 AD) have had such a yearning desire to go himself to Rome to impart some spiritual gift to the believers so they could be established (Rom. 1:11)? If Peter were the Pope, why did Paul so totally ignore him, not to even mention his name among all those friends he greeted in chapter 16? And though he noted several friends in his four letters written from a Roman prison (61-64 AD), he made no mention whatsoever of Peter. Where was “the Pope” in 2 Timothy 4:16?

Then, too, there is neither biblical nor historical evidence that Peter had a superior role of authority over either the other apostles or the universal church. If any “authority” is implied in the use of “keys” in Scripture, it is for either opening to gain access or closing to deny access. God used Peter to open the door of salvation initially to the Jews (Acts 2:14-36), the Samaritans (with Philip and John, Acts 8:4-25) and the Gentiles (Acts 9:32-10:48). The apostolic authority for “binding and loosing” (Mt. 16:19) had to do with church discipline, and was given to all the apostles, not just to Peter (Mt. 18:18; Jn. 20:23). It appears that James had a more prominent role than Peter in the Jerusalem church (Acts 12:17) and in that “first” council at Jerusalem (Acts 15:13-29). Peter was one of two, who were “sent” to Samaria by “the apostles at Jerusalem” (Acts 8:14). Paul spoke of a plurality of three church leaders in Jerusalem “who were reputed to be pillars,” but he listed James first before Peter (Gal. 2:9). He also indicated that even with their high reputation, they “added nothing” to him. As he put it, “whatever they were” made no difference to him (Gal. 2:6). In fact, when Peter went to Antioch, Paul had to publicly rebuke him to his face, because he stood condemned for his hypocrisy and failure to walk uprightly according to the truth of the gospel (Gal. 2:11-14). Paul certainly did not consider himself to be inferior to any of the other apostles in any way (2 Cor. 11:5; 12:11). And Peter, as a married man (Mk. 1:29; 1 Cor. 9:5) would not qualify now to be a priest, bishop or Pope since the RC law clearly states: “Clerics are obliged to observe perfect and perpetual continence for the sake of the Kingdom of heaven, and are therefore bound to celibacy.”²³ In Scripture the highest role of church leadership (after the early apostles) seems to be that of local-church “elders/bishops.”²⁴ And even as an apostle, Peter saw himself as merely a “fellow elder” among other elders of local churches (1 Pet. 5:1). He himself also identifies Christ as “the chief shepherd” (1 Pet. 5:4), the only one with primacy over the universal church. Christ alone is “head of the church” (Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18). And although these truths are self-evident, this shattered RC pillar of Peter’s supremacy as the first Pope is crucially foundational for support of the faulty RC pillar of “apostolic succession.”

3. RC Popes and Bishops Succeed Peter and Apostles in Primacy Through Apostolic Succession.

RC View: RC teaching claims that Pope Benedict XVI follows a so-called *unbroken chain*²⁵ of 263 other popes, all successors of Peter, the first Pope. “Just as ‘by the Lord’s institution, St. Peter and the rest of the apostles constitute a single apostolic college, so in like fashion the Roman Pontiff, Peter’s successor, and the bishops, the successors of the apostles, are related

²³ *Code of Canon Law*, Book 2, Can. #277. http://arcc-catholic-rights.net/book_31.htm

²⁴ The words, elders (presbuteros) and bishops/overseers (episkopos), designate the same groups. All elders are overseers who shepherd (poimaine) those under their care. See Acts 20:17, 28 and Titus 1:5, 7.

²⁵ This claim of an “unbroken chain of popes” would be difficult to support from *factual* historical records.

with and united to one another'.... This pastoral office of Peter and the other apostles belongs to the Church's very foundation and is continued by the bishops under the primacy of the Pope.... The Pope... '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'" (#880-882). "There is neither appeal nor recourse against a judgment or a decree of the Roman Pontiff."²⁶ It is also claimed that "united with the Roman Pontiff... this college [of bishops] has 'supreme and full authority over the universal Church...'" (#883). And what's the tragic consequence for those, like us, who reject these RC claims? The Magisterium under Pope Pius IX of Vatican I has made it crystal clear: "Therefore, if anyone says that it is not by the institution of Christ the Lord himself (that is to say, by divine law) that blessed Peter should have perpetual successors in the primacy over the whole Church; or that the Roman Pontiff is not the successor of blessed Peter in this primacy: let him be anathema."²⁷

Protestant View: Even so, traditional protestants do not accept this RC doctrine of apostolic succession and papal supremacy because it is neither taught in Scripture, nor proved by authentic history.²⁸ Although, hundreds of "evangelicals" also claim to be "Apostles" with apostolic authority. But not all of them base their authority on apostolic succession from Peter and the other apostles. Prophets and apostles were foundational in building the church (Eph. 2:20). First century apostles were given extraordinary gifts (Matt. 10:1, 8; 2 Cor. 12:12) with authority in a transitional period when God was giving new revelation through them. Many of us believe that, with the passing of these men after the completion of our present Scripture, the apostolic office was terminated by God Himself.²⁹ Protestants accept the authority of the apostolic, canonical writings as inspired by the Holy Spirit and binding on us today. However, neither the RC Pope nor the RC College of Bishops have any God-given authority whatsoever over us who make up the universal church of true believers. These false RC claims of papal primacy and apostolic succession are absolutely essential to support the RC insistence that the RC Magisterium is the only God-given teaching authority for the universal Church.

4. The Magisterium (Pope and Bishops) Is the Only Teaching Authority in the Church.

RC View: Prior to his election as Pope, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger warned Catholics of

²⁶ *Code of Canon Law*, Book 2, Can. #333.

²⁷ Pope Pius IX, *First dogmatic constitution on the Church of Christ*, "On the permanence of the primacy of blessed Peter in the Roman pontiffs, Vatican I, Session 4 (18 July 1870) Ch 2, #5. www.ewtn.com/library/COUNCILS/V1.HTM#6

²⁸ RC historians: Paul Johnson, "A History of Christianity" (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1976, 1995); Hans Kung, "The Catholic Church: A Short History" (translated by John Bowden) (New York: Modern Library, 2001, 2003); Peter de Rosa, "Vicars of Christ: The Dark Side of the Papacy" (Dublin, Ireland: Poolbeg Press, 1988, 2000). Other historians: Malachi Martin, "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Church" (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1981); William Webster, "The Church of Rome at the Bar of History" (Carlisle, Pennsylvania: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1995).

²⁹ However, in light of Eph 4:7-16, "some among us believe that God still uses gifted *prophets* and *apostles* today but without proclaiming new revelation, prophesying the future and performing the miraculous 'signs of a true apostle'" (2 Cor. 12:12). Through prayer God can and does heal sickness at times (James 5:14-15), but any such healing is temporary. Except in cases of tragic death by causes apart from failing health, all people die physically sick.

“certain presuppositions... which hinder the understanding and acceptance of the revealed truth.” He identified one of these presuppositions as “the tendency to read and to interpret Sacred Scripture outside the Tradition and Magisterium of the Church.”³⁰ And why has he been so concerned? “According to a saying of the Fathers, Sacred Scripture is written principally in the Church’s heart rather than in documents and records, for the Church carries in her Tradition the living memorial of God’s Word, and it is the Holy Spirit who gives her [the RC Church] the spiritual interpretation of the Scripture (‘according to the spiritual meaning which the Spirit grants to the Church’)” (#113). “Salvation comes from God alone; but because we receive the life of faith through the Church, she is our mother.... Because she is our mother, she is also our teacher in the faith” (#169).³¹ And how does “she” do this? As every good Catholic should know, “The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition... has been entrusted solely to the Magisterium of the Church, that is, to the Pope and to the bishops in communion with him” (#85, 100). That’s why one major criteria for interpreting Scripture is: “Read the Scripture within the living Tradition of the whole [RC] Church” (#113).

Protestant View: The RC Magisterial claim of exclusive authority to authentically interpret the Scripture is cultic. It is blatantly false to claim that the Holy Spirit only gives the RC Church, through the Magisterium, “the spiritual interpretation of the Scripture.” The RC Church is neither our Mother nor “our teacher of the faith,” and yet we have God as our Father. Our Lord Jesus promised to give His disciples and all true believers the Holy Spirit as our Helper or Advocate. We are not orphans. He, the Spirit of Truth, is with us and in us. He has come to teach us (Jn. 14:16-18, 26). He does this through the Scripture He Himself has given by inspiration. The Apostle John warned common, ordinary believers of anti-christs among them. Then he wrote, “But you [i.e. true believers, not the RC Church] have an anointing from the Holy One” and you know the truth.... “And as for you the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for any one to teach you but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.... Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God: because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 John 2:20, 27; 4:1). Paul admonished all believers to prove/test³² all things, holding fast to that which is true, presumably as did the Bereans, who examined the Scriptures daily to see if the things that even the Apostle Paul (and Silas) taught were in fact true (Acts 17:11). They needed neither Pope nor Magisterium. The Reformers’ cry for *Sola Scriptura* is still our cry today. No self-proclaimed magisterial authority can or should take the place of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Scripture. God’s Word teaches the priesthood of all believers. The Magisterium’s claim of having the exclusive, God-given authority to interpret the Scripture for every man is only made worse by its self-proclaimed doctrine that they alone are infallible in their interpretation, particularly “in matters of faith and morals.”

³⁰ Joseph Ratzinger, “*Dominus Iesus*,” (8/06/2000) #4. Writing as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. This declaration was “ratified and confirmed” by Pope John Paul II on 6/16/2000. <http://www.ewtn.com/library/CURIA/CDFUNICI.HTM>

³¹ And “No one can have God as Father who does not have the Church as Mother.” CCC (#181).

³² Paul and John used the same word translated variously as “test/try/prove/examine” (1 Jn. 4:1; 1Thes. 5:21).

5. The Magisterium Is Infallible “in Matters of Faith and Morals.”

RC View: “The Church is catholic.... She is upheld infallibly in the truth: Christ governs her through Peter and the other apostles, who are present in their successors, the Pope and the college of bishops.” (#869). “In order to preserve the Church in the purity of the faith handed on by the apostles, Christ who is the Truth willed to confer on her a share in His own infallibility. By a ‘supernatural sense of faith’ the People of God, under the guidance of the Church’s living Magisterium, ‘unfailingly adheres to this faith’....[The] pastoral duty of the Magisterium is aimed at seeing to it that the People of God abides in the truth that liberates. To fulfill this service, Christ endowed the Church’s shepherds with the charism of infallibility in matters of faith and morals. The exercise of this charism takes several forms: The Roman Pontiff, head of the college of bishops, enjoys this infallibility in virtue of his office, when, as supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful — who confirms his brethren in the faith he proclaims by a definitive act a doctrine pertaining to faith or morals” (#889-891). This “See of St. Peter always remains unblemished by any error.... Therefore, such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are of themselves, and not by the consent of the Church, irreformable. So then, should anyone, which God forbid, have the temerity to reject this definition of ours: let him be anathema.”³³ “The infallibility promised to the Church is also present in the body of bishops when, together with Peter’s successor, they exercise the supreme Magisterium, above all in an Ecumenical Council. When the Church through its supreme Magisterium proposes a doctrine ‘for belief as being divinely revealed,’ and as the teaching of Christ, the definitions ‘must be adhered to with the obedience of faith.’ This infallibility extends as far as the deposit of divine Revelation itself” (#889-91). “The infallibility of the Magisterium of the Pastors extends to all the elements of doctrine, including moral doctrine, without which the saving truths of the faith cannot be preserved, expounded, or observed” (#2051).

Protestant View: Although the apostles taught with God-given apostolic authority, we know of no claim that their teaching was necessarily infallible. Their original, biblical writings were inerrant and infallible because they were divinely inspired by the infallible Holy Spirit. He, the Holy Spirit Himself, is the believer’s only infallible, authoritative teacher. He illuminates our hearts and minds to biblical truth. But no human is an infallible interpreter of the Holy Spirit’s teaching and illumination. The Holy Scripture serves as our only infallible guide to biblical interpretation. But neither is any human infallible in his interpretation nor understanding of Scripture.

Infallibility is a holy, divine attribute of God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) and no other! In speaking of “the sinlessness of the Virgin Mary and the personal infallibility of the Pope,” the great church historian, Philip Schaff, wrote that both “are the characteristic dogmas of modern Romanism.... Both were enacted under the same Pope³⁴.... Both rest on pious fiction and fraud; [And] both present a refined idolatry by clothing a pure humble woman and a mortal sinful man with divine attributes.”³⁵ Church history clearly

³³ “*First dogmatic constitution on the Church of Christ, On the infallible teaching authority of the Roman Pontiff,*” Vatican I, Session 4, Ch 4, #6, 9 (18 July 1870). www.ewtn.com/library/COUNCILS/V1.HTM#6

³⁴ Pope Pius IX at Vatican I. Vatican I was never to be finished having been suspended by Pope Pius IX as a result of the Franco-German war. For history see www.christusrex.org/www1/CDHN/coun21.html

³⁵ Philip Schaff, “Papal Infallibility Explained, and Tested by Scripture and Tradition,” *Creeeds of Christendom, With a History and Critical Notes*, Vol. 1, *The History of Creeeds*, (1877, 1905, 1919), 6th Edition, Ch.4, #34,

verifies that any declaration of papal and/or magisterial infallibility is pure myth. Schaff writes, “This infallibility extends over eighteen [now 19] centuries.... To refute Papal infallibility is to refute also Episcopal [magisterial] infallibility; for the higher includes the lower. The [first] Vatican Council is the best argument against the infallibility of ecumenical Councils, for it sanctioned a fiction, in open and irreconcilable contradiction to older ecumenical Councils, which not only assumed the possibility of Papal fallibility, but actually condemned a Pope as a heretic. The fifth Lateran Council (1512 AD) declared the decrees of the Council of Pisa (1409 AD) null and void; the Council of Florence denied the validity of the Council of Basle, and this denied the validity of the former. The Council of Constance condemned and burned John Hus for teaching evangelical doctrines....”³⁶ At least one Pope (Honorius I, 625-38 AD) is notorious “from the fact that he was condemned as a heretic by the sixth general council (680 AD)” under Pope Agatho (678-81).³⁷ It remains true that neither Pope nor Magisterium has ever been, or ever will be, infallible because all men (and women) are sinful by nature. And this includes Mary, who is one of the main objects of RC worship.

6. Mary Is the Object of Worship for Her Divine-like Person and Work.

RC View: The following are some RC claims made about Mary: A) She is the Sanctifier of the Church. “In the most Blessed Virgin the Church has already reached that perfection whereby she exists without spot or wrinkle... in her, the Church is already the all-holy” (#829). B) She lived without either sin or a sin nature. Like Jesus, Mary’s own conception was *immaculate*³⁸ meaning that she “was preserved immune [or free] from all stain of original sin” (#491) from birth and lived perfectly sinless all her life. That’s why she is called “the Mother of Mercy, the All-Holy One” (#2677). She is described as being “alone most pure in soul and body, alone exceeding all perfection of purity... most holy, all-pure, all-immaculate, all-stainless, all-undefiled, all-incorrupt,” etc.³⁹ C) She has always remained a virgin. The virginity of the “Ever-virgin” Mary has always been *perpetual*. Exempt from the curse (Gen. 3:16), Mary supernaturally brought forth Jesus “without injury [or violation] to her maternal virginity... [and] without experiencing... any sense of pain.”⁴⁰ She gave birth to Jesus and no other (#499-501). D) She was assumed bodily. Although she eventually died, her body suffered no decay in the tomb since she “was taken up [or

p.164.

³⁶ Schaff, *Ibid.*

³⁷ The Magisterium officially declared in part that “we decide that Honorius also, who was pope of elder Rome, be with them [Sergius and other heretics] cast out of the holy Church of God and be anathematized with them.... In the final acclamations, anathema to Honorius, among the other heretics, was shouted. The solemn dogmatic decree, signed by the legates, all the bishops, and the emperor, condemns the heretics mentioned by St. Agatho ‘and also Honorius who was pope of elder Rome.’” From “Honorius I,” *Catholic Encyclopedia*, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07452b.html> [Note: In this paper all citations from the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1910, 2003 (Online Edition) are available at <http://www.newadvent.org>

³⁸ After centuries of magisterial debate, Pope Paul V (1617) “decreed that no one should dare to teach publicly that Mary was conceived in original sin.” Other popes echoed this teaching. Finally in 1894 Pope Pius IX defined the dogma. “Immaculate Conception,” *Catholic Encyclopedia*.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, Par1, “The Apostles Creed,” Art. 3. <http://www.catholicapologetics.info/thechurch/catechism/trentc.htm>

assumed] body and soul into heavenly glory” (#966).⁴¹ E) She is a Sovereign: Pope Pius XII proclaimed that “as *Queen of the Universe*, she [Mary] sits in splendor at the right hand of her Son, the immortal King of the Ages.”⁴² He also spoke of “the ‘sovereignty’ of Mary”⁴³ and cited St. Ildephonsus salutation: “O my Lady, my sovereign, you rule over me, Mother of my Lord” whom “theologians of the Church... have called the most Blessed Virgin the Ruler of all.... Let all, therefore, try to approach with greater trust the throne of grace and mercy of our Queen and Mother, and beg for strength in adversity, light in darkness, consolation in sorrow....”⁴⁴ F) She is Our Refuge and Hope. Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903) proclaimed that “the great Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, the guardian of our peace and the minister to us of heavenly grace... is placed on the highest summit of power and glory in Heaven.... Catholics... fly for refuge to Mary.... The Catholic Church has always, and with justice, put all her hope and trust in the Mother of God”⁴⁵ who is also “*the Spouse of the Holy Spirit*.”⁴⁶ G) She is honored by numerous names and titles. After her assumption Mary’s “manifold intercession continues to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation.... Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked in the Church under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix” (#969),⁴⁷ among “more than 6,000 titles for Mary.”⁴⁸ H) She has crushed Satan’s head (Gen 3:16). “Great indeed is Our trust in Mary. The resplendent glory of her merits... elevates her to the very steps of the throne of God. Her foot has crushed the head of Satan.”⁴⁹ I) She is our Mediatrix who intercedes for us. “Mary is the intermediary through whom is distributed unto us this immense treasure of mercies gathered by God.... Thus as no man goeth to the Father but by the Son, so no man goeth to Christ but by His Mother.... [And] nothing is imparted to us except through Mary....”⁵⁰

⁴¹ Cited from Pope Pius XII, *Munificentissimus Deus*, 1/11/1950, #44. Pius XII finally defined the dogma to prevent further opposition to the doctrine.

⁴² *Ibid.*, #40. Mary is also worshipped as Queen of: Heaven, Earth, the world, Mankind, all creatures, Angels, the Church, all Saints, Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, Virgins, the most holy Rosary, Life, Love, Mercy, Peace, etc.

⁴³ Pope Pius XII, *Ad Caeli Regnam*, 10/11/1954, #4. (This was in reference to the time “when the miraculous image of the Virgin Mary which is venerated at Fatima was being crowned with a golden diadem.”)

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, #21-22, 48.

⁴⁵ Pope Leo XIII, *Supremi Apostolatus Officio*, “On Devotion of the Rosary” 9/01/1883, #1-2.

⁴⁶ Pope Leo XIII, *Divinum Illud Munus*, “On the Holy Spirit,” 5/09/1897, #14.

⁴⁷ The suffixes (-ix or -ess) indicate *female*.

⁴⁸ Most are not official, but hundreds are. <http://www.cyberfaith.com/nurturing/nurting14.html> Besides all the Marian names and titles, Marian devotion is also very evident in the abundance of Marian epithets, Masses, hymns of praise and glory to Mary, sacramentals (e.g. Rosary beads, medals, scapulars), icons (e.g. pictures, images, statues), medallions, apparitions, revelations, miracles (e.g. fulfilled prophecies, healings), saints, cathedrals and basilicas, chapels, shrines, altars, pilgrimages, processions, confraternities, communities, monasteries, schools, churches, missions, hospitals, Papal documents, books etc., all in dedicated devotion to Mary.

⁴⁹ Pope Pius IX, *Ubi Primum*, “On the Immaculate Conception,” 2/02/1849, #4. Although often quoted in RC sources, this is probably no longer official RC doctrine. “She [not He] shall crush thy head” (Gen. 3:15) comes from the *Douay Version* via the Vulgate. But it has been admitted and clarified that “the translation ‘she’ of the Vulgate... cannot be defended critically. The conqueror from the seed of the woman, who should crush the serpent’s head, is Christ.” See “Immaculate Conception,” *Catholic Encyclopedia*.

⁵⁰ Pope Leo XIII, *Octobri Mense*, “On the Rosary,” 9/22/1891, ASS 24, 196.

This partially accounts for why most Catholics may pray more to Mary, than to God.⁵¹ J) She is the object of RC worship. The CCC clearly states, “The Church’s devotion to the Blessed Virgin is intrinsic⁵² to Christian worship” (#971). In other words, the *essential nature* of Christian worship is devotion to Mary. But Catholics deny that they worship Mary as they do God. To counter the obvious charge of Mariolatry, RC theologians eventually made a distinction between 1) their *adoration* of the Trinity, 2) their *veneration* of the saints, martyrs and angels, and 3) their *veneration* of Mary by calling such worship by three different terms respectively as 1) latria, 2) dulia and 3) hyperdulia. But each of these terms have for centuries been called *worship* by the Church.⁵³ Pope Leo XIII clearly stated the RC View with these words: “The worship paid [1] to the saints and angels, [2] to the Mother of God, and [3] to Christ Himself, finally redounds to the honor of the Blessed Trinity.”⁵⁴ Even since Vatican II RC “worship” includes veneration “with special love [for] Mary the most holy Mother of God” [and honoring] “with religious devotion the memory of the martyrs and the other saints.... [And] devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary is an indication of the Church’s genuine piety. This devotion fits... into the only worship that is rightly called ‘Christian.’... Indeed every authentic development of Christian worship is necessarily followed by a fitting increase of veneration for the Mother of the Lord.”⁵⁵

Protestant View: All of the aforementioned RC claims about Mary are false and cannot be supported by Scripture. A) Sanctifier of the Church: True believers (the real church) are justified, i.e. declared righteous, by faith *in Christ*. We are positionally holy in Him, not *in Mary*. The righteousness of Christ, not Mary, has been imputed to our accounts (Rom. 4:3-11). In Him, not Mary, we are already referred to as *saints* (1 Cor. 1:2). B) Sinless: Only Christ, the God-Man, and not Mary, was immaculately conceived. And only He, and not Mary, lived without the Adamic nature and without sin. Mary has never been either “*Sinless Mother*” or the “*All-Holy One*.” When Jesus said, “No one is good except God alone” (Lk. 18:19), Mary was still living. Holy Scripture declares, “There is none righteous, not even one.... For all [including Mary] have sinned and fall short of God’s glory” (Rom.3:10, 12, 23). Our Triune God is the only one who is the *Most Holy* or *All-Holy One*, uniquely distinct from all others (Is. 40:25; 43:14-15). C) Ever-Virgin: God’s Word teaches the miraculous virgin-birth of Jesus but not the *perpetual virginity* of Mary. Ample Scripture supports the fact that Joseph and Mary had other children, since Jesus had other siblings, all younger than He.⁵⁶ *Ever-virgin Mary* is just another misnomer. D) Assumed Bodily: Scripture does not support the *bodily assumption* of Mary as though she were exempt from the curse of all

⁵¹ Common Marian prayers (*hyperdulia* worship) include the *Hail Mary*, the *Salve Regina*, the *Seven Dolors*, *Litany of Loreto*, and numberless others - besides all the prayers (*dulia* worship) given to saints and angels.

⁵² *Intrinsic* means, “Of or relating to the *essential nature* of a thing; inherent.” *The American Heritage Dictionary*.

⁵³ Addressing three “degrees of **worship**,” distinction has been made between [1] the “worship of adoration... a worship of latria... due to God alone... [2] “the veneration of martyrs, of angels, or of saints... as the worship of dulia... [and 3] the worship paid to her [the Blessed Virgin]... called hyperdulia” because of her “supereminent rank among the saints.” See “Christian Worship,” *Catholic Encyclopedia*. [Note: RC documents have not consistently made a sharp distinction between the terms *adoration* and *veneration*.]

⁵⁴ Pope Leo XIII, *Divinum Illud Munus*, “Encyclical on the Holy Spirit,” 5/09/1897, #3.

⁵⁵ Pope Paul VI, *Marialis Cultus*, “Apostolic Exhortation for the Right Ordering and Development of Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary,” (2/02/1974). This was obviously *after* the Vatican II Council.

⁵⁶ Matt. 12: 46; 13:55-56; Mk. 3:31; 6:3-4; Lk. 8:19; Jn. 2:12; 7:2-10; Acts 1:14; 1 Co. 9:5; Gal. 1:19.

mankind (Gen. 3:19). E) Sovereign: Only our Triune God is *sovereign* and *Ruler of all*. Mary is not God. And she does not share any of His unique, *holy* attributes! The only *throne of grace and mercy* is God's throne, not Mary's. Mary is no *Queen of heaven*. In fact, it was an abomination to worship the only so-called *queen of heaven* mentioned in Scripture (Jer. 7:18; 44:17-19). F) Our Refuge and Hope: Only God Almighty, not Mary, *is placed in the highest summit of power and glory in Heaven*, and we fly to Him *for refuge* through Christ, not Mary. We put *all our hope and trust* in Him and not in the so-called *Mother of God*. Our God is one God in three persons. He (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) is eternal with no beginning. This God, our God, had/has no mother. Mary was the earthly mother of Jesus, the incarnate Christ. And only in this way has she been divinely blessed with a uniqueness shared by no other creature. G) Her Holy Names: So many of Mary's names and titles assume that she has superhuman divine attributes that in Scripture apply only to God Almighty. God's *holy name* (in all its forms) is holy (Is 57:15), meant to be uniquely applied to Him alone, distinguishing Him from any and all other things and creatures. He is jealous for His holy name (Eze. 39:25) which represents all that He is. That's why we glory in His holy name (Ps. 105:3). Mary's names (in RC teaching) are meant to glorify her as superhumanly unique. But our God is a jealous God who will not share His glory with another, including Mary (Is. 42:8; 48:11). H) Satan's Crusher: As godly as she was, our trust is in God, not in Mary or her so-called *merits*. Jesus Christ Himself, the promised seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15; Gal. 3:16), and not Mary, is the one prophesied to *crush the head of Satan*. I) Mediatrix: Christ, not Mary, is our Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5) and Advocate (1 Jn. 2:1-2) who makes intercession for us (Rom. 8:34) as our glorious High Priest (Heb. 4:14-16). We need no other plea! Our Blessed Comforter and Helper, the Holy Spirit who indwells us, also makes intercession for us (Rom. 8:26-27). And all those who put their trust, confidence and hope in Mary and pray to her have been tragically deceived. She is not God! Only our omniscient God, not Mary, has *the knowledge* to know, see, hear, and receive all the praise and prayers of His people simultaneously worldwide on a 24-7 basis. And only our omnipotent God, not Mary, has *the power* to answer all their requests and meet their every need. In all religions people only pray to those things or people in which or whom they trust, worship, and dedicate themselves.⁵⁷ J) Object of Worship: Obviously, in RC theology, "the *essential nature* of Christian worship⁵⁸ is devotion to Mary." Since Vatican II many Catholics claim they do not worship Mary, or at least they do not worship Mary as they worship God. Yet many, if not most, Catholics pray more to Mary than to any other thing/person.⁵⁹ And prayer is always an act of worship! Prayer is defined as "1)...The act of making a reverent petition to God, a god, or another object of worship. 2) An act of communion with God, a god, or another object of worship, such as in devotion, confession, praise, or thanksgiving. 3) A specially

⁵⁷ Pope John Paul II was only one of many who exemplified complete submission and dedication to Mary when he took as the motto of his Papacy, *Totus tuus* (Totally yours) in exclusive reference to Mary. Even a casual reading of the official papal documents on Mary or, *The Glories of Mary*, by St. Adelphonsus Liguori, will give anyone a better view of what *Marian worship* means. St. Adelphonsus (1696-1787) was a most noted "Doctor of the Church."

⁵⁸ Worship is defined as "1.a. The reverent love and devotion accorded a deity, an idol, or a sacred object. b. The ceremonies, prayers, or other religious forms by which this love is expressed. 2. Ardent devotion; adoration." *American Heritage Dictionary*.

⁵⁹ Possibly the *Hail Marys* are the most-prayed prayers on planet earth. *The Rosary*, which developed by the end of the 16th century, is prayed to Mary (not to God) and involves the repetition of 150 *Hail Marys* in decades of 10, usually assisted by using sacramental, holy beads.

worded form used to address God, a god, or another object of worship.”⁶⁰ Worship is still worship no matter what the RC theologians call it! And worship of anything or any being other than our All-Holy, Triune God is idolatry. This includes any forms of worship of angels, Mary, other saints, their images/icons, and the Eucharist (Sacrament and/or species).⁶¹ That’s why the wise men worshiped only Jesus (Matt. 3:11), not Mary. And Jesus’ words could not be clearer: “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve” (Matt. 4:10). Although God loves people, He hates idolatry! So much of what RC theologians teach in their Mariology is erroneous, as it is in other areas of RC theology, because it is rooted not in the accurate interpretation of Holy Scripture, but in their *Sacred Tradition*. This of course is no problem to them since, in their minds, all of their teaching is based on “the Word of God,” as that phrase is defined in their theology. This gets us to another, and perhaps the most important, theological pillar in the whole RC system. RC *Sacred Tradition* constitutes a major part of the RC *Sacred “Word of God.”*

7. Both Scripture and Tradition Constitute the RC *Word of God*.

RC View: 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” (#78). “The Apostles entrusted the ‘Sacred deposit’ of the faith (the *depositum fidei*) contained in Sacred Scripture and Tradition, to the whole of the Church.... ‘Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture make up a single sacred deposit of the Word of God’” (#84, #97).⁶² Excluding times when the phrase, “Word of God,” is used for Christ, or the written Scriptures, the RC *Word of God* refers to this two-fold, *sacred deposit of the faith*. The CCC states: “Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, then, are bound closely together, and communicate one with the other.... And [Holy] Tradition transmits in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. It transmits it to the successors of the apostles [the Magisterium] so that, enlightened by the Spirit of truth, they may faithfully preserve, expound and spread it abroad by their preaching.’ As a result the Church, to whom the transmission and interpretation of Revelation is entrusted, ‘does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the holy Scriptures alone. Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honoured with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence....’ We believe all ‘that which is contained in the word of God, written or handed down, and which the Church proposes for belief as divinely revealed’” (#86, #182). Of course, most of this RC Sacred Tradition consists of the official, written declarations⁶³ of successive magisteriums that have resulted mostly from

⁶⁰ *The American Heritage Dictionary*.

⁶¹ RC theologians justify their “adoration and worship of the Blessed Sacrament” (#1178) on the basis of transubstantiation. The “*adoration of the Blessed Sacrament*... [as] an important daily practice... becomes an inexhaustible source of holiness.” (Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia De Eucharistia*, #10). A Vatican II document claims that “the Catholic Church... has at all times given to this great Sacrament the worship which is known as Latria, and which may be given to God alone. As St. Augustine says: ‘It was in His flesh that Christ walked among us, and it is His flesh that He has given us to eat for our salvation. No one, however, eats of this flesh without having first adored it... and not only do we not sin in thus adoring it, but we would sin if we did not do so.’” Pope Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei*, Encyclical on the Eucharist, (9/03/1965).

⁶² For more on this, see Pope Paul VI, “*Dei Verbum*, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation” (11/18/1965) from which these CCC quotes were taken. See <http://www.vatican.va/archive/index.htm>

⁶³ Even so, it is not uncommon for RC theologians to refer to Sacred Tradition as “the unwritten Word of God.” Note this example, “The Sacred Scriptures form a part of divine revelation; the other part being contained in the

the 21 “ecumenical” councils of church history. That’s why the RC Code of Canon Law (*CCL*) insists that “the ministry of the word... must be based upon sacred scripture, tradition, liturgy, the magisterium, and the life of the Church.”⁶⁴ That’s the law!

Then, too, the RC “Holy Scripture” contains extrabiblical revelation in the form of apocryphal books which protestants reject as non-canonical. The RC claim is that the “canon of Scripture... includes 46 books for the Old Testament,” not 39. Included in the RC Old Testament are apocryphal writings such as the books of Tobit, Judith, 1 and 2 Maccabees, the Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach (or Ecclesiasticus), and Baruch (#120).⁶⁵ These writings are also venerated “as true Word of God” (#123).⁶⁶ What about those of us who sincerely reject the apocryphal books as *Sacred Scripture*? The Vatican I magisterium under Pope Pius IX has made it clear: “If anyone does not receive as sacred and canonical the complete books of Sacred Scripture with all their parts [including apocryphal writings as here listed], as the holy Council of Trent listed them, or denies that they were divinely inspired: let him be anathema.”⁶⁷ Officially recognized apparitions of Mary are also a source of extra-biblical revelation. Many of her admonitions and prophecies are accepted as part of the divine revelation of so-called *Sacred Tradition*.

Protestant View: Protestants teach that the Holy Scriptures, consisting of 66 books, were completed in the first century AD. Only these original writings were divinely inspired of the Holy Spirit. And thus only these 66 books are sacred as *the Word of God*. All other writings, as significant as they may be for historical record, are not to be considered as a part of God’s Word, the Holy Scripture. They are all extrabiblical, uninspired writings. If historical “Sacred Tradition” is a part of “the Word of God” then God’s Word is not only incomplete but is continually being changed through the life and ministry of “the Church.” And if it can be changed, how can it be trusted? Over centuries of church history, numerous additions, and changes in the RC “Word of God” have been made by various Popes and Ecumenical Councils. For example, Pope Pius IX officially added to the RC “Word of God” the doctrine of Mary’s immaculate conception and sinlessness.⁶⁸ And 15 years later at Vatican I, the same Pope officially dogmatized the doctrine of the Pope’s infallibility. Both of these key RC doctrines changed the RC “Word of God” because previous RC magisteriums had rejected both doctrines. Which Popes and which Magisteriums should be trusted as infallible? That’s very important because the Magisterium, which local RC priests represent, is the only “teaching authority” available to RC adherents. RC insistence

depository of the Church and designated as the unwritten word of God.” From “Preface” to the *Douay Version*.

⁶⁴ *Code of Canon Law*, #760. http://arcc-catholic-rights.net/code_of_canon_law_1983.htm

⁶⁵ RC Bibles include other apocryphal additions as well: “The Rest of Esther” goes from Esther 10:4-16:24; “The Song of the Three Holy Children” is inserted after Daniel 3:23; “The History of Susanna” and “Bel and the Dragon” make up Daniel 13 and 14. See the *Douay Version*.

⁶⁶ This is important since, for instance, RC teaching regarding “praying for the dead” in purgatory is partially supported by magisterial teaching of “Sacred Scripture” found in 2 Maccabees 12:46 (#1032).

⁶⁷ Pope Pius IX, *Dogmatic constitution on the Catholic faith*; Canons, “On Revelation,” VI, Session 3, (24 April 1870) #4. www.ewtn.com/library/COUNCILS/VI.HTM#4

⁶⁸ “In the Constitution *Ineffabilis Deus* of 8 December 1854, Pius IX pronounced and defined that the Blessed Virgin Mary ‘in the first instance of her conception, by a singular privilege and grace granted by God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the human race, was preserved exempt from all stain of original sin.’” From *Catholic Encyclopedia*, “Immaculate Conception.” www.newadvent.org/cathen/07674d.htm

that their Sacred Tradition forms a part of the infallible Word of God is especially crucial since all the other foundational theological pillars rest mostly on that so called *source of revelation*.

CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY:

In “Roman Catholicism Part One: we have briefly discussed seven related foundational pillars on which the complex RC program of salvation is built. They are these: 1) The RC Church is the one and only true church; That’s because 2) The Apostle Peter was the first Pope with authority over the Apostles and the Church universal; And 3) All Popes and Bishops respectively have the same power as Peter and the Apostles through “apostolic succession”; 4) Successive Magisteriums (the RC Popes and bishops under them) have been the only teaching authority in the Church universal; 5) The RC Magisterium is infallible in matters of faith and morals; 6) Mary is unique in sharing many divine attributes with the Trinity, and is therefore worshiped by the RC Church; and 7) The RC “Word of God” includes both Scripture and RC Tradition, which has developed and changed by successive magisteriums and Popes over the centuries of church history.

All these pillars stand or fall together. None are grounded on the firm foundation of Holy Scripture. Although much Scripture is used in vain to support them, they are grounded mostly on the shifting sands of RC tradition. Yet they are foundational to the vast and complicated RC soteriology, which has drastically garbled the saving message of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. And this is of great concern, especially 1) in light of *past* developments in the move toward a unified one-world church, 2) in light of the *present* ecumenical pressures of our time in which differences between “evangelicals” are swept under the rug for the sake of political correctness and church unity, and 3) in light of the *future* fulfillment of biblical prophecy for these last days.

There are other major RC theological pillars including these three: 1) “Outside the [RC] Church there is no salvation;”⁶⁹ 2) The RC Sacraments, especially the Eucharist, is the source of life and grace/graces needed for one’s justification and 3) The RC Liturgy, which is essential for the administration of the Sacraments, is “the font from which all her [the RC Church] power flows” (#1074). But, since these pillars have to do mostly with RC Soteriology, they will be discussed in “Roman Catholicism — Part Two; Conditions for Salvation.” Essentially *Part Two* will constitute a partial RC response to the Philippian jailor’s question, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

⁶⁹ This is the boldface subtitle just following (#845) and just before (#846) in the CCC.