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CHURCH

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THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT JESUS IS TRULY PRESENT IN THE EUCHARIST

John 6:53 "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."

Protestants do not believe that the Eucharist is the actual body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ. Catholics believe that after the consecration at Mass, "the Lord Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is truly, really, and substantially contained" in the Eucharist under the appearance of bread and wine (*Council of Trent, Decree on the Eucharist*). The Catholic view of the Eucharist was unanimously held for the first 1,500 years of Christianity. The biblical support for the Catholic teaching on the Eucharist is overwhelming and undeniable.

IN JOHN CHAPTER 6, JESUS CLEARLY SAYS THAT HIS FLESH IS FOOD AND HIS BLOOD IS DRINK, AND THAT YOU MUST EAT HIS FLESH AND DRINK HIS BLOOD

John 6:51-58 "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and **the bread that I will give is my flesh**, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. **Whosoever eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life**; and I will raise him up at the last day. **For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.** This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever."

Jesus says over and over again, in the clearest terms, that His flesh is food and His blood is drink. He says that unless you eat His flesh and drink His blood you shall not have life in you.

THE JEWS SCOFFED AT THE NOTION OF EATING HIS FLESH; IN RESPONSE, JESUS CONFIRMS THAT THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT HE MEANT

Non-Catholics claim that the words of Jesus in John 6 are not meant to be understood literally. They claim that Jesus was speaking only metaphorically or symbolically. Such an interpretation is not justified by the context of John 6. Furthermore, it is clearly refuted by what Jesus said to the Jews immediately after

expressed their disbelief at the idea of eating His flesh.

John 6:52-53 “The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, **How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.**”

The Jews did not believe that it was possible (or that Jesus could really mean) that He would give them His flesh to eat. They said exactly what the Protestants are saying today. If Jesus had been speaking in purely metaphorical (rather than literal) terms, as the Protestants say, then here was the perfect opportunity for Him to assure them that their fears were unfounded. It was the perfect moment for Jesus to explain that He didn't really mean that people would eat His flesh, but that He meant something else.

So what does Jesus say to them? In response to their disbelief, we see that Jesus repeats the same message, that it's necessary to actually eat His flesh and drink His blood, but in even stronger terms. He tells them that if they don't eat His flesh and drink His blood they will not have life in them (John 6:53).

THERE'S MORE: IN JOHN 6:54, THE BIBLE SWITCHES FROM THE WORD *PHAGO* (MEANING “EAT”) TO *TROGO* (MEANING “CHEW” OR “GNAW”) TO LEAVE NO DOUBT THAT JESUS ACTUALLY MEANS EATING HIS FLESH

The word *phago* (meaning “to eat” or “consume”) is used nine times in the original Greek text of John 6:23-53. *Phago* is sufficient to convey the idea of eating Jesus' flesh. Immediately after the Jews expressed their disbelief that Jesus could mean such a thing, we read (in John 6:54) that Jesus switched to an even stronger and more graphic word. **The word He then used (in John 6:54 and following) is *trogo*. This word literally means “to gnaw, chew or crunch,”** as even a Protestant study bible accessible on the internet will confirm.¹ Therefore, to eradicate all doubt about the necessity to eat His flesh, Jesus switches to a word which means nothing but literal eating (“gnawing, chewing”). The same word *trogo* is used to mean literal eating in Matthew 24:38 and John 13:18.

John 6:54-56 “Whosoever eateth [*trogo*] my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth [*trogo*] my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.”

In light of this evidence, it is absurd to argue that Jesus didn't mean that people

1 <http://www.studylight.org/lex/grk/view.cgi?number=5176>

would actually eat His flesh and drink His blood.

WHAT ABOUT JOHN 6:63?

Faced with the overwhelming evidence in John 6 that the Eucharist is the actual body and blood of Jesus, certain non-Catholics will look for anything to combat it. They will point to John 6:63.

John 6:63 “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”

They claim this indicates that Jesus didn't really mean that people will eat His flesh. This claim does not hold up, however. It is refuted by the following points.

First, we know that Jesus is not talking about His flesh in the part of the verse where He says “the flesh profits nothing.” Consider this question: is the flesh of Jesus of no profit? What about His Incarnation? How could He speak of His own flesh as profiting nothing, when He just said over and over (John 6:51, etc.) that His flesh is the life of the world?

If Jesus was speaking of His flesh when He said that the flesh profits nothing, then He was contradicting Himself. Jesus would have been saying that His flesh is the life of the world (John 6:51, etc.) just before telling them that “it profits nothing.”

That's impossible and ridiculous. Jesus was not speaking of His flesh when He said “the flesh profits nothing.”

Second, Jesus says that people need to eat His flesh and drink His blood (and that His flesh is food) approximately ten times in this chapter. Not once does He indicate that His meaning is not literal; nor does He do so here.

Rather, by emphasizing to them that what He said about His flesh and blood is “spirit and life,” Jesus was dispelling their notion that all they should be concerned with is having flesh to eat for the sustenance of physical life. **The Eucharist is the actual flesh and blood of Jesus (as He makes clear), as well as His soul and divinity, but it primarily brings a spiritual endowment.** It is spirit and life. It is primarily for the sustenance of spiritual life and having eternal life.

It is not received for the purpose of filling a hungry stomach, but for the inestimable spiritual life and graces that it brings. That's what Jesus was telling them. This is confirmed by the next point, which shows that *even after His words in John 6:63*, many of Jesus' followers left Him over the “hard saying” about His flesh and blood.

They realized that Jesus was telling them that they must eat His flesh and drink His blood, but they simply refused to accept it.

AFTER TELLING THEM THAT THEY MUST EAT HIS FLESH AND DRINK HIS BLOOD, MANY OF HIS DISCIPLES LEFT HIM; THIS PROVES THAT IT WAS CLEAR TO ALL PRESENT THAT JESUS SAID AND MEANT THAT PEOPLE MUST EAT HIS FLESH

John 6:60-68 **“Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is a hard saying; who can hear it? When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? ... From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.** Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.”

If Jesus did not really mean that people would eat His flesh and drink His blood, then He would have clarified His meaning and stopped these disciples from leaving Him over a misunderstanding. He would have said something like this: *“Wait, you misunderstood me. I was only speaking symbolically. I didn’t really mean that people would eat my flesh and drink my blood.”* But He doesn’t do anything of the sort. He lets everyone who cannot accept His message walk away. This is an overwhelming contextual indication that everyone understood that Jesus was speaking literally of the necessity to eat His flesh and drink His blood. They simply couldn’t accept it, and Jesus wasn’t going to deny the truth or modify what He had told them.

The fact that many of Jesus’ followers left Him over the necessity to eat His flesh and drink His blood is sadly illustrative of how this issue would, at different times in Church history, be a prime cause of people leaving the true faith of Jesus. It happened again in the 16th century, when many left Jesus and His true faith because they refused to believe that the Eucharist is the actual body and blood of Jesus Christ.

PROTESTANTS ADMIT THAT THE BLOOD OF THE PASSOVER LAMB MENTIONED IN EXODUS 12, WHICH THE HEBREWS HAD TO MARK THEIR DOORS WITH, SIGNIFIES JESUS AS THE LAMB OF GOD SLAIN FOR THE SINS OF THE WORLD; THEY DON’T REALIZE THAT GOD ALSO COMMANDED THE HEBREWS **TO EAT** THE PASSOVER LAMB

In Exodus 12 we read that God commanded the Jews to mark their doors with the blood of a lamb. The angel of death, passing through Egypt, would pass over the doors of the Hebrews which were marked with the blood.

Exodus 12:13 “And the blood shall be unto you for a sign in the houses where you shall be: and **I shall see the blood, and shall pass over you**: and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I shall strike the land of Egypt.”

Protestants and Catholics readily acknowledge that the blood of the Passover lamb (a real event) was also a type (a foreshadowing) of Jesus Christ, the true Passover Lamb. He is the true Lamb who was slain. His blood was poured out to save the world. People must receive the merit of His passion to be saved. The New Testament repeatedly declares that Jesus is the “Lamb of God” who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29; 1 Peter 1:19; Rev. 22:1; Rev. 15:3; etc.). St. Paul specifically describes Jesus as the Passover lamb in 1 Corinthians 5:7.

1 Corinthians 5:7 “Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even **Christ our passover** is sacrificed for us.”

John 1:29 “The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, **Behold the Lamb of God**, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

There can be no doubt that the blood of the Passover lamb is a type of the blood of Jesus Christ, and that **the Passover lamb is a type of Jesus Christ**. Now here’s the interesting part as it pertains to this issue. The Hebrews were not only commanded to mark their doors with the blood of the lamb; but they were also commanded to eat the lamb!

Exodus 12:7-8 “And they shall take of the blood [of the lamb], and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein **they shall eat it**. And they shall eat the flesh in that night...”

Exodus 12:11 “And thus **shall ye eat it**; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord’s passover.”

The necessity to consume the Passover lamb shows us the necessity to eat the flesh of the Son of man in the Eucharist. It isn’t enough to be marked with the blood of the Lamb; one must also consume the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, to be saved. It’s necessary to receive Him in the Eucharist. He becomes present at a valid Catholic Mass. It’s also interesting that no one who was not of the family of God could eat the lamb (Exodus 12:43-45), just like no one who is not of the true faith can receive the Eucharist.

JESUS WORKED THE MIRACLE OF THE LOAVES AND FISHES THE DAY

BEFORE TELLING THEM OF THE EUCHARIST IN ORDER TO SHOW EVERYONE THAT MIRACULOUS SUPERABUNDANCE IS POSSIBLE

In the very same chapter that Jesus speaks so clearly of receiving His flesh and blood in the Eucharist, we read that He performed the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes.

John 6:9-14 "... five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many? And Jesus said, Make the men sit down... So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would. When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten. Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world."

5,000 people miraculously ate from what began as five barley loaves and two fishes. Jesus performed this miracle the very day before He told them that they must receive His flesh and blood in the Eucharist. By working this miracle just before He told them that they must receive His flesh and blood in the Eucharist, Jesus intended to show them that such a thing is possible. For the concept of eating Jesus' flesh and blood was completely new and mind-boggling to them. In the same way, the idea that He would miraculously become present for people in many places was astonishing. The miraculous multiplication of the food was intended to dispel their doubt, to win their complete confidence in His words before telling them about the miracle of the Eucharist. The multiplication of the food indeed signified the miraculous food of the Eucharist, which is not bread but the body and blood of Christ.

THE EUCHARIST CANNOT BE JUST ORDINARY BREAD; OTHERWISE IT WOULD BE INFERIOR TO ITS OLD TESTAMENT TYPE; THE MANNA IN THE DESERT, WHICH APPEARED SUPERNATURALLY

There can be no doubt that the manna in the desert (Exodus 16) prefigured the Eucharist. Jesus makes a connection between the two in John chapter 6.

John 6:48-51 "I am that bread of life. **Your fathers did eat manna** in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. **I am the living bread** which came down from heaven... and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give

for the life of the world.”

Jesus makes reference to the manna in the desert, and then says that His flesh is the true manna from Heaven. The manna in the desert was bread, but bread which appeared miraculously. It fell every day, except Saturday, for the 40 years that the Hebrews were in the desert. It showed up as if it had fallen from Heaven.

Exodus 16:15 “And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another: Manhu! which signifieth: What is this! for they knew not what it was. And Moses said to them: This is the bread, which the Lord hath given you to eat.”

The New Testament fulfillment is greater than the Old Testament type. If, as the Protestants say, the Eucharist is just ordinary bread, then it would be inferior to the manna in the desert, which appeared miraculously. It would be inferior to its Old Testament type. That doesn't make sense; it cannot be the case. The Eucharist must be supernatural and miraculous in some way.

JESUS SAYS: “THIS IS MY BODY” AND “THIS IS MY BLOOD”; HE DOESN'T SAY:
THIS IS JUST A SYMBOL OF MY BODY AND BLOOD

Matthew 26:26-28 “And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; **this is my body**. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for **this is my blood** of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

Mark 14:22-24 “And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: **this is my body**. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, **This is my blood** of the new testament, which is shed for many.”

Luke 22:19-20 “And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, **This is my body** which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, **This cup is the new testament in my blood**, which is shed for you.”

The translations above are from the Protestant King James version of the Bible. Even the Protestant translations show that Jesus proclaims the Eucharist to be His body and His blood. There were many ways in Hebrew or Aramaic for Jesus to say “this represents my body,” or “this is a symbol of my body,” but He doesn't. He says “this is my body” and “this is my blood.”

Moreover, contrary to what some think, the words “do this in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19) do not suggest that the Eucharist is just a symbol. The Greek word for “remembrance” is *anamnesis*. It has a sacrificial meaning. It’s one of the sacrificial offerings of the Old Testament. It means to make present again as a sacrificial offering. Jesus is telling them to offer His actual body and blood to the Father as a memorial sacrifice.

JESUS’ LANGUAGE CORRESPONDS TO THAT OF MOSES IN EXODUS 24, IN THE FOUNDING OF THE FIRST COVENANT, WHICH HAD REAL BLOOD

The institution of the Eucharist (which we read about in Matthew 26, Mark 14, and Luke 22) clearly corresponds to the institution of the first covenant in Exodus 24.

Exodus 24:8 “And **Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you** concerning all these words.”

Matthew 26:26-28 “And as they were eating, **Jesus took bread**, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. **And he took the cup**, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; **for this is my blood of the new testament**, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

Notice the similarity of language between the institutions of the two covenants. Jesus institutes the New Covenant in His blood on the same pattern that Moses instituted the first covenant. The New Covenant of Jesus takes the place of the Old, and it will be the New and Everlasting covenant. But if the blood referred to by Jesus isn’t real blood – but just a symbol, as the Protestants say – then the New Covenant would be inferior to the Old; for the institution of the Old Covenant involved real blood.

1 CORINTHIANS 10 CLEARLY TEACHES THAT THE EUCHARIST IS A PARTICIPATION IN THE ACTUAL BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST

1 Corinthians 10:16 “**The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?**”

St. Paul is clear that the Eucharist is the actual body and blood of Jesus Christ.

1 CORINTHIANS 11 SAYS THAT TO RECEIVE THE EUCHARIST UNWORTHILY IS TO SIN AGAINST THE ACTUAL BODY AND BLOOD OF THE LORD

1 Corinthians 11:26-29 “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come. Wherefore **whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.** But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. **For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.**”

According to the clear teaching of the Bible, one who receives the Eucharist unworthily is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. St. Paul says that a person eats and drinks damnation by receiving the Eucharist without the proper dispositions and discernment. If the Eucharist is just a piece of bread and some wine, taken in memory of Christ, how could one who receives it improperly be found guilty of the body and blood of the Lord? One would obviously not be held guilty of the body and blood of Christ unless the Eucharist is indeed the body and blood of Christ.

THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH UNANIMOUSLY BELIEVED THAT THE EUCHARIST IS THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST

Besides the clear biblical evidence we’ve seen, the witness of the ancient Church unanimously supports Catholic teaching on the Eucharist. Anyone who takes time to consult the fathers of the Church on this point will discover that they all believed that the Eucharist is the body and blood of Jesus Christ. The fathers of the Church are the Christian writers from the earliest centuries. They are those who received the tradition of the Apostles.

The Protestant view of the Eucharist was foreign to the entire Christian Church for the first 1,500 years of its existence. I could quote many passages from the fathers of the Church on this matter, but I will only quote three. In 110 A.D., St. Ignatius of Antioch (one of the apostolic fathers generally acknowledged by Protestants) said the following about a group of heretics who denied that the Eucharist is the flesh of Christ. He was referring to the Docetists, who also denied the reality of the Incarnation and the Crucifixion.

St. Ignatius of Antioch, *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans*, Chapter 7, 110 A.D. “**They abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer, because they confess not the Eucharist to be the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ**, which suffered for our sins, and which the Father, of His goodness, raised up again.”

St. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book 5, Chap. 2, 185 A.D. “When, therefore, the mixed cup and the baked bread receives the Word of God **and becomes the**

Eucharist, the body of Christ, and from these the substance of our flesh is increased and supported, how can they say that the flesh is not capable of receiving the gift of God, which is eternal life-flesh which is **nourished by the body and blood of the Lord**, and is in fact a member of him?”

St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Discourses, Mystagogic 1*, 19:7, 350 A.D.
“For as the Bread and Wine of the Eucharist before the invocation of the Holy and Adorable Trinity were simple bread and wine, while after the invocation the Bread becomes the Body of Christ, and the Wine the Blood of Christ...”
(<http://mb-soft.com/believe/txuc/cyril48.htm>)

To deny the Catholic teaching on the Eucharist is simply to deny the clear teaching of Jesus Christ and the Bible.

THE BIBLICAL BASIS FOR PRAYING TO MARY AND FOR CATHOLIC TEACHINGS ON MARY

The Blessed Virgin Mary is the mother of Jesus Christ. Contrary to the claims of some, the Catholic Church does not teach and has never taught that Mary is God. That would be heresy. Mary is just a creature, but the greatest of all the human beings ever created by God. Please look at this biblical evidence for the Catholic teachings about Mary, and why it's so necessary to understand her role and importance.

To understand the Bible and what it teaches about Mary (the mother of Jesus Christ), one must understand Biblical types.

Type = a true event, person or institution in the Old Testament which foreshadows or prefigures something in the New Testament.

THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT ADAM, THE FIRST MAN, WAS A TYPE OF JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ was true God and true man. Adam was only a man, the first man. However, the Bible says that Adam was a type of the one who was to come, Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:14 “Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of **Adam's transgression, who is the figure [type] of him that was to come [Jesus].**”

How was Adam a type of Jesus? It's perhaps best summed up in this passage.

Romans 5:19 “For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”

Adam plunged the world into sin; Christ came to redeem the world from Adam's sin. Adam sinned by his disobedience at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; Christ redeemed the world by His obedience and sacrifice on the tree of the Cross. That's why the Bible says that Christ is the new or second or last Adam. He came to undo what Adam did. He became the head of the new and redeemed race of those who supernaturally live in Christ, whereas Adam, the first man, was the head of humanity which fell into sin.

THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE SECOND ADAM

1 Corinthians 15:45 “And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; **the last Adam** was made a quickening spirit.”

There are many biblical types. Keep in mind that all of these events, persons and things were *real* events, persons and things which also prefigured something that would come later. Here are a few examples:

1 Cor. 10:1-2 – The Bible teaches that the Crossing of the Red Sea (Exodus 14) prefigured baptism.

1 Peter 3:19-21 – The Bible teaches that Noah’s Ark and the Great Flood prefigured being saved by baptism and the Church.

1 Cor. 5:7 – The Bible teaches that the Passover Lamb, which was sacrificed (Exodus 12), prefigured Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29).

Heb. 8:8-9 – The Bible teaches that the Old Testament system was a “shadow” or figure of the New Testament.

Matthew 12:40 – The Bible teaches that Jonas’ three days and nights in the belly of the whale prefigured Jesus Christ’s Resurrection from the dead after three days.

Many other examples of biblical types could be given. It’s important to understand that the fulfillment of a type (called an “antitype”) is greater than the type. Jesus Christ is infinitely greater than Adam; the New Testament is greater than the Old; the Resurrection is greater than the travails of Jonas; etc. With that in mind, we must now consider types of Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ. There are many types of Mary. In addition to other biblical evidence, these types provide undeniable biblical proof for Catholic teachings about Mary. The following points will undoubtedly be new and surprising to many non-Catholics.

AS CHRIST IS THE NEW ADAM, **MARY IS THE NEW EVE**

As mentioned already, Adam was a type of Jesus Christ. There was a distinct woman who was involved with Adam, the first man, in the downfall of the world into sin. That was Eve, the first woman. It was Adam’s transgression which constituted the original sin. But Eve was instrumental and inextricably bound up with the events leading up to the original sin. The woman (Eve) sinned and was the occasion for Adam to sin.

Genesis 3:1-6 “Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto **the woman**, Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. **And the serpent said unto the woman**, Ye

shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, **she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.**”

Just as “the woman” (Eve) was intimately involved in the events leading up to the original sin, there is a distinct woman who was intimately involved in the events leading up to the Redemption. That is Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ. She is the new Eve.

There are numerous clear parallels in the Bible between Eve and Mary. These demonstrate that Mary is the new Eve, as Christ is the new Adam.

EVE COMMUNICATED WITH, BELIEVED AND OBEYED A FALLEN ANGEL (THE SERPENT) –
MARY COMMUNICATED WITH, BELIEVED AND OBEYED A GOOD ANGEL (GABRIEL)

Genesis 3:4-6 “**And the serpent said unto the woman**, ye shall not surely die... she **[Eve] took** of the fruit thereof, **and did eat...**”

Luke 1:26-38 “... **the angel Gabriel** was sent from God into a city of Galilee... to a virgin... and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel being come in, **said unto her**: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women... And the angel said to her: Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus... **And Mary said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word.** And the angel departed from her.”

Eve was approached by the serpent (the Devil), a fallen angel. Eve believed his lying words and disobeyed God. Eve sinned and caused her husband to sin, plunging the world into death.

Mary was approached by Gabriel, a good angel. Mary believed his message of salvation: that she was blessed among women, full of grace, and would bring forth the Savior. Mary obeyed God. By her obedience, she consented to the conception of Jesus Christ in her womb, and enabled Him to come and redeem the world from Adam's sin.

Even in the very ancient Church, these biblical parallels were recognized as identifications of Mary as the new Eve, just as Christ is the new Adam. St. Irenaeus was a famous apostolic father from the second century. He contrasts the first Eve with the second Eve (Mary).

St. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book III, Chap. 22, 185 A.D. "In accordance with this design, **Mary the Virgin is found obedient**, saying, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to your word (Luke 1:38). **But Eve was disobedient**; for she did not obey when as yet she was a virgin... **And thus also it was that the knot of Eve's disobedience was loosed by the obedience of Mary. For what the virgin Eve had bound fast through unbelief, this did the virgin Mary set free through faith.**"

EVE WAS THE MOTHER OF ALL THE LIVING –
MARY, AS MOTHER OF JESUS, IS THE MOTHER OF ALL THE LIVING AND EVEN
OF LIFE ITSELF

Genesis 3:20 "And Adam **called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all the living.**"

Eve was called the "mother of all the living" because all who had life descended from her. Mary is also the mother of all the living, but indeed in a greater way. Mary is the mother of Jesus Christ, who is Life itself and in whom all life is to be found.

John 1:4 "In him [Jesus] was life; and the life was the light of men."

Matthew 1:16 "Mary, of whom was born Jesus..."

John 14:6 "Jesus saith unto him, **I am** the way, the truth, and **the life**: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

Jesus is the Life. Mary is, therefore, literally the mother of Life itself. The parallel to Eve, the mother of all the living, is clear. The difference is that Mary is the mother of a Life that is infinitely greater than human existence. Those who live and die in her Son have access to eternal life in Him and become new creatures.

2 Corinthians 5:17 "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."

The fulfillment (Mary as mother of all the living) is again greater than the type (Eve as mother of all the living).

EVE WAS CREATED WITHOUT ANY SIN –

THE NEW EVE, MARY, ALSO HAD TO BE CREATED WITHOUT ANY SIN (IMMACULATELY CONCEIVED)

We've seen that the Bible indicates that Mary is the new Eve. So the question is: **in what state was the soul of Eve created? Eve was created in Genesis 2 free from all sin. The entire creation was perfect until the fall of mankind.** Adam and Eve were both created in a state of original justice. They didn't lose that state of original perfection, in which they were free from all sin, until the original sin in Genesis 3.

If God created the first woman (the first Eve) without any sin, then He could certainly create the second (and greater) Eve (the Blessed Virgin Mary) without any sin. That's exactly what He did. He had to do so as a matter of proportion and justice because she would be the first member of the redeemed humanity.

DEFINITION OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Pope Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*, Dec. 8, 1854 "We declare, pronounce, and define that the doctrine which holds that the most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instant of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by Almighty God, **in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin**, is a doctrine revealed by God and therefore to be believed firmly and constantly by all the faithful."

Some mistakenly think that the Immaculate Conception refers to the miraculous conception of Jesus in the womb of the Virgin Mary. That's not correct. Jesus was indeed conceived without any sin in the womb of Mary, but the Immaculate Conception refers to the conception of Mary in the womb of her mother. From the very first instant of her creation, she was preserved from any stain of original sin, which every other member of the human race (except Jesus) inherits.

God preserved her without sin in view of the saving merits of Jesus Christ. It was done for Mary because she had to be the uncursed and pure vessel which would carry the all-holy God. In order to carry infinite holiness, Mary had to be holy from the first instant of her creation.

JESUS SAVED MARY IN A GREATER WAY

So, if Mary was preserved from the stain of the original sin, does that mean that she didn't have a Savior? No. Mary answers that herself.

Luke 1:46-47 "And Mary said, my soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath

rejoiced in God my Savior.”

God saved Mary by preventing her from contracting original sin. Suppose that a man falls into a deep hole in the forest, but is pulled out by his friend. It is true to say that the friend saved the man. Now suppose a man sees a woman walking toward the deep hole, and catches her just before she falls in. He stops her from falling into the hole in the first place, so that she doesn't get injured or dirty at all. Did he save the woman? Certainly he did. He saved her in a greater way, by preventing her from falling into the hole and suffering any of the harmful consequences.

That's how God saved Mary. Jesus was her Savior in an even greater way, by preventing her from ever contracting original sin, and by preserving her from sin throughout her life. He did this for Mary, in view of her unique role. The sinlessness of Mary is indicated by numerous types in the Bible.

Some express disbelief at the notion that God would create someone completely free from sin. They are forgetting that God created the first man and woman without sin.

THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT MARY IS THE ARK OF THE NEW COVENANT

We will now see that the Bible without any doubt identifies Mary as the Ark of the New Testament. It identifies Mary as the New Testament counterpart to the Ark of the Old Testament. Mary is the new and greater fulfillment of what was prefigured by the Ark of the Old Testament. This information is some of the most important and revealing about Mary's profound role.

Since it carried and represented the presence of God, **the Ark of the Old Covenant/Testament was the holiest and most powerful thing on Earth outside of God Himself**. The Ark of the Covenant was a sacred chest which contained the stone tablets of the Ten Commandments (Deuteronomy 10:5). The Ark also carried and represented the spiritual presence of God on Earth. When God spoke to Moses, it was from between the two cherubim which were on the Ark.

Numbers 7:89 “And when Moses went into the tent of meeting **to speak with the Lord, he heard the voice speaking to him from above the mercy seat that was upon the ark** of the testimony, from between the two cherubim; and it spoke to him.”

Exodus 25:21-22 “And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and **in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee** from above the mercy seat, **from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark** of the testimony, of

all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.”

Let’s now look at how the Bible identifies Mary as the Ark of the New Covenant.

The Ark of the Old Covenant	The Virgin Mary
Contained the written word of God (Deut. 10:5)	Contained the Word of God made flesh, Jesus (Jn. 1:1)

Jesus Christ is the Word of God made flesh (John 1:1). So, just as the Ark of the Old Covenant contained the written word of God, Mary (who is the Ark of the New Covenant) contained the Word of God made flesh.

Apocalypse (Revelation) 19:13 “And he [Jesus] was clothed with a garment sprinkled with blood; and *his name is called, the Word of God.*”

The Ark of the Old Covenant	The Virgin Mary
Was “overshadowed” by the power and presence of God (Exodus 40:34-35)	Was “overshadowed” by the power and presence of the Most High (Luke 1:35)

The tabernacle was constructed to contain the holy Ark (Exodus 40:2-3). When God would come down upon the tabernacle and the Ark to speak to Moses, we read in Exodus 40:34-35 that God’s glory cloud or visible presence (called the “Shekinah”) “overshadowed” it. The rare word which is used to describe how this unique presence of God would “overshadow” the Ark is *episkiasei* in the Greek translation of the Old Testament.

Exodus 40:34-35 “Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting, because the cloud **overshadowed it**, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.”

The very same word “episkiasei” is used in the Greek of the New Testament to describe how the presence of God will “overshadow” the Virgin Mary. The Bible uses this language only about the Ark and about Mary.

Luke 1:35 “And the angel answered and said unto her, **The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee:** therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”

The clear implication is that the presence of God overshadows Mary and comes down upon her – since she is the New Ark – just as it overshadowed the Ark of the Old Covenant. This reveals that Mary, while just a creature and infinitely less than

God, is the new Ark. She thus has a unique connection to God, a unique holiness, sanctification and power.

THE AMAZING EVIDENCE FROM 2 SAMUEL 6 AND LUKE 1 THAT MARY IS THE ARK OF THE NEW COVENANT

Consider the amazing parallels that Scripture gives us between what happened to the Ark of the Old Covenant in 2 Samuel 6 (2 Kings 6 in the Douay-Rheims Catholic Bible), and what happened to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Ark of the New Covenant, in chapter 1 of Luke’s Gospel. 2 Samuel 6 is the most complete story in the Bible concerning the Ark of the Old Covenant. Luke 1 is the most complete story in the Bible concerning the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Ark of the Old Covenant	The Virgin Mary
2 Samuel 6:9 “David feared the Lord that day and said, How can the ark of the Lord come to me? ”	Luke 1:43 “[Elizabeth said]: And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ”

David says: “How shall the Ark of the Lord come to me?” while Elizabeth asks how is it “that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” Elizabeth says the same thing to Mary that David said about the Ark because Mary is the Ark of the New Covenant. The only difference between the two statements is literally that “mother” is used where Ark was used. The Bible is telling us that **the mother of the Lord = the Ark**. This is confirmed without any doubt as we carry the story further.

David Leapt Before the Ark	The Infant Leapt in the presence of Mary
2 Samuel 6:16 “ As the ark of the Lord was entering the City of David, Saul’s daughter Michal looked down through the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord... ”	Luke 1:41-44 “And it came to pass, that, when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost... For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. ”

David leapt before the Ark, just as the infant in Elizabeth’s womb leapt before Mary (the new Ark).

The Ark stayed for three months	Mary (the Ark) stayed for three months
2 Samuel 6:11 “ The ark of the Lord remained in the house of Obedom the Gittite for three months , and the Lord <u>blessed</u> Obedom and his whole house.”	Luke 1:56-57 “ Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home. Now Elizabeth’s full time of being delivered was come, and she <u>brought forth a son.</u> ”

In 2 Samuel 6, we read that the Ark stayed with Obededom the Gittite for three months. Likewise, in Luke 1, we read that Mary (the Ark of the New Covenant) stayed with Elizabeth for three months.

2 Samuel 6:11 also mentions that the Lord blessed Obededom and his house while the Ark was present. "Blessing" in Scripture frequently indicates fruitful offspring. In this fact we see another parallel to Luke 1 and Mary. For Luke 1:57 tells us that after Mary stayed with Elizabeth, the Lord blessed her and her house with the birth of a child, John the Baptist.

David set out to fetch the Ark from Judah This occurred when Mary (the Ark) went to Judah

<p>2 Samuel 6:2 "Then David and all the people who were with him set out for Baala of Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, which bears the name of the Lord of hosts enthroned above the cherubim."</p>	<p>Luke 1:39-40 "During those days Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth."</p>
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As we read here, these incredible parallels occurred when David set out for the hill country of Judah to fetch the Ark (2 Samuel 6:2), and when Mary, the Ark of the New Covenant, went to the hill country of Judah (Luke 1:39).

The Book of Revelation (Apocalypse) also indicates that Mary is the Ark of the New Covenant

<p>Revelation 11:19, 12:1 "And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and <u>there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament</u>: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail. [12:1] <u>And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman</u> clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars."</p>

The Bible was not written with any chapters or verses indicated. It wasn't until the 12th century that the Bible was divided into chapters and verses. Therefore, the author of Revelation, St. John the Apostle, wrote what begins chapter 12 in one continuous stream immediately after what ends chapter 11. At the end of chapter 11, we read that the Ark of Jesus' testament/covenant was seen in Heaven. The very next verse is Revelation 12:1. Therefore, the words which end chapter 11 flow immediately into the words which begin chapter 12, without any division.

That means that the appearance of the Ark of Jesus' covenant at the very end of chapter 11 – "the ark of his testament was seen in his temple" (Rev. 11:19) – is immediately explained by the vision of "the woman" clothed with the sun

which begins chapter twelve, the very next verse (Rev. 12:1). This indicates that “the woman” clothed with the sun, who bore the Divine Person in her womb (the Virgin Mary), is the Ark of the New Testament.

The Ark contained the manna from the
desert

Mary contained the manna from Heaven,
Jesus

<p>Hebrews 9:4 “... the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant.”</p>	<p>John 6:48-51 “I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven... and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”</p>
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There can be no doubt that the manna in the desert (Exodus 16) prefigured Jesus as the Bread of Life. Jesus makes a connection between the two in John chapter 6. He makes reference to the manna in the desert, and then says that His flesh is the true manna from Heaven. Well, the manna from the desert *was placed inside the Ark* of the Old Covenant. That prefigures Jesus Christ Himself (the true manna of the New Testament) *being contained within Mary*, the Mother of Jesus.

In Hebrews 9:4, we also see that *the rod of Aaron was placed within the Ark* of the Old Covenant. In Numbers 17, we read that this rod budded to prove the true high-priest. The rod of Aaron thus signified the true high-priest. In the New Testament, Jesus is described as the true high-priest.

Hebrews 3:1 “Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and **High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus.**”

Also see Hebrews 6:20, Hebrews 9:11, and other passages for more proof that Jesus is the true high-priest. The inescapable conclusion is that Aaron’s rod being placed within the Ark prefigured Jesus Christ, the true high-priest, being contained within Mary (the Ark of the New Covenant).

There is absolutely no doubt that the New Testament indicates that Mary is the Ark of the New Covenant. This evidence is undeniable.

SINCE MARY IS THE ARK OF THE NEW COVENANT, THAT MEANS THAT SHE IS THE MOST SACRED THING ON EARTH OUTSIDE OF JESUS CHRIST

The Ark of the Covenant was the holiest thing on Earth outside of the presence of God Himself. The Ark was contained in the tabernacle, within the holy of holies. The Ark's presence is what made the holy of holies so sacred.

2 Chronicles (or 2 Paralipomenon) 35:3 **“Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David king of Israel did build.”**

The Ark was so holy that when the people of God followed it they had to keep a respectful distance.

Josue 3:3-5 **“When you shall see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests of the race of Levi carrying it, rise you up also, and follow them as they go before: And let there be between you and the ark the space of two thousand cubits: that you may see it afar off, and know which way you must go: for you have not gone this way before: and take care you come not near the ark.”**

People who unlawfully touched the Ark were killed.

2 Samuel 6:6-7 **“Oza put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it: because the oxen kicked and made it lean aside. And the indignation of the Lord was enkindled against Oza, and he struck him for his rashness: and he died there before the ark of God.”**

The men of Bethshemesh were killed because they had dared to look into the Ark.

1 Samuel 6:19 **“And he smote the men of Bethshemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the Lord, even he smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men...”**

We see how sacred God considered the object which was to come into close contact with His spiritual presence.

SINCE MARY IS THE NEW ARK, SHE HAD TO BE HOLY AND CREATED WITHOUT SIN

God gave the most precise specifications for the construction of the Ark. He ordered that it be made with the most pure gold.

Exodus 25:10-13,24 **“And they shall make an ark of setim wood: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. And thou shalt overlay it with pure**

gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about. And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in the four corners thereof; and two rings shall be in the one side of it, and two rings in the other side of it. And thou shalt make staves of setim wood, **and overlay them with gold...**”

It’s interesting that the Ark not only had to be overlaid with gold all around, but there is a specific reference to it having a “**crown of gold** round about.”

The Ark of the Old Covenant had a gold crown The Virgin Mary (the New Ark) also has a crown

Exodus 25:11 “And thou... shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about. ”	Apocalypse 12:1 “And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.”
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The Ark of the Old Covenant had to be perfect and holy because it was the seat of God’s unique spiritual presence. God’s holiness could not be tarnished by contact with that which had defects. Likewise and to a greater degree, the Virgin Mary, as the new Ark and bearer of Jesus Christ, had to be created without sin and in a state of perfection.

She did not merely contain the spiritual presence of God, but Jesus Christ (God Himself). She did not merely contain the written word of God, but the Word of God made flesh (John 1:1). Consequently, Mary must be perfect. She must be free from all sin. She must be an ever-virgin and untouched by man.

If the Ark of the Old Covenant, which contained the written tables of the Law and was overshadowed by the spiritual presence of God, had to be overlaid with the most pure gold and had to be constructed according to the most precise specifications of God, how much greater is God’s construction of Mary, the Ark of the New Covenant? The fulfillment is greater than the type. Mary, the Ark of the New Covenant, must be and is greater than the Ark of the Old Covenant.

Just like the Ark of the Old Covenant, Mary must also have tremendous power over the Devil and God’s enemies. She must have a unique power of intercession with God, in bringing down His blessings and in aiding the people of God, just as the Ark of the Old Covenant did.

JUST LIKE THE ARK OF THE OLD COVENANT, MARY HAS A UNIQUE POWER OF INTERCESSION; SHE HAS AWESOME POWER OVER GOD’S ENEMIES,

OVER THE DEVIL AND IN AIDING THE PEOPLE OF GOD

The Ark of the Old Covenant had awe-striking power. When it was taken by the Philistines, extraordinary things happened to them and to their false god, Dagon.

1 Samuel 5:1-5 “And the Philistines took the ark of God, and carried it from the Stone of help into Azotus. And the Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it into the temple of Dagon, and set it by Dagon. And when the Azotians arose early the next day, **behold Dagon lay upon his face on the ground before the ark of the Lord:** and they took Dagon, and set him again in his place. And the next day again, when they rose in the morning, **they found Dagon lying upon his face on the earth before the ark of the Lord: and the head of Dagon, and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold:** And only the stump of Dagon remained in its place. For this cause neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that go into the temple tread on the threshold of Dagon in Azotus unto this day.”

The Philistines began to be destroyed for having taken the Ark. This prompted them to return the Ark to their enemies, the Israelites.

1 Samuel 5:7 “And the men of Azotus seeing this kind of plague, said: **The ark of the God of Israel shall not stay with us:** for his hand is heavy upon us, and upon Dagon our god.”

The Ark struck mortal terror into the face of God’s enemies.

1 Samuel 5:10 “And when the ark of God was come into Accaron, **the Accaronites cried out, saying: They have brought the ark of the God of Israel to us, to kill us and our people.**”

The waters of the Jordan were miraculously dried up by the Ark.

Josue 3:13-14 “[And the Lord said to Josue]: And when the priests, that carry the ark of the Lord the God of the whole earth, shall set the soles of their feet in the waters of the Jordan, the waters that are beneath shall run down and go off: and those that come from above, shall stand together upon a heap. So the people went out of their tents, to pass over the Jordan: and the priests that carried the ark of the covenant went on before them...”

Mary, the New Ark, has this power and even more; for the fulfillment is greater than the type, and the New Testament is greater than the Old. We must now cover more biblical evidence for Catholic teachings on Mary.

THE EARTH FROM WHICH ADAM WAS CREATED IS A TYPE OF MARY AND HER PRESERVATION FROM SIN (HER IMMACULATE CONCEPTION)

We've established that Jesus Christ is the new Adam. Adam was formed from the Earth or ground.

Genesis 2:7 “**And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground [adamah]**, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”

The Hebrew word for “ground” is *Adamah*. It's a feminine noun. Adam is so named because he came from the *Adamah*; his name means son of the ground, son of the *Adamah*. (This point was made by Gerry Matatics, Biblical Foundations International, Dunmore, PA.)

This point could be developed, but it's clear that, on a certain level, the Earth from which Adam was created is a type of Mary. The first Adam was created by God *from the ground*, and the second Adam (Jesus Christ) took flesh *from Mary*, His mother. So the question is: **what was the state of the Earth when it was created?**

Genesis 1:31 “**And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.** And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.”

The Earth from which the first Adam was formed – and indeed the entirety of God's creation before the fall – **was completely uncursed, unfallen and perfect**. Sin and curse had no place in it.

Mary, who gives birth to the second and greater Adam (Jesus Christ), must likewise be completely uncursed, unfallen and perfect. She must be preserved from all stain of sin and from the curse of original sin. That's called the Immaculate Conception.

ONLY MARY AND HER SINLESSNESS COMPLETELY FULFILL WHAT IS PREDICTED IN GENESIS 3:15 – “I WILL PUT ENMITY BETWEEN THEE [THE SERPENT] AND THE WOMAN...”

Shortly after the fall of Adam and Eve, God makes this prophecy.

Genesis 3:14-15 “And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: **And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and**

her seed; she shall crush thy head and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel."²

God says that there will be enmity – hostility, division, opposition – between the Devil and “the woman.” In the same context we read of the seed of the woman, and the victory which will be granted through the woman and her seed. In the Bible, a man’s children and descendants are spoken of as his seed. The seed of the woman, therefore, is something unique. It refers to a child which is produced by a woman alone. This obviously refers to the virginal conception and birth from the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Jesus’ mother. The “seed” of the woman refers to Jesus Christ.

Therefore, **the woman herein identified as having opposition or enmity with the serpent is clearly Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ.** The woman is not Eve, who gave in to the serpent. It is Mary.

God says that He will put enmity or opposition between the serpent and the woman. As a result, Mary must be completely preserved from sin. For when one sins, one does not have opposition to the Devil, but rather gives in to the Devil. The only way the woman could have complete and definitive opposition to the serpent is by preservation from sin and from the sin of Adam.

The fact that Mary is this “woman,” and therefore completely free from the domination of sin and the Devil, is the reason that Jesus calls Mary “woman” throughout the New Testament. Jesus never calls His mother anything but “woman.” Many non-Catholics think this was Jesus’ way of belittling His mother and downplaying her role; on the contrary, **Jesus was identifying Mary as the “woman” of Genesis 3:15.**

Genesis 3:15 **“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman,** and between thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel.”

John 2:3-5 “And the wine failing, the mother of Jesus saith to him: They have no wine. And **Jesus saith to her: Woman,** what is that to me and to thee? My hour is not yet come. His mother saith to the waiters: Whatsoever he shall say

²Protestant translations of the passage are slightly different: “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; *it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel*” (1611 King James Version). The Protestant Bibles render the final part of the passage as *the seed* of the woman will crush the head of the serpent, whereas the traditional Catholic versions have it as “she” (*the woman*) will crush the serpent’s head. An ambiguity in the Hebrew texts makes this issue a matter of scholarly debate. Many of the ancient fathers, however, agree with the traditional Catholic rendering of “she.” Regardless, even if one were to grant, for the sake of argument, the translation which is preferred by Protestants, the point about Mary being the definitive “woman” in opposition to the serpent remains perfectly intact; for Protestants translate the first part just as Catholics do.

to you, do ye.”

Some superficial readings of John 2:3-5 have left people with the impression that Jesus is rebuking His mother at the wedding of Cana. However, it actually reveals the power of Mary’s intercession with Jesus. Jesus said that His hour had not yet come; in other words, it was not yet the time for Him to reveal His miraculous powers. It was His design to wait longer. Nevertheless, at the urging of His mother, who had compassion on the newly married couple, Jesus worked the miracle anyway. **He worked this (His first) miracle at the urging of His mother, even though His hour “had not yet come.”** This is an excellent example of how graces are obtained from Jesus through Mary – graces which He might not otherwise be inclined to give.

Many non-Catholics also object that if Mary is so crucial, why would Jesus allow the Gospel writers to perhaps give the impression that He was belittling the place of His mother? They contend that certain verses give that impression, or don’t do much to dispel that notion. The answer is that God does not cast pearls before swine (Matthew 7:6). He often slightly conceals His truths, or puts them just under the surface, so that superficial efforts or insincere people will pass over them or be left with the wrong impression. However, those who are more patient and dig deeper – or who simply trust the Church which Jesus established – will find the gem and the true meaning.

Luke 8:8-10 “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. And his disciples asked him what this parable might be. To whom he said: **To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to the rest in parables, that seeing they may not see, and hearing may not understand.**”

This is so very true in the case of the Bible’s teaching on Mary’s profound role. Superficial readings and insincere efforts will keep people blind to it. But it’s there in Scripture. Mary is the new Eve and the woman of Genesis 3:15, as we have seen. She is also the Ark of the New Covenant and much more, as we will see. It’s all there in the biblical typology and in many passages more deeply understood; but so many remain oblivious to it. Seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not. Having failed to trust the one Church which Christ established, they have sadly acquired only a shallow and misguided understanding of the Bible’s teaching.

John 19:26 “When Jesus therefore had seen his mother and the disciple standing whom he loved, he saith to his mother: **Woman, behold thy son.** After that, he saith to the disciple: Behold thy mother. **And from that hour, the disciple [John] took her to his own.**”

Though other women were at the foot of the cross, Jesus singles out His mother.

Jesus again calls her nothing other than “woman” because she is the woman of Genesis 3:15: the one in complete opposition to the serpent. Jesus also calls for St. John to take His mother for his own.

MARY’S SOUL MAGNIFIES THE LORD, AND THE ALMIGHTY HATH DONE GREAT THINGS TO HER

In Luke 1, we see a glimpse of the unique privileges that God has bestowed upon Mary.

Luke 1:46-50 “And Mary said: **My soul doth magnify the Lord.** And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. Because he hath regarded the humility of his handmaid; for behold **from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.** Because **he that is mighty, hath done great things to me;** and holy is his name. And his mercy is from generation unto generations, to them that fear him.”

The Bible says that Mary’s soul magnifies the Lord; it doesn’t diminish Him. Mary doesn’t detract from Jesus, but leads people to Jesus. The Ark of the Old Covenant signified God’s power and presence. When it was in their presence, it stirred them to devotion, to confidence, and to love of the Almighty. In a similar, but yet greater way, Mary, the new Ark, directs and centers us powerfully around Jesus Christ. Everything Mary has and everything Mary is comes from being the mother of Jesus Christ. He did great things to her by preserving her from sin.

One should also make a special note of Luke 1:48, in which Mary prophesies that “all generations shall call” her “blessed.” This is a prophecy about the Catholic prayer the Hail Mary. For generations Catholics have prayed: “Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, ***blessed art thou among women***, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.”

THE BIBLE SAYS THAT MARY IS “FULL OF GRACE,” WHICH MEANS WITHOUT SIN

Luke 1:27-31 “... and the virgin's name was Mary. **And the angel being come in, said unto her: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.** Who having heard, was troubled at his saying, and thought within herself what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said to her: Fear not, Mary, **for thou hast found grace with God.** Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus.”

Modern Protestant Bibles do not translate Luke 1:28 as “Hail, full of grace.” They have: “*Rejoice highly favored daughter*” or something similar. The Protestant translations are wrong. There are a number of simple ways to show that they are wrong. The word in the original Greek is *kecharitomene*. This word is directly concerned with the idea of “grace.” Greek scholars point out that *kecharitomene* comes from the root word *charis*, which has a literal meaning of “grace.” Out of about 150 appearances, the King James (a Protestant Bible) translates *charis* as “grace” 129 times.

It’s also extremely important to note that early Protestant translations had Luke 1:28 as “full of grace” or the equivalent. Famous Protestant William Tyndale (1494-1536) is considered to be a hero among some Protestants. His version of the Bible was translated into early modern English around 1525. Tyndale translated Luke 1:28 as: “**Hayle full of grace ye Lorde is with ye: blessed arte thou amonge wemen.**” (http://wesley.nnu.edu/biblical_studies/tyndale/) The English Protestant Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556) also rendered the passage as “full of grace.”

St. Jerome (A.D. 347-420) was the biblical scholar of the ancient Church. Even the Protestant translators of the 1611 King James Bible called St. Jerome “a most learned father, and the best linguist without controversy, of his age, or of any that went before him” (From the Translators’ Preface to the 1611 KJV). St. Jerome translated “kecharitomene” as “*gratiae plena*” meaning “**full of grace** which thou hast received” in the Latin Vulgate. “Grace” was also accepted as the proper translation in the Rheims New Testament in 1582.

The *Word Pictures of the New Testament*, by the famous Protestant Greek scholar A.T. Robertson, says this about Luke 1:28:

“Highly favoured (*kecaritwmenh*). Perfect passive participle of *caritow* and means endowed with grace (*caris*), enriched with grace as in Ephesians 1:6...
The Vulgate *gratiae plena* is right, if it means ‘full of grace which thou hast received’; wrong, if it means ‘full of grace which thou hast to bestow.’”
(Robertson, *Word Pictures of the New Testament*, Luke 1:28.)

If Mary is “full of grace,” that in itself strongly suggests that she is without sin. For grace is in opposition to sin. The angel is not saying that Mary will become full of grace, but that he has encountered Mary already in that state. She was conceived in that state. Moreover, Mary is pronounced “blessed among women” because her position is unique.

MARY WAS A PERPETUAL VIRGIN

We've seen that Mary is the new Eve and the Ark of the New Covenant. Now we must look at the biblical evidence for Mary's perpetual virginity. Most Protestants of our day reject the perpetual virginity of Mary; they think it contradicts the Bible. **Many of them will be shocked to find out that the first Protestants, including Martin Luther, John Calvin, Huldrych Zwingli and others all believed in the perpetual virginity of Mary.** The idea that Mary ceased to be a virgin and had other children besides Jesus was invented many generations after the original Protestant "reformation." Thus, the Protestant position on this matter not only contradicts ancient Catholic tradition and the Bible (as we will see), but their own Protestant "tradition."

MATTHEW 1:25 DOES NOT DISPROVE MARY'S PERPETUAL VIRGINITY

The first thing that Protestants usually quote against Mary's perpetual virginity is Matthew 1:25.

Matthew 1:24-25 "Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: **And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus.**"

According to Protestants, this proves that Mary ceased to be a virgin after the birth of Jesus. This is quite wrong. The Greek word for "until" or "till" (*heos*) does not imply that Joseph had marital relations with Mary after the birth of Jesus Christ. It simply means that they had no relations up to that point, without saying anything about what happened after that point. This is proven below by many passages. We should also bear in mind that the Bible was written several thousand years ago. It was written at a time and in languages which don't express and imply things the same way that they would be expressed and implied in modern English.

For instance, in 2 Samuel 6:23 (2 Kings 6:23 in the Douay-Rheims Catholic Bible), we read that God cursed Michal, David's wife. He cursed her because she mocked David for the manner in which he rejoiced before the Ark of the Covenant. As a result, Michal had no children "until" the day of her death.

2 Samuel 6:23 "Therefore **Michal** the daughter of Saul **had no child until the day of her death.**"

Does this mean that Michal started having children after her death? Obviously it does not. This verse demonstrates **that when Scripture describes something as being true "until" or "before" a certain point, it doesn't necessarily mean that it ceased to be true after that point.** Here are numerous other examples of this:

Hebrews 1:13 “But to which of the angels said he at any time, **Sit on my right hand, until** I make thine enemies thy footstool?”

This refers to the Son of God. Does this mean that He will cease to sit at the right hand of the Father after God’s enemies are made His footstool? Obviously it does not. He will remain at the right hand of God the Father.

1 Timothy 4:13 “**Till I come**, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.”

Does this mean that they should abandon reading and doctrine after he comes? Obviously it does not.

Acts 23:1 “And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, **I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.**”

Does this mean that Paul necessarily ceased to have a good conscience after that day? Obviously it does not.

The preposition “before” can be used the same way.

John 4:49 “Come down before my child dies.”

Here we see that the word “before” can be used in a similar manner to the word “until.” This child did not die; Jesus healed him (John 4:50). Thus, the statement in Matthew 1:18, which is quoted below, that Mary was with child “before” she and Joseph came together, doesn’t mean that they came together after she was with child. It simply means that she was pregnant without any sexual contact.

Matthew 1:18 “Now the generation of Christ was in this wise. When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child, of the Holy Ghost.”

It’s quite certain, therefore, that Matthew 1:25 and Matthew 1:18 do not contradict Mary’s perpetual virginity in any way. Protestants cannot legitimately claim that these passages constitute proof that Mary ceased to be a virgin. These passages do not prove her perpetual virginity, either. Her perpetual virginity is proven by other things in the Bible.

WHAT ABOUT THE “FIRSTBORN” SON – DOESN’T THAT IMPLY OTHER CHILDREN?

Luke 2:7 “And she brought forth her **firstborn** son; and she wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.”

Matthew 1:25 “And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus.”

“Firstborn son” is a legal title given to a first-born male child in a Jewish family: in other words, it is given to a male child who is also the first child.

God specifically commanded the Israelites to sanctify (i.e., set apart) their first-born sons for a special consecration and service to God. The title “first-born son” held additional importance because it entitled that child to a double portion of the inheritance (Deut. 21:17). **This title of “first-born son” was given to the child regardless of whether the woman had any other children after him.** As an example: “we can see this from a Greek tomb inscription at Tel el Yaoudieh (cf. “Biblica” 11, 1930 369-90) for a mother who died in childbirth: ‘In the pain of delivering my firstborn child, destiny brought me to the end of life.’” (Quoted in “Brothers and Sisters of Jesus,” by William Most)

In Exodus 13 and 34, we read about God’s prescription that the first-born be consecrated to Him. There was a ceremony for the “sanctification of the firstborn” (Exodus 13 and 34:20). It’s not as if they postponed the ceremony for the “first-born son” until after the woman had a second child.

Exodus 13:2,12 “Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine... Thou shalt set apart all that openeth the womb for the Lord, and all that is first brought forth of thy cattle: whatsoever thou shalt have of the male sex, thou shalt consecrate to the Lord.”

Thus, the statement that Jesus was the “first-born son” of Mary (Luke 2:7) does not in any way contradict Mary’s perpetual virginity. It simply means that He was her first and male child. It says nothing about whether any came later.

WHAT ABOUT THE “BROTHERS” OF JESUS?

Non-Catholics often bring up the passages which mention the “brothers and sisters” of Jesus. First of all, it must be mentioned that never once are these “brothers” described as the children of Mary, Jesus’ mother.

Mark 6:3 “Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and

Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.”

Matthew 13:55 “Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?”

In the original Greek the words used are *adelphoi* (“brethren”) and *adelphe* (“sisters”). The words *adelphoi* and *adelphe* can refer to actual siblings. However, **the Bible also uses these words to describe people who are not brothers, but cousins or relatives or step brothers or close neighbors.**

THE BIBLE SAYS THAT ABRAHAM WAS LOT’S BROTHER, BUT HE WASN’T LITERALLY

Lot was Abraham’s nephew. Abraham was his uncle (see Genesis 11:31; 14:12). Yet, the Bible twice describes Lot as Abraham’s “brother.” That’s because the word “brother” doesn’t necessarily mean a sibling. As stated above, it can mean a cousin or a relative or a step-brother or a close family friend.

Genesis 14:14 “Which when Abram had heard, to wit, **that his brother Lot** was taken...”

Lot was Abraham’s nephew	The Bible also calls him his “brother”
Gen. 11:27 “Now these are the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot. ”	Gen. 14:14 “And when Abram heard that his brother [Lot] was taken captive...”
Gen. 12:5 “And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother’s son... ”	Gen. 14:16 “And also brought again his brother Lot... ”
Gen. 14:12 “And they took Lot, Abram’s brother’s son , who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.”	

Some Protestants attempt to respond to this by arguing that the Old Testament was not written in Greek, but Hebrew. Therefore, they say, the case of Lot doesn’t prove that *adelphos* can refer to a person who is not literally a brother. This is refuted by pointing out that while the Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew, it was famously translated into Greek by seventy scholars a few centuries before the coming of Christ. This famous translation is called the Septuagint.

This Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, is quoted about 300 times by the inspired writers of the New Testament. That means that the New Testament writers accepted the Septuagint. **In the Septuagint, the same Greek word *adelphos* is used to describe Lot as Abraham's brother.** *Adelphos* is the singular form of *adelphoi*, the word used in the New Testament for the "brothers" of Jesus. Therefore, the Old Testament does use *adelphos* to describe someone who is not literally a brother.

But the point can also be proven from the New Testament. **In Acts 3:17 and Romans 9:3, we see that *adelphoi* (brothers) is used to describe people of the same nationality who are not siblings.** Consider these verses to be the death-blow to the Protestant argument in this regard.

Moreover, in Luke 10:29, Matthew 5:22 and Matthew 7:3, we see that *adelphos* ("brother") is used for neighbor, not necessarily sibling.

BUT THERE IS A GREEK WORD FOR COUSIN, *ANEPSIOS*; IF THE BRETHERN OF JESUS WERE COUSINS, RATHER THAN BROTHERS, WHY WASN'T *ANEPSIOS* USED?

The Catholic Church teaches that Mary is ever-virgin and had no other children. The Catholic Church does not teach that all the "brethren" of Jesus were necessarily His cousins. They may have been extended relatives or close friends or people considered part of the family by marriage or law or homeland. For instance, in 2 Samuel 1:26, King David calls Jonathan his "brother." Jonathan and David were not brothers or cousins. David had married Jonathan's sister, Michal, the daughter of King Saul. So David married into the family.

The number of Jesus' "brothers" (*adelphoi*) mentioned in the Bible seems to suggest that some of them were not even extended relatives, but considered part of the family in other ways. If even one or a few of them were not cousins, but more extended relatives or neighbors or close family friends, then the word *adelphoi* would have been used. **Therefore, the fact that the word for cousin was not used does not in any way prove that Mary had other children.**

EVIDENCE FROM MATTHEW 27:56 SHOWS THAT THE "BROTHERS" OF JESUS WERE NOT HIS SIBLINGS

Matthew 13:55 "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? **And his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?"**

James and Joses are two of the names given as "brothers" of Jesus. It can be

shown, by the following points, that these were children of another woman and not siblings of Jesus. Please follow this carefully.

There were three women at the foot of the Cross: 1) the Blessed Virgin Mary (the mother of Jesus); 2) Mary the wife of Cleophas (who is said to be the Blessed Virgin Mary's sister); and 3) Mary Magdalene.

John 19:25 "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus [1] his mother, and [2] his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and [3] Mary Magdalene."

Mary, the wife of Cleophas, is also described as "the other Mary" in Matthew 28:1. The Bible tells us that James and Joses are the children of this Mary:

Matthew 27:56 "Among which was Mary Magdalene, **and Mary the mother of James and Joses**, and the mother of Zebedees children."

Thus, James and Joses (who are called the "brothers" of Jesus) are not His siblings, but at least His cousins. However, they are probably not even first cousins. This is because Mary of Cleophas (the mother of James and Joses), who is said to be the "sister" of Jesus' mother (John 19:25), is also named Mary. It's extremely unlikely that two siblings in a Hebrew family would be given the same name. Most likely they were not sisters, but members of the same clan who were called "sisters" in the same way that James, Joses, Simon and Judas were called "brothers" of Jesus. All of this shows that none of the statements in the Bible about the brothers and sisters of Jesus disproves, in any way, the perpetual virginity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Now we must look at the proof that Mary had no other children and that she was perpetually a virgin.

JOHN 19:26 PROVES THAT MARY HAD NO CHILDREN BESIDES JESUS

While dying on the Cross, Jesus entrusts His mother to the care of St. John the Apostle.

John 19:26-27 "When Jesus therefore had seen his mother and the disciple standing whom he loved, he saith to his mother: **Woman, behold thy son.** After that, **he saith to the disciple: Behold thy mother. And from that hour, the disciple [John] took her to his own.**"

Scholars point out that this was a formal act of entrustment. (Gerry Matatics, *Op. cit.*) Jesus entrusted His mother to St. John so that he would take care of her. If Mary had other children, as Protestants contend, Jesus would not have told St. John to take Mary for his mother. She would have been put into the care of one of his many

“brothers.” The fact that Jesus entrusted Mary to St. John proves that she had no other children.

Protestants try to respond to this by arguing that Jesus’ “brothers” were not believers and that’s why Jesus entrusted her to St. John. However, that’s refuted by Acts 1:14. It indicates that Jesus’ “brothers” were believers. Jesus certainly knew that they were or would become believers and hence He would not have entrusted her to St. John if they were His siblings.

It’s also quite significant that when Jesus was found in the temple at 12 years old, there is no indication whatsoever that Mary and Joseph had other children (Luke 2:41-51). The indication is that He is an only child. He is also referred to as “the son of Mary” (Mark 6:3), not as a son of Mary. Never once is Mary said to have had other children.

MARY’S RESPONSE TO THE ANGEL IN LUKE 1 INDICATES THAT SHE HAD TAKEN A VOW OF PERPETUAL VIRGINITY

Luke 1:30-34 “And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And, **behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son**, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. **Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not man?**”

The angel appears to Mary and tells her that she will conceive and bring forth a son. Mary responds by saying: “How shall this be, seeing I know not man?” The actual meaning is: *how shall this be since I am a virgin*. How shall this be? Mary understood how children were conceived. Her response only makes sense if she had taken a lifelong vow of virginity. She was asking how she could conceive while a virgin.

It should also be pointed out that Mary’s engagement to Joseph doesn’t contradict the notion that she had taken such a vow. Moral behavior at the time dictated that women committed to virginity have a male protector who would guard and respect the vow. That was Joseph’s role.

IT’S UNIMAGINABLE THAT THE ARK OF THE NEW COVENANT WOULD HAVE SEXUAL CONTACT

We’ve already seen that the Bible clearly teaches that Mary is the Ark of the New Covenant. As the holiest creature on Earth and the vessel of the Most High, it’s totally

incongruous – completely out of keeping with the Ark’s dignity and role – to think that she would have any sexual contact. To prepare the people for God’s coming on Mt. Sinai, Moses said:

Exodus 19:14-15 “And Moses came down from the mount to the people, and sanctified them. And when they had washed their garments, he said to them: **be ready against the third day, and come not near your wives.**”

When David was on the run and needed bread from the priest, we read:

1 Samuel 21:4 “And the priest answered David, saying: I have no common bread at hand, but only holy bread, **if the young men be clean, especially from women.**”

The Ark was created for a more sublime and sacred reason, and never would have sexual contact. Oza was struck dead for merely touching the Ark when he shouldn’t have done so (2 Samuel 6:6-8).

EZECHIEL 44 AND THE PROPHECY ABOUT THE CLOSED GATE IS A PROPHECY OF MARY’S PERPETUAL VIRGINITY

Ezechiel 44:2 “And the Lord said to me: **This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall pass through it: because the Lord the God of Israel hath entered in by it, and it shall be shut.**”

Here we see that the Lord shall pass through this gate, and no other man shall pass through it. This is a prophecy about the perpetual virginity of Mary. She is the closed gate, through whom the Lord comes. That’s one reason why Mary has been called “the Gate of Heaven” in traditional Catholic writings.

THE PERPETUAL VIRGINITY OF MARY WAS FIRMLY BELIEVED IN THE ANCIENT CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Second Council of Constantinople, 553 A.D., Can. 6 “If anyone says that the holy, glorious, **and ever-virgin** is called God-bearer by misuse of language and not truly... let him be anathema.”

Some Protestants and most members of the “Orthodox” Church claim to honor the Second Council of Constantinople. It was the fifth ecumenical council. As we see here, it clearly taught Mary’s perpetual virginity.

Pope St. Martin I, *Lateran Council, 649 A.D., Can. 3* “If anyone does not

properly and truly confess in accord with the holy Fathers, that the holy Mother of God **and ever Virgin** and immaculate Mary in the earliest of the ages conceived of the Holy Spirit without seed, namely, God the Word Himself specifically and truly, who was born of God the Father before all ages, and that she incorruptibly bore [Him], **her virginity remaining indestructible even after His birth**, let him be condemned.” (Denzinger 256)

The ancient Christian Church believed that Mary was perpetually a virgin. In the fourth century, St. Jerome, the father of biblical scholarship and the one who translated the Bible into Latin, defended this truth against Helveticus, a heretic who denied it. As mentioned already, even the first Protestants, including Luther, Calvin and Zwingli, accepted the perpetual virginity of Mary.

THE BIBLICAL EVIDENCE FOR MARY’S BODILY ASSUMPTION INTO HEAVEN AND HER QUEENSHIP IN HEAVEN

The Catholic Church teaches that, after her course of life on Earth, the Blessed Virgin Mary was assumed body and soul into Heaven. Her body did not remain in the grave and suffer corruption of the flesh; for this is a punishment for original sin, which she did not have. Since she was free from all original sin and was the privileged Ark, Mary’s soul was taken directly to Heaven, and her body some days after. That’s called the dogma of Mary’s Bodily Assumption.

Non-Catholics claim there is no evidence in the Bible for the Assumption of Mary. On the contrary, we find a description of it in Revelation/Apocalypse chapter 12:

Revelation 12:1 “And **there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun**, and the moon under her feet, **and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.**”

The woman in Revelation 12:1 signifies a number of things. The fathers of the Church understood it to signify the Mother of Jesus; they also understood it to signify, on a certain level, the Church. There is no doubt that it signifies Mary, for the Son of this woman is the one who rules all nations with an iron rod (Rev. 12:5). That’s Jesus, of course; and thus the mother must be the Virgin Mary. Therefore, Revelation chapter 12 provides us with a clear picture of Mary assumed into Heaven and placed as Queen of Heaven.

The Bible also gives us a glimpse of the Assumption of Mary in Psalm 132:8 (Psalm 131:8 in the Douay-Rheims Catholic Bible).

Psalm 132:8 “**Arise, O Lord, into thy resting place: thou and the ark**, which

thou hast sanctified.”

This interesting psalm speaks of the Lord and the Ark arising or being carried to a permanent resting place. This is an image of the Assumption; for Jesus is the Lord and Mary is the new Ark, as we've shown. Both of them are taken to Heaven, body and soul. Jesus ascends on His own; Mary is assumed by Jesus.

If the Ark of the Old Covenant is spoken of as being carried off to a resting place, how much more the Ark of the new and eternal covenant? We also see that the Ark is spoken of as sanctified.

THE ASSUMPTION OF MARY INTO HEAVEN FLOWS LOGICALLY FROM HER PRESERVATION FROM SIN

The bodily Assumption of Mary flows logically from her preservation from all original and actual sin. The corruption of the flesh in the grave is a consequence of original sin (Genesis 3:19). Most Protestants would agree on this point. As the Ark of the New Covenant, Mary did not have original sin. As a result, she was free from its consequences. It follows from this that God did not let her body see corruption.

Psalm 15:10 “Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; **nor wilt thou give thy holy one to see corruption.**”

This psalm, which speaks of God not allowing His holy one to see corruption, is quoted in the New Testament in Acts chapter 2. It refers to Jesus.

Acts 2:31 “Foreseeing this, he spoke of **the resurrection** of Christ. **For neither was he left in hell, neither did his flesh see corruption.**”

Likewise, because Mary was created free from all sin, she did not suffer any corruption of the flesh in the grave and was assumed body and soul into Heaven.

THE ARK WAS MADE OF INCORRUPTIBLE WOOD

The Ark of the Old Covenant was made of setim (or shittim) wood, an incorruptible acacia.

Exodus 25:10 “Frame an ark of setim wood...”

Setim wood is so extremely durable that the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament, actually translates this word as “**incorruptible**” or “**nondecaying**” **wood**. If the Ark of the Old Covenant was incorruptible, how much more must the Ark

of the New Covenant be incorruptible. God specifically prescribed incorruptible wood for the construction of the Ark because it served as a prefigurement of the incorruptible body and soul of the new Ark, the Blessed Virgin.

MARY'S BODILY ASSUMPTION DOES NOT CONTRADICT BIBLICAL REALITIES

Some people consider it fanciful that Mary could have been miraculously assumed into Heaven, body and soul. However, the Bible tells us that Elijah was miraculously carried away to Heaven (2 Kings 2:1, 11). We also read that Enoch was miraculously carried away to walk with God (Heb. 11:5; Gen. 5:24). It's also clearly taught in the Bible – and is an article of the ancient Christian faith – that all men, whether good or evil, shall be miraculously reunited with their bodies at the final judgment, for the resurrection of the just and the reprobate (1 Cor. 15). Thus, it's not in any way contrary to biblical realities – but rather corresponds precisely to them – to believe that Mary was assumed into Heaven because she was God's perfect Ark and without sin.

THE BIBLE INDICATES THAT MARY IS THE "QUEEN MOTHER" IN THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

God established a covenant with David in order to establish a Kingdom. The Davidic Monarchy, the Kingdom of God on Earth, was meant to be a prototype of the spiritual Kingdom of God which Jesus Christ would establish. That's why Jesus is called the son of David in the Gospels. It's why Peter himself says in Acts 2:30 that Jesus sits upon David's throne. Luke 1:32 says the following of Jesus:

"He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the most High; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of David his father..."

In the Hebrew monarchy, **the most powerful, honored and important woman in the Kingdom was the mother of the King. She was known as "the Queen Mother."** In Hebrew, she was called "the Gebirah." The Gebirah, the Queen Mother of the Kingdom, possessed a unique power of influence with the King. Her influence, power and prestige surpassed that of the King's wife. We clearly see the unique influence and power of the "Queen Mother" in 1 Kings 1 and 2 (3 Kings 1 and 2 in the Douay-Rheims Catholic Bible).

King Solomon's mother was Bathsheba. Bathsheba's power and influence as Queen Mother was so great that Adonias (or Adonijah) said this to her:

1 Kings 2:17 "And he (Adonias) said: **I pray thee speak to king Solomon (for he cannot deny thee any thing)** to give me Abisag the Sunamitess to wife."

Adonias understood the position and the power of the Queen Mother. However, the request that Adonias made was unreasonable. Adonias wanted to marry Abisag, who was King David's last wife. By taking her to wife, Adonias could have made a claim on Solomon's throne. This is why the King could not have granted his request.

Even though Adonias' request was unreasonable and would never have been granted by the King, this shows us that it was recognized that the Queen Mother had a unique and profound power of influence with the King. This influence was so great that Adonias said: "he cannot deny thee anything."

The next few verses shed even more light on this truth. In 1 Kings 2:19, we read that Bathsheba (the Queen Mother) went in to speak to King Solomon to ask of him the favor. When she entered, **the King bowed himself to her and caused a throne to be set up for her next to him.**

THE BIBLE SHOWS US THAT THE QUEEN MOTHER HAD A THRONE AND UNIQUE HONOR

1 Kings 2:19-20 "Then Bethsabee came to king Solomon, to speak to him for Adonias: **and the king arose to meet her, and bowed to her, and sat down upon his throne: and a throne was set for the king's mother, and she sat on his right hand.** And she said to him: I desire one small petition of thee, do not put me to confusion. And the king said to her: **My mother, ask: for I must not turn away thy face."**

As we can see, the Bible teaches that the Queen Mother is honored on a throne with the King. She is not equal to the King, of course; but she is honored along with him as the Queen of the Kingdom. Here we see a perfect description of the Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of her influence with the King. She is the Queen Mother in the Kingdom of Jesus. Mary is infinitely inferior to her Divine Son. However, she is the perfect Ark, the Queen of Heaven and Earth.

This is why Mary has such a power in Heaven under her Divine Son – a power and influence that is greater than what the Queen Mother of the Old Testament had over the King. It's why it's so effective to ask favors of her, so that she can ask them of Jesus. She is placed, in the Kingdom of Jesus, beside Him as the Queen of Heaven and Earth.

In Psalm 45 (Psalm 44 in the Douay-Rheims Catholic Bible), we also see a reference to God's throne and the Queen with Him:

Psalms 45:6,9 “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: A sceptre of equity is the sceptre of thy kingdom... **The queen stood on thy right hand**, in gilded clothing...”

ARE THE HAIL MARY AND THE ROSARY VAIN REPETITIONS CONDEMNED BY JESUS?

Some non-Catholics claim that Catholic prayers such as the Hail Mary and the Rosary fall under the denunciation of Jesus.

Matthew 6:7-8 “But when ye pray, **use not vain repetitions**, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.”

Like the other objections we’ve covered, this objection is also disproven by a deeper consideration of the Bible. Probably the best example to refute the Protestant objection on this point is Revelation (Apocalypse) 4:8.

Revelation 4:8 “And the four living creatures had each of them six wings; and round about and within they are full of eyes. **And they rested not day and night, saying: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty**, who was, and who is, and who is to come.”

The angels in Heaven say over and over again, day and night, “Holy, holy, holy.” So much for the idea that all prayers which contain repetitions are “pagan.” The assertion couldn’t be more wrong.

In Matthew 6:7, Jesus is not condemning prayers which contain words that are repeated; nor is He condemning multiple repetitions of the same prayer (e.g., saying the Our Father or the Hail Mary five times in a row). No, He is denouncing the practices of the pagans. The pagans thought that they could please their false gods by their eloquence and elaborate speeches. They thought that they had to say precisely the correct things and words and names on certain days, lest their false “gods” would not hear them or remember their needs. Jesus is denouncing their paganism. He is teaching that the true God knows all things.

There are other points which obliterate the Protestant objection on this matter. In Psalm 136 (Psalm 135 in the Douay-Rheims Catholic Bible), we are given a prayer of praise and thanksgiving which repeats the same phrase – “for his mercy endures forever” – a grand total of 26 times in a row!

Psalms 136:1-26 “O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: **for his mercy endureth for ever**. O give thanks unto the God of gods: **for his mercy endureth for ever**... To him who alone doeth great wonders: **for his mercy endureth for ever**... [etc.]”

Jesus repeats the same prayer three times in a row, when praying to His Father in the Garden of Gethsemane. That can be read in Matthew 26:39, Matthew 26:42, and Matthew 26:44. In Matthew 20:29-33, Jesus responds to the repeated prayer of the blind men to have mercy on them.

As we can see, the Bible contains many examples where prayers to the true God are repeated. They do not constitute “vain repetitions” of pagans. In fact, the Catholic Church’s prayers to Mary in the Hail Mary and the Rosary are predicted by Mary herself in Luke 1:

The Hail Mary prayer: “Hail Mary, full of grace; the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.”

Luke 1:46-48 “And Mary said: **My soul doth magnify the Lord**. And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. Because he hath regarded the humility of his handmaid; **for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.**”

Obviously only the Catholic Church fulfills this prophecy, which is about all generations of the true Church.

MARY’S UNIQUE AND IMMACULATE HEART RECEIVES UNIQUE ATTENTION IN SCRIPTURE

The Catholic Church honors and spreads devotion to the immaculate heart of Mary. She had the most pure heart of any human being that ever lived. Just like the Ark of the Old Covenant, the devotion to Mary’s immaculate heart is powerful with God. Some non-Catholics condemn this devotion as unbiblical. On the contrary, only the heart of Mary is specifically mentioned in the New Testament. The heart of no other good or holy person receives the kind of attention that is given to Mary’s heart in the Gospel. Her heart was unique among human beings because it was never defiled by sin.

Luke 2:18-19 “And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. **But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.**”

Luke 2:51 “And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but **his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.**”

Mary’s unique soul also receives a special mention in Scripture.

Luke 2:35 “(Yea, **a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,**) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”

MARY IS THE MOTHER OF GOD

It’s surprising that so many non-Catholics have trouble with the title “Mary, mother of God.” They admit that Mary is the mother of Jesus, but argue that she is not to be considered “mother of God.” Protestants who hold that Mary is not the mother of God don’t seem to realize that it’s not logically consistent to believe that Jesus is God, but to deny that Mary is the mother of God. Such a position actually denies the divinity of Jesus Christ, who is *one divine person with two natures*.

Fact: **Jesus Christ is God.** The Bible teaches it in many places (John 1:1; John 20:28; John 8:58; Isaias 9:6; etc.)

Fact: **Mary is the mother of Jesus.** The Bible teaches it in many places (Luke 1:31; Mt. 1:25; etc.)

Undeniable conclusion: Mary is the mother of God.

Luke 1:31-32 “And, behold, thou [Mary] shalt conceive in thy womb, **and bring forth a son**, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called **the Son of the Highest**: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David.”

Isaias 7:14 “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, **a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel [God with us].**”

The Bible indicates that Mary is the mother of Immanuel (which means “God with us”).

Luke 1:43 “[Elizabeth said]: And how does this happen to me, **that the mother of my Lord should come to me?**”

Elizabeth also explicitly says that Mary is the mother of the Lord. That is the one Lord

Jesus Christ, who is God.

Ephesians 4:5 “One **Lord**, one faith, one baptism...”

John 20:28 “And Thomas answered and said unto him, My **Lord and my God.**”

That should be simple enough. Unfortunately, it isn't sufficient for some people. The Protestant error on this point needs to be more completely addressed and refuted.

Protestants point out that the divine nature of God is eternal and without beginning. That's certainly true. Since the nature of God is eternal and it certainly did not come from Mary, they argue, Mary cannot be said to be “mother” of God. This is the main argument that Protestants make on this point. It is a very flawed argument.

The Protestant error on this point stems from attributing to the person of the Son of God *only that which belongs to His divine nature*. It is to fail to attribute to the person of the Son of God also that which belongs or pertains to *His human nature*.

Since the Son of God has truly become man, by failing to attribute to Him also that which belongs to His human nature, they actually deny that Jesus Christ is at the same time true God and true man.

The Son of God, Jesus Christ, is one divine person (the second person of the Holy Trinity) with two natures. He is both true God and true man. Jesus Christ is not a man who was united with or inspired by God. No, He is true God who truly *became man*.

John 1:14 “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us...”

Jesus was not just a special human who had a unique inspiration and connection to the Word of God (the Son of God). No, He is **the Word of God made flesh**. Therefore, to attribute to the Son of God only that which specifically belongs to His divine nature, and not also that which applies to His assumed human nature – as the Protestants do when they deny that Mary is the mother of God – is to divide Jesus into two different people.

In the 5th century there was a certain heretic named Nestorius. He argued like Protestants of our day on this matter. He held that Mary was not to be called *Theotokos* (mother/bearer of God), but only *Christotokos* (bearer of Christ). The Church immediately recognized the heresy of Nestorius and condemned it in 431 at the Council of Ephesus. Nestorius' false view was recognized by the Church to be the heresy which the Bible condemned as the “dissolving” of Jesus and “antichrist.” This false idea “dissolves” Christ by separating from His one person that which

pertains to His human nature. **It results in the division of Jesus into two people, and the position that Jesus was just a man who carried (or was inspired by) the person of God, rather than a divine person who truly became man.** This heresy results in the worship of a man and the worship of two sons. The Church clearly saw this for what it was and condemned it.

Second Council of Constantinople, 553 **"The holy synod of Ephesus... has pronounced sentence against the heresy of Nestorius... and all those who might later... adopt the same opinions as he held... They express these falsehoods against the true dogmas of the Church, OFFERING WORSHIP TO TWO SONS, trying to divide that which cannot be divided, AND INTRODUCING TO BOTH HEAVEN AND EARTH THE OFFENCE OF THE WORSHIP OF MAN.** But the sacred band of heavenly spirits worship along with us only one Lord Jesus Christ."

Council of Ephesus, 431, Can. 5: **"If anyone dares to say that Christ was a God-bearing man and not rather God in truth,** being by nature one Son, even as "the Word became flesh", and is made partaker of blood and flesh precisely like us, let him be anathema."

Jesus is not two different people. He is ONE DIVINE PERSON with two natures. **Therefore, that which happens to His human nature truly happens to His one person.** His person was conceived and born in His humanity from Mary. She is therefore truly His mother, and the mother of God.

The meaning entailed in this truth is staggering. As the Church has always taught, the Son of God, eternal and equal to the Father, had two births. He was born before time, and from all eternity, from God the Father (John 16:28; John 8:42.). He was born in time, as man, from Mary, His mother. Only Mary possesses this inscrutable connection to God, to a person of the Trinity. It is from this truth, that she is truly Mother of God, that all of her other unique prerogatives and privileges come.

CONCLUSION ABOUT BIBLICAL TEACHING ON MARY

These are the biblical reasons why the Catholic Church has always recognized the importance and the necessity of devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. She is the new Eve, the new Ark, the pure vessel, the sealed gate, and the Mother of God. To fail to have devotion to her is equivalent to a man in the Old Testament who would refuse to venerate the Ark of the Covenant or would refuse to march behind it to a battle. Such a man would fall prey to the enemies of God and would be separated from the camp of God's people.

1 Samuel 4:22 "... The glory is departed from Israel, because the ark of God was taken."

THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT JESUS MADE ST. PETER THE FIRST POPE

JESUS GIVES THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM TO PETER IN MATTHEW 16

Matthew 16:16-19 “And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. **And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.**”

Jesus gives the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven to Peter, and declares that whatsoever he binds on earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever he looses upon earth shall be loosed in Heaven. Even though all 12 disciples are gathered together for this meeting, Jesus says these things only to St. Peter.

WHILE SPEAKING TO PETER, JESUS SAYS THAT HE WILL BUILD HIS CHURCH UPON THIS VERY ROCK

Jesus says: “thou art Peter and ***upon this rock I will build my Church.***” The Greek word for “this” – as in *this rock* – is the demonstrative pronoun *taute*. It means “this very” rock or “this same” rock. *Taute* is used when “it is desired to call attention with special emphasis to a designated object, whether in the physical vicinity of the speaker or the literary context of the writer” (H. E. Dana and J.R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 127). In the King James Version, *taute* is translated as “the same” in 1 Corinthians 7:20 and “this same” in 2 Corinthians 9:4.

Therefore, Jesus’ statement to Peter has this meaning: thou art Peter and upon THIS VERY ROCK I will build my Church. From the context given, “this rock” naturally refers to Peter. It just so happens that Jesus also changes his name from Simon to a name which means rock. (But we will see more on this point in a bit.)

THE CHANGE OF PETER’S NAME

Jesus changes his name from Simon to Peter, just before he declares: “and upon this rock I will build my Church.”

Matthew 16:17-18 “... Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona... **And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter...**”

In the Old Testament a change of name denoted an appointment or a special calling or a change in status. In Genesis, we read the following about Abraham:

Genesis 17:5 “Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.”

God changed his name from Abram to Abraham because **the new name denoted his special role as a LEADER of God’s people**. Abraham was chosen to be the father of many nations. (He was also called “rock,” as we will show.) In Hebrew *Abram* signifies a high father, but *Abraham* signifies the father of the multitude.

Likewise, in Genesis 32:28, we read that God changed Jacob’s name to Israel in order to signify his special role or position. Therefore, in addition to the other important things that Jesus says to St. Peter in Matthew 16, the change of his name from Simon to Peter serves to confirm St. Peter’s special position and his new status.

THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM

Matthew 16:19 “And I will give unto thee [Peter] the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

No other apostle is given the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. In Matthew 18:18, we read that all the Apostles are given the power to bind and to loose; but Peter alone is promised the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven in Matthew 16:19. This shows us that the power which is given to all the Apostles to bind and to loose in Matthew 18:18, must be exercised under the keys which are given alone to Peter. Peter has a unique position of authority in the Church.

THE “KEYS OF THE KINGDOM” REFERS TO ISAIAS 22 AND THE POSITION OF PRIME MINISTER

Here’s what’s really interesting. Most people don’t know that this reference to the keys of the Kingdom in Matthew 16:19 (and to Peter’s binding and loosing with them) comes from Isaias chapter 22. Jesus’ words to Peter in Matthew 16 are a reference to the function of the prime minister of the Kingdom in the Old Testament.

Isaias 22:22 “**And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.**”

Notice that the language clearly parallels Matthew 16:19. In the Old Testament God established a covenant with David in order to establish a Kingdom. The Davidic Monarchy, the Kingdom of God on Earth, was meant to be a prototype of the Kingdom of God which Jesus Christ would establish. That's why Jesus is called the son of David in the Gospels. It's also why Matthew's Gospel has *kingdom* as one of its primary themes. It's also why Peter himself says in Acts 2:30 that Jesus sits upon David's throne. Luke 1:32 says the following of Jesus: "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the most High; **and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of David his father...**"

Jesus sits upon the throne of David. But Jesus' Kingdom is a spiritual one; His Kingdom is His Church. Jesus' Kingdom not only fulfills, but surpasses the prototype, David's Kingdom. The point here is that Jesus' Kingdom is set up along similar lines.

JESUS WAS CLEARLY MAKING ST. PETER HIS PRIME MINISTER

In David's Kingdom there was not only a king who ruled all the people, but the king had a royal cabinet. The king had royal ministers or chief officers. You see references to this royal cabinet (these chief officers or royal ministers of the king) in 2 Samuel 8 (2 Kings 8 in the Douay-Rheims Catholic Bible). You also see a reference to them in 1 Kings 4 (3 Kings 4 in the Douay-Rheims) and in other places. In this royal cabinet, there was a minister of defense, ministers in commerce, provisions, etc.

However, of all the king's ministers, there was one who stood out with authority above the rest. That was the prime minister, who was over the king's house. That's where the fascinating truth of Isaias 22 becomes relevant to Matthew 16.

In Isaias 22 we read that the prime minister HAD THE KEY to the house of David. Let me repeat that: the prime minister had the key to the house of David. **This key represented the prime minister's authority over the house of the king.**

Isaias 22:20-22 "And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah: And I will clothe him with thy [Shebna's] robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, **and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem**, and to the house of Judah. **And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.**"

Notice that the prime minister had the key of the house of David. We also see that to him was committed "the government," and that he would be "a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem."

In Isaias 22 the prime minister of the Kingdom was a man named Shebna. Isaias 22:15 says Shebna was “over the house” – that is, he was over the house of the king. Then Shebna left the office of prime minister and was replaced by a man named Eliakim. **Then we read that the key of the Kingdom, which Shebna had, was given to Eliakim** by King Hezekiah (the successor of David who was reigning as the king at the time). King Hezekiah gave the key of the Kingdom to Eliakim because Eliakim succeeded Shebna in the office of prime minister.

Eliakim now had the key to the house of David. **By the fact that he had the key, everyone would recognize Eliakim as the king’s prime minister.**

Think about the striking similarity to Matthew 16. In Isaias 22:22, we see the clear reference to the key of the Kingdom being passed, just as Jesus gives the keys to St. Peter. In addition, the statement that with the key “he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open” is strikingly similar to what Jesus says to St. Peter in Matthew 16:19, when He gives him the keys to His kingdom: “Whatsoever you bind on Earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever you loose upon earth shall be loosed also in Heaven.” The significance of this should be very obvious.

Jesus sits upon the throne of David. So when Jesus comes to establish His kingdom (His Church), which is the fulfillment of the Kingdom of David, He likewise appoints His royal cabinet: His Apostles. But of those royal ministers (His Apostles), there is one prime minister who is over all the other ministers and all the members of the Kingdom. This prime minister is the one who will have the keys of His Kingdom and will be given the primacy in His Church to look after the affairs of His Kingdom.

When Jesus said to Peter, “I will give you the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven,” **it would have been a clear indication to all informed Jews that Jesus was going to make St. Peter His prime minister. He was declaring that St. Peter would be the first pope – the president or governor of His Church.** This is a powerful and irrefutable proof that Jesus was indeed saying that St. Peter would be the first pope in Matthew 16:18-19.

WHO IS THE ROCK OF MATTHEW 16? IT’S PETER

Matthew 16:18 “And I say also unto thee, ***That thou art Peter, and upon this rock*** I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

It really should be obvious that Peter is the one whom Jesus is describing as the rock. But Protestants raise all kinds of objections on this point.

OBJECTION: PETER COULDN'T BE THE ROCK BECAUSE JESUS IS THE ONLY FOUNDATION

1 Corinthians 3:11 "For other foundation no man can lay, but that which is laid; which is Christ Jesus."

Those who raise this objection fail to realize that the Bible speaks of all the Apostles as foundations.

Revelations 21:14 "And the wall of the city **had twelve foundations**, and in them the names of **the twelve apostles** of the Lamb."

Is there a contradiction between Rev. 21:14 and 1 Cor. 3:11? No, of course not. The fact that Christ is the only foundation, as 1 Cor. 3:11 teaches, simply means that everything comes from Christ. All true authority in the Church must come from Christ because the Church itself comes from Christ. Anything outside of Christ is a false foundation.

Peter's authority comes precisely from Jesus Christ, as Matthew 16 shows. It's quite obvious, therefore, that if Jesus is the one who established these things in Peter, then what set up in Peter is not a foundation other than of Christ. It's the very foundation of Christ.

So, the fact that Christ is the foundation or the cornerstone, as we read in Ephesians 2:20, does not mean that Christ Himself could not or did not establish one apostle to have a perpetual office which would be the rock upon which the Church would be built. The two concepts are not mutually exclusive. For example: Jesus is the Good Shepherd (John 10:14), but He also gives the responsibility of shepherding all His sheep to Peter, as we will see in John 21:15-17. Jesus is the one with the keys (Rev. 1:18; Rev. 3:7), but He gives His keys to Peter.

GOD CALLS ABRAHAM THE ROCK IN THE OLD TESTAMENT!

God is declared as the rock throughout the Old Testament and in Deuteronomy 32:4, but Abraham is also described as the rock in Isaias 51:1-2.

Deuteronomy 32:4 "He [God] is the Rock, his work is perfect..."

Isaias 51:1-2 "... **look unto the rock whence ye are hewn**, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. **Look unto Abraham your father...**"

The Old Testament says look to the rock, look to Abraham. Abraham is described as

the rock because he was the father of all the Israelites. Abraham's name was changed from Abram to signify his role as rock and father of God's people. **Wouldn't it be fitting, then, for Jesus to choose someone as the rock and father in the New Testament of the new Israel, the Church? Yes, and that's why Simon's name was changed to Petros, which means rock.** In light of this evidence, it should be totally obvious to everyone that St. Peter is the rock. Nevertheless, let's move to some other points.

WHAT ABOUT PETROS VS. PETRA IN THE GREEK?

Protestants argue that Jesus couldn't have been saying that Peter was the Rock because of the differences in the Greek words. They point out that in the original Greek of Matthew 16:18, Peter's name is *petros*, which means small stone, while the word to denote rock is *petra*, which means large rock. The Greek says: "Thou art Peter (*petros*) and upon this very rock (*petra*) I will build my Church." But this argument is refuted by the following points.

First, the words *petros* and *petra* had the same meaning (rock) in the Greek which was used at the time of Christ. In some much earlier ancient Greek poetry, *petros* meant "small stone" and *petra* "large rock"; but that slight distinction had already disappeared by the time Matthew's Gospel was written in Greek. (On this point, see the quote from Protestant D.A. Carson on the next page.)

The minor distinction between *petros* and *petra* only exists in Attic Greek, not Koine Greek. The Gospel was written in Koine Greek, in which **both *petros* and *petra* meant "rock."** Moreover, there was a word for stone which Jesus could have used. It is *lithos*. If Jesus wanted to call Peter a stone, but not the rock (*petros*), then He would have used *lithos*. But He did not. He used *petros*, which means rock. But if there is an equation between Peter and the rock, why, then, are two different Greek words used (*petros* and *petra*)? The answer is found in the very important fact that Jesus spoke in Aramaic, not in Greek.

JESUS SPOKE ARAMAIC, NOT GREEK, IN WHICH PETER'S NAME AND ROCK ARE EXACTLY THE SAME

In Aramaic, Matthew 16:18 would say this: "You are *kepha*, and on this *kepha* I will build my Church."

Notice that in Aramaic the same word (*kepha*) is used in both places. There is absolutely no difference between the two. Jesus was equating Simon and the rock upon which the Church would be built. This is also captured in French translations of this passage, which say: "*Tu es pierre, et sur cette pierre...*"

The Protestant misunderstanding on this point comes in because when one translates the Aramaic which Jesus spoke into the Greek, the Aramaic word *kepha* becomes *petra*. **Petra is the normal word for rock in Greek and it's feminine. The fact that *petra* is feminine is no problem for the second part of the passage: upon this *kepha* (upon this rock); but *petra* obviously cannot be used for Peter's new name because Peter is a man.**

Thus, in the Greek, Peter's name is simply changed to *Petros*, a synonym for *petra*, but one which has a masculine ending. That's the only reason that there is any difference at all between the two words. There is no doubt that Jesus was declaring that Peter is the rock.

MANY PROTESTANTS ADMIT THAT IT'S OBVIOUS THAT PETER IS THE ROCK

Even some Protestants have been forced to admit, in the face of the facts, that it's futile to continue to deny that Peter is the Rock.

David Hill, Presbyterian minister and senior lecturer of biblical studies at the University of Sheffield, writes: "It is on Peter himself, the confessor of his Messiahship, that Jesus will build the Church... Attempts to interpret the 'rock' as something other than Peter in person (e.g. his faith, the truth revealed to him) are due to Protestant bias, and introduce to the statement a degree of subtlety which is highly unlikely." (Quoted from *The Gospel of Matthew*, New Century Bible Commentary, p. 261.)

In the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, a Protestant work edited by Protestants Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, there is an article by well-known Protestant Oscar Cullman. This is found in Vol. 6:108 of the *Theological Dictionary*. Cullman states:

"But what does Jesus mean when he says: 'On this rock I will build my Church'? The idea of the reformers that he is referring to the faith of Peter is quite inconceivable in view of the probably different setting of the story. For there is no reference here to the faith of Peter. Rather, the parallelism of 'thou art Rock' and 'on this rock I will build' shows that the second rock can only be the same as the first. It is thus evident that Jesus is referring to Peter, to whom he has given the name Rock. He appoints Peter... to be the foundation of his ecclesia. To this extent Roman Catholic exegesis is right and all attempts to evade this interpretation are to be rejected."

Dr. John Broadus (1886), a Reformed Baptist Bible scholar, was forced to admit:

“As Peter means rock, the natural interpretation is that ‘upon this rock’ means upon thee. No other explanation would probably at the present day be attempted... But there is a play upon words, understand as you may. It is an even more far-fetched and harsh play upon words if we understand the rock to be Christ: and a very feeble and almost unmeaning play upon words if the rock is Peter’s confession... Let it be observed that Jesus could not here mean himself by the rock, consistently with the image, because he is the builder. To say, ‘I will build,’ would be a very confused image. The suggestion of some expositors that in saying ‘thou art Peter, and on this rock’ Jesus pointed at himself, involves an artificiality which to some minds is repulsive.” (John A. Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1886, p. 356.)

The Baptist D.A. Carson, professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Seminary, was also forced to acknowledge:

“Although it is true that petros and petra can mean ‘stone’ and ‘rock’ respectively in earlier Greek, the distinction is largely confined to poetry. Moreover the underlying Aramaic is in this case unquestionable; and most probably kepha was used in both clauses (‘you are kepha’ and on this kepha’), since the word was used both for a name and for a rock... The Greek makes the distinction between petros and petra simply because it is trying to preserve the pun, **and in Greek the feminine petra could not very well serve as a masculine name.**” (Quoted in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, Volume 8, p. 368.)

WE KNOW JESUS SPOKE IN ARAMAIC BECAUSE THE BIBLE GIVES US SOME OF HIS ARAMAIC WORDS

Since the Aramaic is relevant to the aforementioned points about Peter being the rock, consider the evidence that Jesus did, in fact, speak in Aramaic. We know Jesus spoke in Aramaic, first of all, because the Gospels record some of the Aramaic words which He used. Consider Matthew 27:46, where Jesus says from the cross, “*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?*” Those words are Aramaic; they’re not Greek; they mean, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Another example is John 19:13,17 “When Pilate... sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, **but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha...** And he [Jesus] bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, **which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha.**”

Both Gabbatha and Golgotha are Aramaic words, providing more evidence that this was the language Jesus used. But St. John calls them Hebrew in the Bible because, as scholars explain, that “Hebrew,” as commonly used in the New Testament, refers to the Aramaic.

THERE IS ALSO STRONG EVIDENCE THAT THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW WAS ORIGINALLY WRITTEN IN ARAMAIC AND THEN TRANSLATED INTO GREEK

There is strong evidence from the early Church fathers that the Gospel of Matthew was originally written in Aramaic and then translated into Greek. Eusebius, who is the historian of the early Church, the first one to write a history of the Church from the beginning to his own day in the 4th century, repeatedly stated that Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew, meaning Aramaic.

In Book 3, Chapter 3, of his *Ecclesiastical history*, Eusebius quotes Papias to state: “Matthew composed his history in the Hebrew dialect, and everyone translated it as he was able.” By the “Hebrew dialect” he means Aramaic.

In Book 6, Chapter 25, Eusebius quotes Origen to state: “The first [Gospel] is written according to Matthew... who having published it for Jewish converts, wrote it in the Hebrew.”

In Book 6, Chapter 25, Eusebius quotes the great early Church father St. Irenaeus to state: “Matthew, indeed, produced his gospel written among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul proclaimed the gospel and founded the Church at Rome.”

As cited by Eusebius, St. Irenaeus not only says that Matthew wrote his Gospel in the Hebrew dialect (i.e., Aramaic), but also that Peter founded the Church at Rome – something many non-Catholics deny, even though the historical evidence that Peter was in Rome is irrefutable. “All the ancient traditions tell of Peter’s martyrdom in Rome, and not a single source places it elsewhere. Very few events of the apostolic Church are so well attested.”³

Keep in mind that Eusebius, who cites Papias, Origen and Irenaeus to show that Matthew wrote in Aramaic, lived from approximately 260 to 340 A.D. and wrote the very first complete Church history. As if that were not sufficient to silence all objections in this regard, we actually have internal biblical evidence that Peter’s name in Greek, Petros, is equivalent to Petra, the rock upon which the Church is built. This internal evidence comes from John 1:42.

3 Mike Aquilina, *The Fathers of the Church*, Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing, p. 35.

JOHN 1:42 EQUATES PETER'S NAME WITH THE ROCK

Please follow this logically.

John 1:42 “Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You **will be called Cephas (which, when translated, is Peter).**” (New International Version)

In John 1:42, Peter's new name is given in its Aramaic form: Cephas. Some may ask, “I thought Peter's name was Kepha in Aramaic.” Yes, but in English versions of John 1:42, Cephas is simply the Anglicized version of the Aramaic Kepha. So John 1:42 says that Cephas is translated as Peter, the apostle's name.

Cephas = Peter's name (John 1:42).

We also know that Cephas would be translated as *petra*, the word for the rock (Mt. 16:18) upon which the Church is built.

Since Cephas = Peter's new name (as John 1:42 says) and Cephas = *petra*, the word for rock, it is undeniable that Peter's new name = *petra*, the rock.

Peter's new name is equivalent to the rock. There's no doubt about it.

The Primacy of Peter is a collection of essays by Eastern “Orthodox” scholars. The Eastern “Orthodox” are not Catholic and do not accept the Papacy. This work (*The Primacy of Peter*) was edited by the famous Eastern “Orthodox” scholar John Meyendorf. In this Eastern “Orthodox” work, it is repeatedly admitted that the Bible teaches that Peter is the rock:

“There is a formal and real identity between Peter and rock. Jesus will build the church upon Cephas.” (*The Primacy of Peter*, edited by John Meyendorf, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1992, p. 48.)

“By confessing his faith in the divinity of the Savior, Peter became the Rock of the Church.” (*The Primacy of Peter*, p. 72.)

“The Apostle Peter is the rock on which the Church is built, and will remain the rock until the coming of the Lord.” (*The Primacy of Peter*, p. 122; also pp. 63-65; etc.)

CONSIDERING THE CONTEXT, IT WOULD BE ABSURD IF JESUS WERE NOT SAYING THAT PETER IS THE ROCK

Think for a moment how absurd it would be if Jesus were not saying that Peter is the rock. As we've just shown, Jesus pronounces Peter alone blessed.

“And Jesus answered and said unto him, **Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona...**”
(Matthew 16:17)

Jesus changes only Peter's name.

“And **I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter**, and upon this rock I will build my church...” (Matthew 16:18)

Jesus gathers His disciples and gives the keys of the Kingdom to Peter alone. He then gives to Peter alone the power to bind and loose.

“And **I will give unto thee [Peter]** the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven...” (Matthew 16:19)

But when he's talking about the rock, even though the statement is in the midst of all of these others to Peter alone, Protestants would have us believe that Jesus is not talking about Peter but about Himself or something else. It's ridiculous. It's obviously false that argumentation really shouldn't be necessary.

Further, it should be pointed out that the reason that Jesus, while referring to Peter, says “upon *this* rock I will build my Church,” rather than *upon you*, is because while Peter is definitely the rock, the office He is establishing in Peter (the Papacy) will endure through the ages well after Peter is gone. It's founded upon Peter, but will continue to exist after Peter is gone. It's an institution in Peter, but will not be limited to Peter. He will have successors.

THE FATHERS BELIEVED THAT PETER IS THE ROCK

The early Church fathers, the prominent early Christian writers of the first centuries, recognized that Peter is the rock. There are many citations one could bring forward, but here are just a few.

Tertullian, *On Monogamy*, 213 A.D., refers to Peter and speaks of the Church, “built upon him...” (*The Faith of the Early Fathers*, Vol. 1:381)

St. Cyril of Alexandria (370-444), who played a key role with the Council of Ephesus, stated in his *Commentary on John*: “He [Jesus] suffers him to be no

longer called Simon... **He changed his name into Peter, from the word *petra* (rock); for on him He was afterwards to found His Church.**"

St. Basil the Great (330-379 A.D.), *Against Eunomians*, 4: "Peter... who on account of the pre-eminence of his faith received upon himself the building of the Church."

St. Gregory Nazienzen, great Eastern father (329-389 A.D.), *Oration 26*: "... of all the disciples of Christ, all of whom were great and deserving of the choice, **one is called rock and entrusted with the foundations of the Church...**"

St. John Chrysostom, great Eastern father and Bishop of Constantinople, *Homily 3, De. Poenit. 4*, 387 A.D. "Peter himself the head or crown of the Apostles... when I name Peter I name that unbroken rock, that firm foundation..."

One could also quote St. Ambrose, Jerome and many others, but the point should be clear.

OBJECTION: THE ROCK IS PETER'S FAITH, NOT PETER
ANSWER: THE FATHERS SAID THAT BOTH PETER AND HIS FAITH ARE THE ROCK BECAUSE PETER'S FAITH IS INSEPARABLE FROM PETER HIMSELF

In an effort to argue against the Papacy, some non-Catholics say that Jesus was referring to Peter's faith (not Peter himself) as the rock upon which the Church would be built. They will even cite some selective passages from the early Church fathers in an attempt to prove this. For instance, they will cite this passage from St. Hilary of Poitiers.

St. Hilary of Poitiers (300-368), *On the Trinity*, 6, 37: "**This faith is the foundation of the Church**; through this faith the gates of Hell cannot prevail against her." (*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Series 2, Vol. 9, p. 112.)

What they fail to tell you is that in the very same work, St. Hilary said that Peter was the foundation of the Church (*On the Trinity*, 6, 20).

St. Hilary of Poitiers (300-368), *On the Trinity*, 6, 20: "**Blessed Simon**, who after his confession on the mystery **was set to be the foundation-stone of the Church**, and received they keys of the kingdom of Heaven." (NPNF2, Vol. 9, p. 105.)

St. Hilary of Poitiers, *Commentary on Matthew*, 7, 6: "Peter believeth first, and is

the prince of the apostleship.”

The fathers understood Peter’s faith to be inseparable from Peter himself and from the office which Jesus set up in him as prime minister of His Church. We also see this truth in Luke chapter 22.

LUKE 22 TEACHES PAPAL INFALLIBILITY (THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE OFFICE OF THE POPE)

In Luke chapter 22, we find another very important, but often overlooked passage in the Bible which proves Catholic teaching on the Papacy.

Luke 22:24-32 “And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve... And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. **And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.**”

This passage is fascinating. It contains a number of important truths. First of all, there is a strife among the Apostles about who will be the greatest. Jesus explains that His Kingdom is not like that of the Gentiles. So Jesus is talking about how His Kingdom or Church is structured.

Jesus then says that Satan has desired to sift all the apostles in the plural, but that He has prayed for Peter [singular] that Peter’s faith fail not.

Luke 22:31-32 “And the Lord said, **Simon**, Simon, behold, **Satan hath desired to have you [plural]**, that he may sift you as wheat: **But I have prayed for thee [singular], that thy faith fail not:** and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.”

It’s important to note that when Jesus says “Satan hath desired to have you,” the “you” is in the plural. This is clear in the original Greek text, but not in the English. Satan desired to have all the Apostles, Jesus says; but He prayed for Simon Peter alone, that his faith fail not. Peter, the one who receives the keys of the Kingdom, also has an *unfailing faith*, according to the words of Jesus. Jesus says this only

about Peter, clearly separating him from the rest.

The word “infallible” means cannot fail. Thus, we see, right in Luke 22, the roots of the Catholic teaching on the infallibility of the pope. This teaching on the infallibility of the pope does not mean that a true pope, as the successor of Peter, can never make a mistake. It does not mean that he cannot sin. What it means is that when a true pope teaches authoritatively on faith or morals to the entire Church (i.e., from the Chair of Peter), Jesus will not let that teaching fail. For if He did, then the Church would itself be led into error and fail. Vatican Council 1 (a dogmatic Catholic council) put it this way:

Pope Pius IX, *Vatican Council I*, Session 4, Chap. 4, 1870 A.D. “So, this gift of truth and a never failing faith was divinely conferred upon Peter and his successors in this chair...”

It’s an unfailing faith of the **Office** of Prime Minister/Pope which has been established in Peter and will carry on through his successors in that office. Even in the very early Church, the fathers saw this passage in Luke 22 as another proof for the Papacy.

St. Ambrose (4th century), *In Ps. 43, n. 40*: “Peter, after having been tempted by the Devil, is set over the Church. The Lord... chose him as the pastor of the Lord’s flock. For to him He said, But thou when converted confirm thy brethren [Luke 22].”

JESUS ENTRUSTS ALL HIS SHEEP TO PETER IN JOHN 21

John chapter 21 provides more proof that Jesus entrusted all the members of His Church to St. Peter.

John 21:15-17 “So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, **Feed my lambs**. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, **Tend my sheep**. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, **Feed my sheep**.

We see here, in John 21, that Jesus entrusts all of His sheep to St. Peter. The dogmatic First Vatican Council of the Catholic Church said that this moment in John 21, after the Resurrection of Jesus, was the moment that Jesus actually gave to St.

Peter the keys and the authority over His church which He had promised him in Matthew 16.

It's important to emphasize that this moment after the Resurrection, in John 21, was the point at which Jesus made St. Peter the first pope. This is significant because some non-Catholics bring up St. Peter's three-fold denial of Christ in John 18:25 and following. When Peter denied Jesus Christ, it was before the Crucifixion and Resurrection. Jesus had not yet given St. Peter the authority as pope. The words in Mt. 16:18-20 *promise* the keys of the Kingdom to St. Peter. They promise that Jesus would build His Church upon Him and make him the prime minister of His Church, but that office was not conferred upon Peter until after the Resurrection, by these words in John 21:15-17. Therefore, St. Peter's denial of Christ poses no problem at all for Catholic teaching on the papacy.

Further, the Catholic Church does not teach that a true pope cannot sin mortally or even lose his soul. It teaches that a true pope holds the position of supreme authority in the Church, and that when a true pope teaches in a building fashion to the universal Church, God will protect him from teaching error. The power is in the office itself, which is protected by Christ.

JESUS TELLS PETER TO RULE HIS SHEEP

John 21:15-17 "He saith unto him, Feed my lambs... He saith unto him, Tend my sheep... Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep."

In John 21:15-17, Jesus tells Peter to *Feed my lambs, Tend my sheep, Feed my sheep*. Jesus clearly gives St. Peter authority over His flock, the members of His Church. Some may ask why Jesus says the first time, *Feed my lambs*, and the second and third times *my sheep*. The early Church fathers understood this reference to lambs and sheep to differentiate between younger and older members of the Church, or to distinguish between the faithful and the clergy. All of them are entrusted to St. Peter.

Now what's particularly important is that when Jesus says *Feed my lambs, Tend my sheep, Feed my sheep*, the second command of the three is the word *poimaine* in Greek. Many bibles will translate all three the same way, as "feed"; but the second command is actually different from the first and third.

John 21:15-17 "He saith unto him, Feed [Boske] my lambs... He saith unto him, **Tend [Poimaine] my sheep**... Jesus saith unto him, Feed [Boske] my sheep."

In the first and the third commands that Jesus gives to Peter about His flock, the

word in the Greek is *boske*. *Boske* means to feed. But the word *poimaine*, the second command of Jesus to Peter about the flock, means to rule. It is also translated as tend. Hence, Jesus not only commissioned Peter to feed His Church, but to rule it. It's fascinating that a form of the very same word *poimaine*, which Jesus uses about Peter's authority over the flock in John 21:16, is also used in Revelation 2:27.

Rev. 2:27 "And **he shall rule [poimanei] them with a rod of iron...**"

That means that Peter not only has a primacy over Christ's flock, but a primacy of jurisdiction to rule and govern the flock, contrary to what the Eastern "Orthodox" would say. The same word *poimaine* is used in Rev. 12:5 and elsewhere to indicate the power to rule.

Here's what the great Eastern father of the Church, St. John Chrysostom, said about this passage in John 21.

St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on John*, 88, 1, 4th century: "Jesus saith unto him, 'Feed my sheep.' And why, having passed by the others, does He speak with Peter on these matters? He was the chosen one of the apostles, the mouth of the disciples, the leader of the band... the denial was done away, Jesus putteth into his hands the chief authority among the brethren; and He bringeth not forward the denial, nor reproacheth him with what had taken place, but saith, 'If thou lovest Me, preside over thy brethren.'" (*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, Vol. 14:331)

PETER IS MENTIONED OVER 100 TIMES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT; THE NEXT CLOSEST APOSTLE IS ST. JOHN, WHO IS NAMED JUST 29 TIMES

The prominence of Peter's name in Scripture reveals that he held, by the institution of Christ, a unique position of authority among the Apostles. Peter is named well over 100 times in the New Testament. The next closest apostle is John, who is named just 29 times.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE BIBLE REPEATEDLY SINGLES OUT PETER AND SETS HIM APART FROM THE OTHER APOSTLES

The way that Scripture uses Peter's name is extremely telling. People should think about the significance of these examples. Notice how Peter is mentioned by name, while the other Apostles are repeatedly mentioned as *those with Peter*. This demonstrates that **Scripture singles out St. Peter and sets him apart from the other Apostles.**

Mark 16:7 “**But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter** that he goeth before you into Galilee...”

Acts 2:37 “Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, **and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles**, Men and brethren, what shall we do?”

Acts 5:29 “Then **Peter and the other apostles answered** and said...”

Mark 1:36 “**And Simon [Peter] and they that were with him** followed after him.”

Luke 8:45 “And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, **Peter and they that were with him said**, Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee...”

Luke 9:32 “But **Peter and they that were with him** were heavy with sleep...”

Peter is clearly singled out as the leader of the Apostles. It's significant that the New Testament writers singled out Peter in this way even though they wrote years after the Resurrection. This shows that Peter's position of leadership still held its significance in the Church after the Resurrection.

EVERY LIST OF THE 12 APOSTLES HAS PETER FIRST

Every list of the 12 Apostles in the New Testament has Peter's name first and Judas' name last. This is true even though the order of the other Apostles in between is not always exactly the same. You can see those lists in Matthew 10:2, Mark 3:14, Luke 6:14 and Acts 1:13.

Matthew 10:2-4 “Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; **The first, Simon, who is called Peter**, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; Simon the Canaanite, **and Judas Iscariot**, who also betrayed him.”

Mark 3:14-19 “And he ordained twelve... **And Simon he surnamed Peter**; and James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder: and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Canaanite, **and Judas Iscariot**...”

Luke 6:14-16 “**Simon, (whom he also named Peter,)** and Andrew his brother,

James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes, And Judas the brother of James, **and Judas Iscariot**, which also was the traitor.”

IN MATTHEW’S LIST, PETER IS NOT ONLY MENTIONED FIRST, BUT CALLED
“FIRST” OR “CHIEF”

Matthew 10:2 “Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; **The first [protos], Simon, who is called Peter...**”

The Greek word used in Matthew 10:2 (*protos*) means first or chief or principal. Since no other numbers are given in the list – and Peter was not the first one who followed Jesus (Andrew was) – this statement is clearly not meant to assign a number to Simon Peter. It is to indicate that he is the chief or leader or principal of the twelve. Matthew is literally saying: The Chief, Peter.

It’s also interesting to note that *protos* is used to mean “chief” in Matthew 20:27.

Matthew 20:27 “And whosoever will be chief [protos] among you, let him be your servant.”

The very same Gospel (Matthew) already told us that Peter is the chief among them (Matthew 10:2). The statement in Matthew 20:27, about who will be the chief among them, is therefore not some general instruction; but it is one that has a very specific and concrete application. The chief, Peter, must also act like a servant, discharging his position of leadership with humility. This verse is one reason why a pope (who is chief in the Church of Jesus) is called “servant of the servants of God” (*servus servorum dei*).

JOHN AND PETER RAN TO THE TOMB OF JESUS; JOHN GOT THERE FIRST,
BUT WAITED FOR PETER TO GO IN

Here’s another point which is not necessarily as important as those which have already been covered, but it is interesting. In John 20 we read that both Peter and John ran to the sepulchre from which Jesus rose again. John outran Peter and got there first, but he didn’t go in. John stopped and waited for Peter to go in.

John 20:4-6 “So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet he went not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie...”

The fact that Jesus made St. Peter the first pope shows itself again and again after the Resurrection, in the acts of the early Church: the Acts of the Apostles.

PETER TAKES THE PRIME ROLE IN THE REPLACEMENT OF JUDAS; THE REPLACEMENT OF JUDAS SHOWS APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION

In Acts 1, we read about the decision to replace the deceased Judas with another apostle. Peter stands up in the midst of the rest, and directs the course of action to replace Judas.

Acts 1:15-20 “And in those days **Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said**, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,) Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before **concerning Judas**, which was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity... For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and **his bishoprick let another take.**”

This clearly demonstrates Peter’s position of authority as the first pope, but it also shows us apostolic succession. In other words, **the positions of the Apostles (the bishops) continue on with replacements after these Apostles or first bishops died. Speaking of Judas’ office, Acts 1:20 says: let his bishoprick another take. The bishops were to be replaced down through history as the Church continued its mission;** so that when St. Peter himself dies in Rome as its first bishop, his place as prime minister and leader of the Christian Church would be filled by another Bishop of Rome, the second pope. His name was Linus.

IN ACTS 2, WE SEE ST. PETER’S PRIMACY AS THE POPE IN HIS LONG SPEECH TO THE JEWS

Acts 2:14 “**But Peter, standing up with the eleven**, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words.”

Notice again the language, “Peter standing up with the eleven.” This was on the day of Pentecost, considered the birthday of the Church, when all the leaders of the Church were gathered. After he preached to the Jews, they asked the men (plural) what they should do. It was again Peter who answered for everyone:

Acts 2:37-47 “Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, **and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what**

shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost... and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls... And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”

We also see here that there is no salvation outside the Church led by St. Peter, the Catholic Church.

IN ACTS 4, PETER’S PRIMACY AS POPE IS SHOWN IN HIS SPEECH TO THE LEADERSHIP OF THE JEWS

At a gathering with the high priest, the question was posed to them: by what power have you done this? St. Peter again answered for the rest.

Acts 4:6-10,12 “And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem... they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this? **Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them**, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel... Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

PETER IS AGAIN SINGLED OUT AS THE LEADER IN ACTS 5

In Acts 5, the Apostles are again questioned by the high priest and charged not to teach in Jesus’ name.

Acts 5:29 “**Then Peter and the other apostles answered** and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.”

If all the Apostles answered, as the verse says, then why would the scripture word it in this way, mentioning Peter by himself? It’s obviously because he was the leader of the Apostles, being the first pope.

PETER GIVES OUT THE PUNISHMENT OF THE CHURCH IN THE CASE OF ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA

In Acts 5, we read that two Christians, Ananias and Sapphira, sold a piece of land but by fraud kept back part of the money. It was St. Peter who pronounced upon them the stern judgment of God and the Church.

Acts 5:3-11 “**But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart** to lie

to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?... And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost... Then Peter said unto her [Sapphira], How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?... Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost... **And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.**”

THE FIRST GENTILE CONVERT IS TOLD SPECIFICALLY TO GO TO ST. PETER, THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH

In Acts 10, we read about the first Gentile convert, Cornelius. People must keep in mind the significance of receiving Cornelius into the Church. Receiving the first Gentile convert was a monumental event which showed the universality of the one true Church. The fact that the angel tells Cornelius to go specifically to St. Peter, and that Peter will tell him what he must do, provides us with another illustration of the primacy of St. Peter as head of the Church.

Acts 10:4-6 “And when he looked on him, he [Cornelius] was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and **call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter... he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.**”

THE VISION THAT THE OLD LAW’S RESTRICTIONS AGAINST UNCLEAN FOODS IS FINISHED, WHICH SIGNIFIED THE END OF THE OLD LAW, IS GIVEN TO ST. PETER, THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH

In accordance with the angel’s instruction to the first gentile convert to go to St. Peter, it’s equally significant that St. Peter alone is given the vision about the end of the Old Law and its prescriptions.

Acts 10:9-13 “On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, **Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour:** And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending upon him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, **Rise, Peter; kill, and eat.**”

It’s interesting that the vision is given to Peter three times. This corresponds with John 21:15-17, where three times Jesus indicates to Peter that all the members of

His Church are entrusted to him: Feed my lambs, tend my sheep, feed my sheep. This corresponds to the three-fold office of St. Peter and all true popes: to teach and guard the true doctrine, to watch over the Church's liturgy or worship, and to govern the Church by discipline.

ST. PETER CLEARLY HAS THE PRIMACY AT THE COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM

In Acts 15, we read about the dissension concerning circumcision. Some were teaching that all Gentile converts to the Gospel had to undergo circumcision to be saved. After much disputing, Paul and Barnabas went to the Apostles at Jerusalem to consult about this question. The leaders of the Church held a council to discuss the issue. This council is sometimes called the first ecumenical council of the Christian Church.

Acts 15:7 **“And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up,** and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.”

After much disputing, St. Peter rises up and delivers the first address to silence the argument and give the decision. That's because he was the leader of the Church, the first pope. The Bible makes special mention of the fact that when Peter spoke and gave his decision, the multitude kept silence:

Acts 15:12 **“Then all the multitude kept silence,** and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul...”

St. James spoke after Paul and Barnabas; for, as early Church historian Eusebius tells us, St. James was left to be the Bishop over the local church at Jerusalem.

THE PROMULGATION OF THE DECISION REACHED AT THE COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM SHOWS THE POWER OF THE CHURCH AND OF ECUMENICAL COUNCILS

Acts 15:28-29 **“For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;** That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.”

Notice that in Acts 15 the Apostles (led by St. Peter) reached a decision, after Jesus had left the earth, by their own authority which they had received from Christ. This process continued throughout the history of the true Church of Jesus Christ, the

Catholic Church. Since the Church is the pillar and foundation of the truth, as we read in 1 Tim. 3:15, its commands, precepts and decisions are binding, if confirmed by the authority of the supreme bishop, the pope; for he has the power to bind and loose from Christ. That's why, after the Council of Jerusalem, Paul preached that people must follow these precepts:

Acts 15:41 "And he [Paul] went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches, **commanding them to keep the precepts of the apostles and the ancients.**"

This verse is not complete in the Protestant Bible. **The King James removed the part about keeping the precepts of the apostles and ancients because it shows the authority of the Church** and an authority which must be heeded outside the Bible.

St. Ignatius of Antioch, *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans*, Chapter 8, 110 A.D. "Apart from the bishop, let no one do anything that pertains to the Church. The only true Eucharist is the one performed by the bishop or by him whom the bishop has appointed. Wherever the bishop is, there must be the congregation, just as wherever Jesus Christ is there is the Catholic Church."

CONCLUSION TO BIBLICAL PROOF FOR THE PAPACY

We've seen the undeniable evidence from the Bible that St. Peter was the first pope. We've seen evidence and proof from the words of Jesus, from all four Gospels, from the Acts of the Apostles, from the fathers, and more. It's a fact of history that St. Peter died in Rome as its first bishop, and that he was succeeded by other popes down through history. They assumed the office of St. Peter as the leader and governor of Christ's Kingdom (His Church), just like Eliakim succeeded to Shebna's place of prime minister in the Kingdom of David.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ALONE AND ETERNAL SECURITY REFUTED BY THE BIBLE

*James 2:24 “Ye see then how that **by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.**”*

The overwhelming majority of Protestants believe that the Bible teaches that people are justified (put into a state in which they will be saved) by *faith alone in Jesus* – i.e., apart from a consideration of their actions, deeds or sins. Most of them also believe in “once saved always saved” or eternal security: that a man who believes in Jesus cannot lose his eternal salvation. These ideas are false and completely contrary to the teaching of the Bible. Let’s look at the proof. After that, I will respond to objections.

Almost all of the quotations in this section come from the 1611 King James Version of the Bible, a famous Protestant translation.

JESUS SAYS THAT MEN MUST RADICALLY CUT OFF OCCASIONS OF SIN TO AVOID HELL, NOT JUST BELIEVE

In Matthew chapter 5, we find the parable about cutting off one’s hand or eye to avoid Hell.

Matthew 5:29-30 “And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee... **And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.**”

This parable, which obviously refers to cutting off occasions of sins – things in life that will drag people into offenses against God – only has a meaning if sins and works are a part of determining whether one attains salvation. By cutting off sinful things and bad works, one will save his soul. Man’s sins and works are therefore a part of his justification. **If man were justified by faith alone, this parable would not make any sense whatsoever.**

NOT ALL WHO SAY “LORD, LORD” ENTER HEAVEN, BUT HE THAT DOES THE WILL OF GOD

Matthew 7:21-23 “**Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven**. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name

done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

Here we see that he who “doeth” the will of God will enter Heaven, not all who consider Jesus to be the Lord. Then Jesus emphasizes the point by stating that you must do what He says to be His.

Matthew 7:24-27 “**Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock... And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.”**

How clear does it have to be? It’s a matter of whether you hear His words and do them. It’s not by faith alone.

YOU MUST PERSEVERE TO THE END TO BE SAVED

Matthew 10:22 “And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but **he that endureth to the end shall be saved.**”

This totally contradicts the Protestant view of “once saved always saved.” Also see Mark 13:13 for the same message.

ST. PAUL SAYS THAT HE COULD BECOME A CASTAWAY

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 “Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But **I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.**”

St. Paul says that he fears he could become a “castaway.” The word “castaway” (in 1 Cor. 9:27) is translated from the Greek word *adokimos*. *Adokimos* is translated as “reprobate” in 2 Timothy 3:8 and in Romans 1:28. It describes lost souls, mortal sinners, apostates, and those who are outside the state of justification and/or outside the faith of Jesus.

In 2 Timothy 3:8, it is used to describe evil people who “*resist the truth: men of*

corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith” (King James Version). These are obviously not people who are in a state of justification or on the road to Heaven.

In Romans 1:28, *adokimos* is used to describe people who have been given over to abominable sins – once again, people who are not on the road to Heaven. *Adokimos* is also found in other passages, including Titus 1:16, Hebrews 6:8 and elsewhere. In each case, it signifies people who are not on the road to Heaven, but outside the state of justification and/or the true faith.

By declaring that he could become a castaway or a reprobate (*adokimos*), there is no doubt that St. Paul is saying that he could lose his salvation and be damned along with the other reprobates. Was St. Paul a true believer who had been justified? Of course he was. The Bible thus teaches that true believers are not assured of salvation. This passage completely refutes the idea of eternal security or “once saved always saved.”

MORTAL SINNERS, INCLUDING FORNICATORS, DRUNKARDS, ADULTERERS, ETC., WILL NOT INHERIT HEAVEN

Galatians 5:19-21 “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; **Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like:** of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that **they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.**”

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 “Know ye not that **the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.** And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

Before moving on, it should be noted that, according to St. Thomas Aquinas, the sin of “uncleanness” or “effeminacy” (which excludes one from Heaven, according to the above verses) is the mortal sin of masturbation (*Summa Theologiae*, Pt. II-II, Q. 154, A. 11.).

These passages pose big problems for those who believe in justification by faith alone and/or eternal security. The Bible teaches that mortal sins (grave sins) destroy the state of justification. It teaches that grave sins put people in a state in which they

will be excluded from the Kingdom of God. This coincides with the Catholic teaching that a believer *can lose the state of justification* and be damned if he or she commits a mortal sin (e.g., fornication, drunkenness, looking at pornography, etc.) *and dies in that state*.

Now, in light of these passages, Protestants have a problem. If all who commit mortal sins lose their justification, faith-alone Protestants would have to say that no true believer commits mortal sins. This response doesn't work, however, as we will see. There are millions of supposed "Christians" who say they have been "saved" by faith in Jesus. A countless number of them get drunk, fornicate, cheat, steal, etc. In other words, they commit clear mortal sins which the Bible says destroy the state of justification.

Since the Bible clearly says that mortal sins destroy justification, faith-alone Protestants are forced into arguing that all those "believers" who commit mortal sins were not true believers. They must admit that the "assurance" of justification/salvation which those people thought they had by "faith alone" was an illusion, a deception. They didn't really have *true "saving" faith*, according to them, even though they thought they did.

However, this response – that a "REAL" believer cannot commit the mortal sins which the Bible says exclude from salvation – is refuted by the next verse we will see. It proves that people who definitely had true "saving" faith and were justified *could also commit* those mortal sins. If they did, they would lose justification.

EPHESIANS 5:5-8 PROVES THAT IT'S POSSIBLE FOR TRUE BELIEVERS TO COMMIT MORTAL SINS AND LOSE THEIR SALVATION FOR SUCH SINS – THIS DEMOLISHES THE IDEA OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ALONE AND ETERNAL SECURITY

Ephesians 5:5-8 "For this ye know, that **no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God**. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. **Be not ye therefore partakers with them**. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light."

This is a fascinating passage.

St. Paul first mentions a number of mortal sins, and states that those who do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. We saw this above with the passages in Galatians 5 and 1 Corinthians 6:9. As stated already, the common (and only possible)

Protestant response to this is that no true believer could commit such sins which destroy the state of justification.

Well, the above passage clearly teaches that justified believers could commit those grave sins. St. Paul warns them in Ephesians 5:7 to “**Be not ye therefore partakers with them**”! Therefore, the believers could be partakers with the mortal sinners! And if there is any doubt that he is including authentic believers in that warning, **he speaks of them as those who are now “light in the lord”** (true believers).

Therefore, those who are “light in the Lord” could be “partakers” with the mortal sinners and in the mortal sins which destroy justification. This without any doubt refutes justification by faith alone and “once saved always saved.” Let no man deceive you with vain words such as “justification by faith alone”!

MEN CAN FOLLOW THE WAY OF JESUS AND THEN TURN BACK AND BE OVERCOME

2 Peter 2:20-22 “**For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.** For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit **again**; and **the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.**”

This verse indicates that people who are justified can lose their justification through sins. It's a clear proof of the Catholic teaching on justification. Some might try to argue that he's simply speaking here of people who've heard of the Gospel, not those who *really* believed it. That doesn't hold up. The verse says that these people have “known the way of righteousness” and “escaped the pollutions of the world.” One doesn't escape the pollutions of the world by simply hearing of the Gospel. His language describes someone who is walking the justified path and then turns away. That's why 2 Peter 2:23 compares this man to a sow (a pig) who has been **washed** (i.e. justified) and then returns to the mud! That's also why, earlier in the same chapter, a reference was made to the angels who sinned and lost their justification. St. Peter was really driving the point home.

THE ANGELS, ONCE JUSTIFIED, LOST THEIR JUSTIFICATION THROUGH SIN

2 Peter 2:4 “... God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.”

The angels were created in justification; but they sinned mortally, lost their justification, and were cast into Hell. These passages completely contradict the Protestant view of justification.

GOD IS THE AUTHOR OF ETERNAL SALVATION TO ALL WHO "OBEY" HIM

Hebrews 5:9 "And being made perfect, he [Jesus] became **the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.**"

It's not by faith alone.

BELIEVERS CAN FALL AWAY – PERIOD!

Hebrews 6:4-6 "For **it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance**; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."

This passage clearly shows that people who are believers, who "were partakers of the Holy Ghost," can fall away from the state of justification. The reference to it being "impossible" for such people to be renewed again to that state refers to the original grace of baptism, by which they were first cleansed from sin. They cannot be baptized again, but even grave sins can be forgiven in confession (John 20:23). This passage obliterates – totally demolishes – the once saved always saved Protestant theology.

BELIEVERS CAN BE DAMNED FOR THEIR SINS AFTER KNOWING THE TRUTH
– THUS DISPROVING FAITH ALONE!

Hebrews 10:26-27 "For **if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation**, which shall devour the adversaries."

In the same book and in the same vein as the above warning (Hebrews 6:4-6), this passage says that those who have the faith – St. Paul speaks of "we" – can lose salvation as a result of willful sins.

WITHOUT HOLINESS, NO MAN SHALL SEE THE LORD

Hebrews 12:14 “Follow peace with all men, and **holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.**”

This verse teaches that the justification necessary for salvation is a sanctification: a true holiness possessed by the person. It is not, as Protestants contend, the righteousness of Christ being imputed (i.e. applied) to a person, even though he remains interiorly unholy.

Explaining the Protestant view of the justified man, Martin Luther said that a justified man is like a mound of dung covered over with snow. The man remains sinful and iniquitous on the inside; but, as soon as he believes, the righteousness of Christ is applied to him as a covering and a cloak. This enables a dirty and iniquitous man to be saved, according to Protestant doctrine. He can be saved, even though he doesn't possess holiness in himself, but remains a dung of sin on the inside.

We can see how this view contradicts the teaching of the Bible, which is that a justified man is actually and truly holy by God's grace. He is sanctified and changed interiorly; he must possess this interior holiness to see the Lord.

It should also be pointed out that what God says happens. If He pronounces someone just, that's because that person is truly just, not fictitiously just or cloaked over.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER – MEN CAN BELIEVE FOR A TIME AND THEN FALL AWAY

Matthew 13:18-22 “Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon [presently] with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, **but dureth for a while**: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.”

Here we see that a man can believe “for a while,” and then fall away. The versions of this parable in Mark and Luke bring out the point even more clearly:

Mark 4:17 “... And have no root in themselves, and **so endure but for a time**:

afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.”

Luke 8:13 “They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, **which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.**”

Jesus says clearly in Luke 8:13 that these people believe “for a while.” The Protestants might say this refers to people who do not truly believe. One cannot say that, for Jesus Himself says that they believe for a time.

This entire parable refutes – and has no meaning in – the false Protestant view of justification. It not only teaches us that one can believe and then fall away, but that **sins, temptations, worldly concerns, efforts to overcome the world and its snares and its cares (Mt. 13:22), all are part of one's justification and salvation.** It's a striking confirmation of the Catholic teaching on justification, and a striking refutation of the Protestant position.

Luke 8:15 “But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, **keep it,** and bring forth fruit with **patience.**”

Those who bring forth fruit unto eternal life are those who hear the word and “keep it” or practice it.

THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS: IF YOU DO NOT PRODUCE THINGS FOR GOD, YOU WILL BE DAMNED – SO MUCH FOR JUSTIFICATION BY “FAITH ALONE”

The Parable of the Talents completely refutes the Protestant view of justification by faith alone.

Matthew 25:15-30 “And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. **Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.** After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things:

enter thou into the joy of thy lord. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. Then **he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:** Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. **And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**”

In this parable we see that the person is condemned for sloth, for laziness and failing to do things with the talents he has received. He was condemned because he didn't work with his talents to gain more talents! This parable completely contradicts justification by faith alone. What's extremely interesting about this is that it says the Lord “reaps where He has not sown.” In other words, the Lord expects us to do and to produce our own works, done with His grace. If we do not cooperate with His grace to produce such works – and are not able to present such supernatural works before Him at the Judgment – we will be cast into Hell. This parable confirms Catholic teaching on works, while completely refuting Protestant views.

JESUS WILL RENDER TO EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS WORKS

Matthew 16:27 “For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then **he shall reward every man according to his works.**”

We will see the same teaching in the Book of Romans and in the Book of Revelation (the Apocalypse).

JESUS SHALL CAST INTO HELL THOSE WHO DO INIQUITY

Matthew 13:41-42 “The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, **and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire:** there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

God will condemn people to Hell based on whether they do iniquity.

EACH PERSON WILL RECEIVE REWARD OR PUNISHMENT BASED ON WHAT HE OR SHE HAS DONE IN THE BODY

2 Corinthians 5:9-10 "... Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, **we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.**"

We read that one must labor to be accepted by Christ. Further, we see that men will receive in the next world a reward or a punishment based on what they have done in the body, "whether it be good or bad." The things which a man has done (his deeds) are seen as integral to his salvation or damnation.

ONE COULD HAVE ALL FAITH AND IT COULD PROFIT HIM NOTHING

1 Corinthians 13:1-2 "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and **though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.**"

According to Protestant doctrine, *faith alone* grants salvation. Thus, one who has all faith would be saved. But the Bible teaches otherwise: one could have all faith and it could still profit him nothing. Justification is not by faith alone.

WHAT MUST ONE DO TO BE SAVED? JESUS SAYS: KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS, NOT JUST BELIEVE

Matthew 19:16-21 "And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God: but **if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments**... and come and follow me."

To the question of what he must do to be saved, Jesus says one must keep the commandments and follow Him.

A RICH MAN SHALL HARDLY ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

Matthew 19:23-24 “Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, **That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.** And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.”

Here we see that what one does with his money will also affect his salvation.

JESUS SAYS WATCH, LEST HE COMES WHEN YOU ARE NOT DOING WHAT YOU SHOULD AND ARE COMMITTING SIN

Mark 13:35-37 “Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh... Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.”

The version of this parable in Luke’s Gospel brings out the necessity of works and doing things for salvation even more clearly:

Luke 12:38,43 “And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants... **Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.**”

Here’s another interesting passage on this point from Luke 21:

Luke 21:34-36 “And **take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.** For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. **Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass,** and to stand before the Son of man.”

In this interesting passage we see that a failure to do things – a failure to avoid sins such as surfeiting (which means indulgence or gluttony) and drunkenness – can cost one one’s salvation. This should show us again why justification by faith alone is completely contrary and foreign to the true Gospel.

HE THAT SAVES HIS LIFE SHALL LOSE IT

Luke 9:24 “For whosoever **will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life** for my sake, the same shall save it.”

We see that what one DOES, in giving up sinful things that the world offers in this life, will determine whether one has salvation. It’s obviously not by faith alone.

YOU MUST BEAR YOUR CROSS TO BE HIS DISCIPLE

Luke 14:27,33 “And **whosoever doth not bear his cross**, and come after me, cannot be my disciple... So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.”

Salvation is not attained by faith alone in Jesus, but by faith and carrying the cross and prioritizing all one possesses, making salvation in Jesus Christ's religion the top priority.

MAN MUST KEEP THE SAYING OF JESUS TO NOT SEE DEATH

John 8:51 “Verily, verily, I say unto you, **if a man keep my saying**, he shall never see death.”

Those who keep His words, not just believe, will not see death.

ONLY THOSE WHO DO FORGIVE ARE FORGIVEN

Matthew 6:14 “For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.”

One is only forgiven if he forgives. It's not by faith alone.

MEN ARE JUSTIFIED AND CONDEMNED BY THEIR WORDS, NOT JUST ON THE BASIS OF WHETHER THEY BELIEVE

Matthew 12:36-37 “But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”

But I thought the Protestants said that justification was by faith alone? No, your words, your actions, your works shall justify you or condemn you, in addition to whether you believe. Man will have to account for all of his actions and all of his words on the Day of Judgment. A similar parable is given in Luke 19.

SIMON MAGUS BELIEVED AND THEN FELL AWAY

In Acts 8, we read about Simon Magus.

Acts 8:13 “Then Simon himself believed also: and... was baptized...”

But just a few verses later, we find out that he fell into grave sin:

Acts 8:18-21 "... when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, **Thy money perish with thee**, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: **for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.**"

FELIX WAS TERRIFIED WHEN PAUL PREACHED TO HIM THE GOSPEL AND CHASTITY, OBVIOUSLY BECAUSE ONE MUST AVOID IMPURITY TO BE SAVED

In Acts 24, we find another interesting passage that is relevant to this topic.

Acts 24:25 "And as he [Paul] reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, **Felix trembled, and answered**, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee."

The Catholic version of this verse reads:

"And as he treated of justice, and chastity, and of the judgment to come, Felix being terrified, answered: For this time, go thy way: but when I have a convenient time, I will send for thee."

Felix was terrified when Paul spoke about the Gospel's teaching on chastity, obviously because Paul informed him that sins in this regard exclude one from Heaven. Felix was terrified only because Paul did not preach to him the false gospel of justification by faith alone.

WORK OUT YOUR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING

Philippians 2:12 "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.**"

Work out salvation with "fear and trembling," obviously because men can lose their salvation through grave sin at any time.

THE BOOK OF ROMANS CLEARLY INDICATES THAT WORKS ARE A PART OF JUSTIFICATION AND SALVATION

*FOR A REFUTATION OF THE OBJECTION CONCERNING ROMANS 3:28 AND THE “WORKS OF THE LAW” PHRASE – A COMMON PROTESTANT MISCONCEPTION – SEE THE RESPONSE TO THAT OBJECTION AT THE END OF THIS SECTION

The Protestant theology, which says that man is justified by faith alone, is contradicted near the beginning of the Book of Romans by Paul’s discussion in Chapter 2 of how people will be condemned for what they do. It is also contradicted when Paul says in Romans that God will render to each man according to his WORKS, and that eternal life is for those who work unto good.

It’s very interesting that these passages come at the beginning of Romans. This was God’s way of removing any misunderstanding about the necessity to do things and avoid sins for salvation which might arise from heretical misinterpretations of later passages, which were written to emphasize that man is not justified by works of the Old Law.

Romans 2:2-3 “... the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, **and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?**”

What things is he talking about? At the end of chapter 1, he gave a list of mortal sins, including fornication, covetousness, wickedness, etc.

Romans 2:5-6 “... the righteous judgment of God; **Who will render to every man according to his deeds.**”

He will render to every man according to his works or deeds, not on the basis of faith alone. He continues:

ETERNAL LIFE IS FOR BELIEVERS WHO CONTINUE IN PATIENT WELL DOING

Romans 2:7 “To them **who by patient continuance in well doing** seek for glory and honour and immortality, **eternal life.**”

ETERNAL DEATH IS FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT OBEY THE TRUTH AND DO
EVIL

Romans 2:8-10 “But unto them that are contentious, **and do not obey the truth**, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man **that doeth evil**, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;

But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.”

Eternal life is given to those who truly believe and do what is good. Eternal death is for every man, including believers, who do evil or commit grave sins and die in that state. It's not by faith alone.

THE HOLY GHOST IS Poured INTO THE HEARTS OF THE JUSTIFIED:
INTERIOR SANCTIFICATION

Romans 5:5 “And hope maketh not ashamed; because **the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.**”

Here we see that for those who are justified, the love of God is poured into their hearts. This is the Catholic view of justification: that the justified are truly interiorly sanctified.

IF BELIEVERS LIVE AFTER THE FLESH, THEY SHALL ETERNALLY DIE

Romans 8:12-13 “Therefore, **brethren**, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. **For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die**: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”

Speaking to “brethren,” that is, believers, he says that if they commit grave sins of the flesh they will die eternally: be damned. That totally contradicts justification by faith alone, once saved always saved, etc.

IF BELIEVERS DON'T CONTINUE IN GOODNESS, THEY WILL BE CUT OFF

In Romans chapter 11, we come to a verse which devastates Protestant theology.

Romans 11:20-22 “Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; **but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.**”

Romans chapter 11 clearly speaks of the Jews being cut off because of unbelief. And then in verse 22, St. Paul says that you believing Christians will also be cut off unless you continue in goodness. **This destroys the ideas of justification by faith alone and once saved always saved.**

A BELIEVER WHO TAKES THE EUCHARIST UNWORTHILY EATS AND DRINKS DAMNATION TO HIMSELF

1 Corinthians 11:28-29 “But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For **he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.**”

St. Paul says that those who eat of the Eucharist unworthily are guilty of grave sin against the body and blood of the Lord. They drink damnation to themselves. He’s talking to believers, of course, as he made clear in 1 Cor. 5:12. This is also clear from the fact that only believers would be partaking in the Eucharist. Obviously, therefore, believers can be damned for grave sins, such as a sacrilegious reception of the Eucharist. This passage refutes the Protestant idea of justification by faith alone and confirms Catholic teaching.

1 COR. 7 DESTROYS JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ALONE, BY TEACHING THAT IT’S BETTER FOR CERTAIN BELIEVERS TO MARRY THAN TO BURN

St. Paul makes it clear in 1 Corinthians that he is speaking about the problems that can befall those within the Church.

1 Corinthians 5:12-13 “**For what have I to do to judge them also that are without?** Do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.”

This becomes very significant in chapter 7.

1 Corinthians 7:1-9 “Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: **It is good for a man not to touch a woman.** Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. For **I would that all men were even as I myself.** But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. **I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.**”

There are a number of extremely significant things in this passage. First, we see the clear and repeated teaching that the celibate state is superior to the marital state. This confirms Catholic teaching. The Catholic Church teaches that the married state is not a bad state, but a state that is inferior to the celibate state. Jesus teaches the same in Matthew 19:12. This biblical teaching on celibacy is why the Catholic Church's religious and priests of the Roman Rite take a vow of celibacy.

Now to the main point in regard to the Protestant idea of justification by faith alone. We just established that in 1 Corinthians 5:12, St. Paul makes it quite clear that he is talking to believers. Speaking to believers, St. Paul says that "**it is better to marry than to burn**" (1 Cor. 7:9). This clearly indicates that even true believers who fall into grave sins can lose their justification and burn in Hell. He is telling them that it's better to marry than to burn, obviously because some of them would fall into mortal sins of the flesh if they did not get married. This completely refutes the Protestant religion and confirms Catholic teaching on justification.

SANCTIFICATION AND JUSTIFICATION HAPPEN AT THE SAME TIME

1 Corinthians 6:11 "And such were some of you: but **ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified** in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

This verse speaks of those who have been justified as "sanctified" before it mentions that they have been justified. This proves that sanctification and justification happen at the same time. It contradicts the Protestant view of justification, which is that justification and sanctification are not one and the same thing. Protestants hold that man is declared justified, but remains interiorly unsanctified.

HEAVEN IS ONLY FOR BELIEVERS WHO "OVERCOME"

Revelation (Apocalypse) 2:7 "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; **To him that overcometh** will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

The Bible says that only those who overcome will get to Heaven. The passage is about believers, as is made clear in chapter 2 verse 10. Therefore, it's false to say that everyone who believes necessarily overcomes. This refutes justification by faith alone. This theme is repeated numerous times in this chapter.

ONE MUST KEEP JESUS' WORKS "TO THE END"

Revelation 2:23-26 "... all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth

the reins and hearts: and **I will give unto every one of you according to your works...** But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. And **he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end,** to him will I give power over the nations.”

This verse speaks for itself. It completely refutes the Protestant view.

ONE WHO BELIEVES MUST “HOLD FAST” SO THAT HE DOESN’T LOSE HIS CROWN

Revelations 3:11-12 “**Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.** Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out.”

In Revelation chapters 13 and 14, we read about the mark of the beast and that those who receive it will not be saved. This also demonstrates that what you do will determine whether you are saved or damned.

THE DEAD ARE JUDGED ACCORDING TO THEIR WORKS

In Revelation chapter 20, we read about the final judgment.

Revelation 20:12-13 “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: **and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.** And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: **and they were judged every man according to their works.**”

This verse constitutes absolute proof that the Protestant view of justification is unbiblical.

Revelation 22:12 “And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, **to give every man according as his work shall be.**”

Revelation 21:8 “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”

Revelation 22:19 “And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the

holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

This is just another verse which shows that what you do can exclude you from salvation.

THE RIGHTEOUS OR JUST MAN WILL SCARCELY BE SAVED

1 Peter 4:17-18 “For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?”

It says that the “righteous” will scarcely be saved. Other translations have it as “the just man.” There is no doubt that St. Peter is speaking about a justified man in the Church because he speaks here of judgment beginning with the “house of God,” which is the Church.

There are two ways of understanding this verse, and they both contradict the ideas of justification by faith alone and eternal security. The first is that the just or the righteous in the Church shall scarcely, as in rarely, be saved; because most of those who are at one time justified fall away and don’t persevere to the end. They become (grave) sinners. That coincides with the traditional Catholic understanding that even most Catholics are lost because they don’t care enough or don’t do what they need to do to be saved. Hence, they lose their justification at some point and die in the state of mortal sin.

The only other interpretation that could be advanced is that “scarcely” means with difficulty: that it’s hard for a just man to be saved. That is to say, the justified man must make a great effort to be saved; he is not ensured of his salvation by faith alone or a one-time decree as soon as he believes.

A WOMAN IS SAVED BY CHILD-BEARING, IF SHE CONTINUES IN THE FAITH

1 Timothy 2:15 “Notwithstanding **she [woman] shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.**”

This obliterates the Protestant view of justification and salvation. It indicates that people who have the faith can lose it, and they must continue in *holiness* to be saved. It’s not surprising at all that one Protestant who attempted to respond to this verse in a debate about justification had no response whatsoever. He simply said that it’s “quite mysterious.”

BY GOD'S GRACE, YOU WILL SAVE YOURSELF BY DOING THINGS

1 Timothy 4:16 “**Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself**, and them that hear thee.”

Here we see that one must continue in the faith to be saved. One could lose the faith, therefore. We also read that it is in doing things that one is saved!

This verse is quite important because some Protestants – who preach the false doctrine of justification by faith alone – like to contrast the Catholic and Protestant views in these terms: *The Protestant view [they say] is all about Jesus saving man and doing all the work; but the Catholic view is about man doing the work and saving himself.* Obviously the Catholic view is not about man saving himself, but that Jesus saves man by making salvation possible. Without Jesus, man cannot do anything. However, *a man must cooperate with God's grace.* If he cooperates and takes advantage of the salvation which Jesus has made available, and does the things which God requires, then he will save himself.

In the verse above, we see that the Bible teaches the Catholic view; it's not all Jesus without man's cooperation. Rather, man's works and deeds (i.e., what man does) clearly determine whether he – and others – will have salvation. Faith-alone Protestants would have to condemn the above verse as heretical.

ST. PAUL REJOICES THAT HE HAS KEPT THE FAITH, OBVIOUSLY BECAUSE BELIEVERS CAN LOSE IT

2 Timothy 4:6-7 “For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, **I have kept the faith.**”

ALEXANDER THE COPPERSMITH WILL BE REWARDED ACCORDING TO HIS WORKS

2 Timothy 4:14 “Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: **the Lord reward him according to his works.**”

ONE MUST ENDURE AND RESIST TEMPTATION TO HAVE THE CROWN OF LIFE

James 1:12 “**Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life**, which the Lord hath promised to them

that love him.”

The Bible says that one must resist temptation and endure to the end to have eternal life.

SINS OF LUST BRING FORTH ETERNAL DEATH – THUS IT’S NOT BY FAITH ALONE

James 1:13-15 “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: **But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.** Then when lust hath conceived, **it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.**”

Notice here that if one consents to a sin of lust, it brings forth death. He’s clearly speaking of eternal death (damnation). That means that man is not justified by faith alone.

The second chapter of James truly obliterates the Protestant idea of justification by faith alone and once saved always saved. Martin Luther called the book of James “an epistle of straw” and wanted to remove it from his version of the Bible until his friends persuaded him that that would be too radical a move (see the end of this book for more on Luther’s views). The following verses, which reject justification by faith alone, are why Luther criticized this book of the Bible:

James 2:14 “What doth it profit, my brethren, **though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?**”

James 2:17 “Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.”

James 2:18 “Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.”

James 2:19 “Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.”

James 2:20 “But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?”

James 2:21 “Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?”

James 2:22-23 “Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was

faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.”

James 2:24 “Ye see then how that **by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.**”

This is the only place in the entire Bible that the words faith and alone (or only) are joined together. The Bible says that MAN IS NOT JUSTIFIED BY FAITH ALONE, BUT BY WORKS!

OBJECTIONS:

WHAT ABOUT THE PASSAGES WHICH SAY THAT WHOEVER BELIEVES IN JESUS WILL BE SAVED?

ANSWER: TO JESUS, TO BELIEVE IN HIM UNTO SALVATION NECESSARILY MEANS TO FOLLOW AND KEEP HIS WORDS AND COMMANDMENTS UNTO THE END. THIS IS PROVEN BY THE IMMEDIATE OR EXTENDED CONTEXT OF EVERY CASE WHERE JESUS SAYS THAT THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN HIM WILL BE SAVED, IN ADDITION TO ALL THE OTHER PASSAGES WHICH HAVE BEEN COVERED.

FIRST EXAMPLE: JOHN 3:16

John 3:16 “**For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.**”

One might see this verse on posters at sports stadiums, at overpasses on highways, and in many other places. Protestants believe it's the best, or one of the best, examples of the Bible's teaching that whoever believes is saved by faith alone. What they don't tell you or fail to perceive is what is stated in the verses which immediately follow John 3:16.

John 3:17-20 “For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already... **And this is the condemnation**, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, **because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light**, neither cometh to the light, **lest his deeds should be reproved.**”

It's fascinating that in the very context which immediately follows John 3:16, we see prominent references to **condemnation for evil deeds**, as well as to people who do evil and to deeds being judged. This makes it clear that a faith in the only begotten Son of God which will grant salvation is a faith which must be accompanied by persevering in good deeds and good works. To Jesus, to believe in Him *unto salvation* is to follow and keep His words and His commandments, as all the other passages we have covered demonstrate. The context demonstrates that John 3:16 does not teach justification by faith alone or eternal security.

SECOND EXAMPLE: ROMANS 10: IF THOU CONFESS WITH THY MOUTH... THOU SHALT BE SAVED

Romans 10:9 is another verse which Protestants bring forward in an attempt to prove salvation by faith alone in Jesus.

Romans 10:8-10 "... The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach. That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Once again, however, the context shows us that the Protestant understanding of this passage is false. What many don't realize is that the passage above (Romans 10:8-10) is quoting from Deuteronomy 30:14 and following. The footnotes in your Bible will show the reference to Deuteronomy 30:14. Well, Deuteronomy 30:14 and following speak of THE NECESSITY OF DOING THE WORKS OF GOD AND OF KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS.

Deuteronomy 30:14-16 "But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it [Quoted in Romans 10:8]. See, **I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil**; in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, **to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes** and his judgments, **that thou mayest live and multiply**: and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it."

This reference to Deuteronomy 30:14 in Romans 10:8-10 shows that to Paul and his listeners, it was understood **that to believe unto salvation is to follow and keep and do** the works that are necessary for salvation. Only in that way will a believer "live" and have salvation. The Protestant view of justification is simply a total misunderstanding of Scripture, as the full context of this passage shows again.

THIRD EXAMPLE: JOHN 5:24

Reading this in isolation, some Protestants think that all believers are assured of salvation.

John 5:24 “He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”

But just a few verses later, starting in John 5:28, Jesus says this:

John 5:28-29 “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; **they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.**”

Again, we see that people will be condemned on the basis of what they have done, not just on the basis of whether they have believed. Invariably, to Jesus, to believe unto salvation is to follow and keep His words and do the works which are necessary for salvation.

FOURTH EXAMPLE: JOHN 6:47

John 6:47 “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.”

Some Protestants like to quote this passage to argue for justification by faith alone. But this is easily refuted by the entire context of John 6. Almost the entire chapter deals with how one must not only believe for salvation, but also eat the flesh of the Son of Man to be saved. Therefore, it's not by faith alone. This is covered in the section on the Eucharist, but this is another example where the extended context refutes a Protestant misconception.

John 6:53-54 “Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whosoever eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

WHAT ABOUT EPHESIANS 2:8-9, BY GRACE YOU ARE SAVED THROUGH FAITH,
NOT OF WORKS?

Non-Catholics frequently quote the following verse to attempt to prove that man is saved by faith alone.

Ephesians 2:8-9 “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

This argument also fails. As I will now show, this argument fails because this verse is specifically talking about the initial grace of receiving water baptism. Water baptism is not a work “of yourselves,” but a sacrament instituted by God. No work you can do can substitute for the power of water baptism. This is said to “save” because it removes man’s original sin and puts him into the initial state of justification. The proof that Ephesians 2:8-9 is actually referring to water baptism is found when one compares the passage to Titus 3:5, and then to 1 Peter 3:20-21.

Look at this:

Ephesians 2:8-9 “For by grace are ye <u>saved through faith</u> ; and that <u>not of yourselves</u> : it is the gift of God: Not of works , lest any man should boast.”	Titus 3:5 “ Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration , and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”
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Notice that the two passages are extremely similar. They are talking about the same thing. They both mention being saved, *and not of works which we have done*. Ephesians 2:8-9 describes this as being saved through “faith”; Titus 3:5 describes it as being saved through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost. They are referring to the same thing.

Titus 3:5 is without any doubt referring to water baptism, as even John Calvin and Martin Luther admitted. Ephesians 2:8-9 is also talking about water baptism; it’s just that Ephesians 2:8-9 calls it “faith” because accepting baptism is submitting to faith; it’s how one joins the faith, as Jesus makes clear in Mark 16:15 and Matthew 28:19: “*Preach the Gospel to every creature... **Baptizing** them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.*” Baptism is also described as “faith” in Galatians 3:

Galatians 3:26-27 “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. **For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ** have put on Christ.”

We see that receiving baptism is synonymous with receiving “faith” in Christ Jesus. To further confirm that Ephesians 2:8-9 is about being saved by baptism, let’s expand the comparison:

<p>Ephesians 2:8-9 “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that <u>not of yourselves</u>: it is the gift of God: <u>Not of works</u>, lest any man should boast.”</p>	<p>Titus 3:5 “<u>Not by works</u> of righteousness <u>which we have done</u>, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”</p>	<p>1 Peter 3:20-21 “... when they waited for the patience of God in the days of Noe, when the ark was a building: wherein a few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. Whereunto <u>baptism being of the like form, now saves you also...</u>”</p>
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This demonstrates that Ephesians 2:8-9 is referring to the initial grace of baptism. Ephesians 2:8-9 is not talking about the ongoing justification of those who have already been baptized, but simply about how people **were initially brought out of original sin and given the grace of justification**. No work which anyone can do could replace or substitute for water baptism and the grace it grants: the first justification and removal of original sin. But once a person enters the Church through baptism (which is God’s work), his deeds and works indeed become part of the justification process, and a factor which will determine whether he maintains justification. This is made clear from the abundance of passages (e.g., James 2:24) that we already covered. Hence, the Protestant argument from Ephesians 2:8-9 is another one which doesn’t hold up to the context of Scripture.

Baptism is not a work of righteousness we have done; it’s the sacrament which Jesus instituted, which pours out His saving Blood and the cleansing of the Holy Ghost.

WHAT ABOUT THE STATEMENT THAT MAN IS JUSTIFIED BY FAITH “APART FROM WORKS OF THE LAW” (ROMANS 3:28)?

Protestants like to quote Romans 3:28 and similar passages.

Romans 3:28 “For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the law.” (New American Standard Version)

“For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from observing the law.” (Romans 3:28 – NIV Version)

Martin Luther thought this passage taught justification by faith alone, apart from any consideration of human actions or works. This is **completely wrong**. In fact, failing to understand what is meant by the phrase “works of the law” is one of the biggest misconceptions in Protestantism.

As we saw already, James says in James 2:24 that man is justified by works and not by faith alone. What is meant in Romans 3:28 and throughout the New Testament by the phrase “works of the law” is the Old Testament laws and prescriptions. “Works of the law” means works of the Old Law. It does not mean all works and human actions. Paul was writing to people who were stuck on the notion that *the system of the Old Law, with circumcision, the laws about clean and unclean foods, ritual sacrifices, etc.* is indispensable.

That this is what the “works of the law” means in Romans 3:28 and similar passages is proven from the context of Romans, but especially from Galatians 2:14. Notice that the phrase “works of the law” is used, and that it specifically refers to the Old Law (the Law of the Old Testament), not all works or deeds.

Galatians 2:12-16 “... fearing them which were of the circumcision... If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”

Notice that the phrase “works of the law” is clearly used by Paul to refer to living “as do the Jews” – observing the Old Law, circumcision, etc. It is not referring to all works and human deeds. This is obvious throughout the book of Galatians. Here’s another example:

Galatians 5:3-6 “For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.”

As we see again here, it’s clear that when St. Paul speaks of “the law,” and how no man can be justified by it, he is talking about the works of the Old Law: circumcision, etc. He is not talking about all works! No honest person can deny this fact. He is simply pointing out to them that the faith/religion/Church of Jesus Christ has saving power in itself. He is telling them that one doesn’t have to observe the Old Law and its system to obtain the salvation which comes from Jesus Christ. Here’s another example:

Galatians 6:13 “For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.”

Again we see that “the law” refers to the Old Law: observing circumcision, etc. No man is justified by the Old Law. We also see that Paul was talking about the Old Law in Romans 3:28 (when he uses “works of the law”), if we look carefully at the context in Romans 3 and 4.

Romans 3:1 “What advantage then hath the Jew? Or what profit is there of circumcision?”

We see that the very first verse of Romans 3 deals with the Old Testament work of circumcision. St. Paul is emphasizing to the Jews and others that they don’t need to observe these prescriptions for salvation, or to enter the true faith of God that has been delivered by the Savior, Jesus Christ.

Philippians 3 is another example which proves the point about what the Bible means by “the law” and “works of the law” and working under the law. In Philippians 3, St. Paul is explaining that he was a Jew who observed the Jewish law. It’s in that precise context that he speaks of having a justification/righteousness which is not his own of the law, but by the faith of Jesus. In other words, his statement that justification is not his own of the law means that it’s not of the Old Law or by having observed the Old Law:

Philippians 3:5-9 “[I] **Circumcised** the eight day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; **as touching the law, a Pharisee**; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, **not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law**, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”

It’s obvious that when he speaks of the righteousness or justification which is by faith – which is not his own of the law – he is not teaching justification by faith alone. Rather, he is simply emphasizing that the Jewish law does not justify and is not necessary for salvation.

We have already seen an abundance of passages which prove that human deeds and works are part of whether one has justification and salvation. It’s certain that by “works of the law” Paul means that one is not saved by the works of the Old Law, but

by the religion of Jesus Christ.

With these facts in mind, we can see what a tragic and devastating mistake of misinterpretation millions of Protestants have made. This had led them into the disastrous errors of justification by faith alone and eternal security – ideas which run counter to the whole tenor of Scripture, the necessity to avoid sin, the parables of Jesus, etc.

2 Peter 3:16 “As also in all his [Paul’s] epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.”

THE BIBLE TEACHES CONFESSION TO A PRIEST

John 20:22-23 “[Jesus said to them]: Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.”

Many non-Catholics think that confession to a priest is not taught in the Bible. According to them, to be forgiven of even serious sins one must simply believe in Jesus; or at the most, confess those sins directly to God. However, this position – that confession to a priest is not necessary for serious (i.e., mortal) sins after baptism – contradicts what is taught in the Bible.

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, ONE HAD TO GO TO THE PRIEST TO BE FORGIVEN

If one committed a sin in the Old Testament, he couldn't just confess the sin to God and be done with the matter. No, he had to go to the priest. This is taught throughout the book of Leviticus, one of the first books in the Old Testament. Here's a good example of this:

Leviticus 5:1-10 “And if a soul sin... when he shall be guilty in one of these things... he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing... And he shall bring his trespass offering unto the Lord, for his sin which he hath sinned... **And he shall bring them unto the priest**, who shall offer that which is for the sin offering first... **and the priest shall make an atonement for him for his sin which he hath sinned, and it shall be forgiven him.**”

In this passage we see that the priest's role was indispensable for the forgiveness of sin. This is taught throughout the Book of Leviticus and the other foundational books of the Old Testament. Here's another example:

Leviticus 19:21-22 “And he shall bring his trespass offering unto the Lord, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, even a ram for a trespass offering. **And the priest shall make an atonement for him** with the ram of the trespass offering before the Lord for his sin which he hath done: **and the sin which he hath done shall be forgiven him.**”

ONE HAD TO GO TO THE PRIEST TO BECOME CLEAN

Not only did one have to go to the priest to be forgiven of sins (as these and other passages make clear), but also to become clean. In the Old Testament, people would become unclean after having done certain things which God said made a person unclean. To become clean, the priest would have to be involved. Jesus makes

reference to this in Luke 5:13-14.

Luke 5:13-14 “And he [Jesus] put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him. And he charged him to tell no man: **but go, and shew thyself to the priest**, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.”

Leviticus 12:6-8 “And when the days of her purifying are fulfilled... if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons... **and the priest shall make an atonement for her, and she shall be clean.**”

Leviticus 13:27 “And the priest shall look upon him the seventh day: and if it be spread much abroad in the skin, **then the priest shall pronounce him unclean**: it is the plague of leprosy.”

Leviticus 14:11,19-20 “And the priest that maketh him clean shall present the man that is to be made clean... And the priest shall offer the sin offering, and make an atonement for him that is to be cleansed from his uncleanness... And the priest shall offer the burnt offering and the meat offering upon the altar: **and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and he shall be clean.**”

GOD HAD PRIESTS; GOD HAD A PRIESTHOOD; GOD RECONCILED PEOPLE THROUGH PRIESTS

Now, some might say: that was the Old Testament. What about in the New Testament, after Jesus has come? We will see that the New Testament teaches confession to a priest. But these points from the Old Testament are important to consider first because they demonstrate how God works and how He has worked throughout salvation history. God had priests; God set up a priesthood; God forgives and reconciles people through priests. People had to go to the priests to be forgiven.

In Numbers 3, we see a reference to a distinct line of priests, who alone are to handle this special ministry.

Numbers 3:10 “And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall wait on their priest’s office...”

Numbers 3:3 also says that priests’ hands were consecrated; but that has been removed from the Protestants Bible.

Numbers 25:11-13 “Phinehas, the son of Eleazar... Behold... he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood;

because he was zealous for his God...”

In Deuteronomy 17:9 and 24:8, we read about the necessity to follow the instructions of the priests. In Deuteronomy 26:1-5, we read about offering the first-fruits to the priest.

NUMBERS 5 ON THE NECESSITY TO CONFESS SINS

In Numbers 5:6-7, we see that people are to confess sins.

Numbers 5:6-7 “When a man or woman shall commit any sin that men commit, to do a trespass against the Lord, and that person be guilty; then **they shall confess their sin which they have done...**”

The rest of the chapter contains instructions which involve the priests at every turn. For example:

Numbers 5:14-16 “... if the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be not defiled... Then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest, and he shall bring her offering for her... And the priest shall bring her near, and set her before the Lord.”

Thus, in Numbers chapter 5, we see a clear example of confession, as well as the intercession of priests. In Numbers 6:11, the very next chapter, we see that if a man becomes defiled by a certain action “*the priest shall offer the one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering, and make an atonement for him...*”

SINS ARE FORGIVEN THROUGH THE PRIEST

In Numbers 15, we again see that sins are forgiven through the priest.

Numbers 15:22-25 “And if ye have erred, and not observed all these commandments, which the Lord hath spoken unto Moses... all the congregation shall offer one young bullock for a burnt offering... **And the priest shall make an atonement for all the congregation of the children of Israel, and it shall be forgiven them...**”

This is repeated in Numbers 15:28.

EXODUS AND LEVITICUS TEACH THAT PRIESTS ARE TO WEAR SPECIAL GARMENTS: VESTMENTS

In Exodus 28:1-3, we read about the office of priests, and that the priests wear special garments.

Exodus 28:1-3 “And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him... that he may minister unto me in the priest’s office... And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron... that they may make Aaron’s garments to consecrate him, that he may minister unto me in the priest’s office.”

We read the same in Leviticus 16:32.

Leviticus 16:32 “And the priest, whom he shall anoint... **shall make the atonement, and shall put on the linen clothes, even the holy garments...**”

LEVITICUS TEACHES THAT THERE ARE CERTAIN SPECIAL FEASTS: HOLY DAYS OF OBLIGATION

In Leviticus 23:4, we read about special feast days, or holy days of obligation, which were to be observed.

Leviticus 23:4 “These are the feasts of the Lord, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons.”

There is no doubt that God set up a priesthood. God established it so that men were reconciled, forgiven, and made clean through the ministry of priests. That was how God worked in the Old Law. What about in the New?

JESUS CAME NOT TO DESTROY THE LAW, BUT TO FULFILL – HE INSTITUTED A PRIESTHOOD

Matthew 5:17-18 “[Jesus said] Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”

Jesus came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfill. There is no doubt that the New Law surpasses the Old. It surpasses it so much that it makes it obsolete. Jesus accomplished all the figures and prophecies in the Old Law. He made a New and more perfect covenant, rendering the Old thereby void (Hebrews 8:13).

But the New Law has similarities to the Old Law, being its fulfillment. For example, in the Old Testament there were 12 tribes with 12 tribal leaders, and Moses had 70

elders; likewise, in the New Testament, Jesus has 12 apostles and 70 other disciples, as we see in Luke 10. Another example would be how Jesus inherits the throne of David, as we read in Luke 1:32 and Acts 2:30.

Luke 1:32 “He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David.”

Jesus and His spiritual Kingdom (His Church) fulfill what was prefigured in the earthly Kingdom of the Davidic Monarchy.

Another example of how the New Law corresponds to the Old Law would be how, in the Old Testament, a father passed his blessing on to his son through the laying on of hands. In Deuteronomy 34:9, we see that spiritual authority is passed down from Moses to Joshua through the laying on of hands. Likewise, in the New Testament priests are ordained through the laying on of hands, as we read in 2 Timothy 1:6.

So the point is that while Jesus' Kingdom and New Law surpass and make void the Old, the New Law nevertheless fulfills, perfects and corresponds to the Old in many ways. (It should be pointed out that the forgiveness of sins or justification in the Old Testament was an inferior covering of sin which turned away God's anger, but did not fully put away sins. The full remission of sins couldn't happen until the coming of Jesus Christ and the New Law. See Hebrews 10:4.)

Therefore, just as there was definitely a priesthood in the Old Testament, there is a priesthood in the New Testament. The Apostles were made priests and bishops by Jesus Christ.

JESUS GIVES THE APOSTLES THE POWER TO FORGIVE SINS

Jesus gives priests the power to forgive sins. We read this clearly in John chapter 20.

John 20:21-23 “Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so I send you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, **Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.**”

Jesus says that whoever's sins you forgive, they are forgiven; and whoever's sins you retain (do not forgive), they are not forgiven. Nothing could be more clear. The Apostles could only determine which sins to forgive and which sins to retain if they heard a confession of sins. This passage proves that Jesus instituted confession to priests.

AS SON OF MAN, JESUS HAD POWER ON EARTH TO FORGIVE SINS AND HE CAN AND DID TRANSFER THAT POWER TO OTHERS

Even though the meaning of John 20:23 is obvious, there's another point that must be noted in this regard. In Matthew 9:6-8, we read:

“But [Jesus saith] that ye may know that **the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins**, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house... But when the multitudes saw it, they marveled, and glorified God, **who had given such power unto men.**”

Jesus was both God and man, but notice that this passage emphasizes that He had authority as the Son of man to forgive sins. Since Jesus had authority to forgive sins as the Son of man – as is also made clear in Mt. 28:18, when He says that He has been given all power in Heaven and Earth – then He can transfer that authority to others. Look at John 20:21 again:

John 20:21 “Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: **as my Father hath sent me, even so I send you.**”

Just as Jesus was sent as the Son of man with power on Earth to forgive sins, He sends His Apostles to dispense His forgiveness to others.

ST. PAUL SAYS THAT PRIESTS RECONCILE MEN TO GOD IN CHRIST'S PLACE

That's why St. Paul, who was made a priest and bishop in the Church, says this:

2 Corinthians 5:18-20 “God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath **given to us the ministry of reconciliation**... Now then **we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.**”

This passage makes it clear that Jesus sends His Apostles to be the ministers of His reconciliation and forgiveness. That's why the Church has taught that priests, in hearing confessions, stand in the place of Christ. They are not a barrier to Christ, but an avenue, a conduit of His reconciliation; just as St. Paul says: “*we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*”

This is the reason that Jesus gives the Apostles the power to forgive and retain sins in John 20:23, right after sending them in John 20:21 (as His Father has sent Him).

Moreover, in the Acts of the Apostles, we read that people came and confessed their deeds.

Acts 19:17-18 “And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. **And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds.**”

All of this demonstrates without any doubt that Jesus instituted confession to priests.

JESUS GIVES THE APOSTLES THE POWER TO BIND AND TO LOOSE SINS

Further confirming that the Bible teaches confession to a priest, we see that the Apostles were given the power to bind and to loose in Matthew 18:18.

Matthew 18:18 “Verily I say unto you, **whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.**”

This has application to the forgiveness of sins, and to the fact that Jesus dispensed His authority to valid bishops and priests in His one true Church. The authority that is exercised by priests and bishops must be used under the unique authority of the Keys, which were given alone to St. Peter in Matthew 16:18-19.

IF WE CONFESS OUR SINS, HE IS FAITHFUL AND JUST TO FORGIVE US OUR SINS

1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Notice that the passage says “if” we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. It doesn’t say that He will forgive our sins whether or not we confess our sins, or as long as we believe.

JAMES 5 TEACHES THE CATHOLIC SACRAMENT OF EXTREME UNCTION

In James 5, we see a reference to confessing sins, priests, and the forgiveness of sins.

James 5:14-16 “Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders [priests] of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up;

and if we have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

This passage is a classic proof for the Catholic sacrament of Extreme Unction. Extreme Unction is the Catholic sacrament received at the time of death; it’s a priestly anointing and rite which, if properly received, strengthens a man in his final illness of life and forgives his sins. In this passage of James 5, we read that you should “confess your faults to one another.” That instruction comes directly after making reference to calling for the elders/priests of the Church. This shows us, once again, the necessity of confession and priests, as well as the link between the two.

These facts demonstrate that the New Testament teaches that confession to a priest is necessary for the forgiveness of serious (i.e., mortal) sins committed after baptism. That’s why the Catholic Church, the one true Church of Christ, has taught this for almost 2,000 years.

THE FATHERS OF THE ANCIENT CHURCH TAUGHT CONFESSION

The fathers of the Church also believed in confession and taught that it was necessary. Their testimony confirms that confession is the true teaching of Jesus Christ and the Bible.

In the earliest days of the Church, confessions were sometimes made publicly to the priest or to the bishop in front of others in the congregation, and sometimes they were made privately.

One of the best proofs for confession from the fathers of the Church comes from famous early Church writer Origen, dated approximately 245 A.D.

Origen, *Commentary on Luke 2*, 245 A.D. “... if we have sinned, we ought to proclaim: I have acknowledged my sin to thee, and my injustice I have not concealed. I said I will confess against myself my injustice to the Lord. For if we have done this, **AND IF WE HAVE MADE KNOWN OUR SINS, NOT ALONE TO THE LORD, BUT TO THOSE ALSO WHO CAN HEAL OUR SINS AND OUR WOUNDS, OUR SINS SHALL BE BLOTTED OUT BY HIM.**” (*Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*, Regnery Co: Chicago, IL, 1963, Vol. 1, p. 172.)

Origen clearly teaches that confession to the Lord alone is not enough; there must be confession to the priests.

The Didache 4:14, 14:1, 70 A.D. “Confess your sins in church, and do not go up

to your prayer with an evil conscience. This is the way of life... On the Lord's Day gather together, break bread, and give thanks, after confessing your transgressions so that your sacrifice may be pure."

The Letter of Barnabas 19, 74 A.D. "You shall confess your sins. You shall not go to prayer with an evil conscience. This is the way of light."

St. Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to Philadelphians* 8, 110 A.D. "To all them that repent, the Lord grants forgiveness, if they turn in penitence to the unity of God, and to communion with the bishop."

St. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1:22, 185 A.D. "Some of these women make a public confession, but others are ashamed to do this, and in silence, as if withdrawing from themselves the hope of the life of God, they either apostatize entirely or hesitate between the two courses."

Tertullian, *Repentance* 10:1, 203 A.D. "[Regarding confession, some] flee from this work as being an exposure of themselves, or they put it off from day to day. I presume they are more mindful of modesty than of salvation, like those who contract a disease in the more shameful parts of the body and shun making themselves known to the physicians; and thus they perish along with their own bashfulness."

St. Cyprian of Carthage, *The Lapsed* 28, 251 A.D. "Of how much greater faith and salutary fear are **they who... confess their sins to the priests of God** in a straightforward manner and in sorrow, making an open declaration of conscience... I beseech you, brethren, **let everyone who has sinned confess his sin** while he is still in this world, while his confession is still admissible, while the satisfaction and remission made through the priests are still pleasing before the Lord." (Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, Vol. 1:553)

St. Basil the Great, *Rules Briefly Treated* 288, 374 A.D. "**It is necessary to confess our sins to those to whom the dispensation of God's mysteries is entrusted.** Those doing penance of old are found to have done it before the saints. It is written in the Gospel that they confessed their sins to John the Baptist [Matt. 3:6], but in Acts [19:18] they confessed to the apostles."

St. John Chrysostom, *The Priesthood* 3:5, 387 A.D. "Priests have received a power which God has given neither to angels nor to archangels. It was said to them: 'Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose, shall be loosed'... Priests... can bind with a bond which pertains to the soul itself and transcends the very heavens. Did [God] not

give them all the powers of heaven? **'Whose sins you shall forgive,' he says, 'they are forgiven them;** whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.'"

St. Ambrose of Milan, *Penance* 1:1, 388 A.D. "For those to whom [the right of binding and loosing] has been given... For this right has been granted to priests only."

St. Jerome, *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* 10:11, 388 A.D. "If the serpent, the devil, bites someone secretly, he infects that person with the venom of sin. And if the one who has been bitten keeps silence and does not do penance, **and does not want to confess his wound**... then his brother and his master, who have the word [of absolution] that will cure him, cannot very well assist him."

All of this proves that the Bible teaches the necessity of confession to a priest. The Catholic Church has always remained faithful to this teaching of the Bible because the Catholic Church is the one true Church of Christ.

THE BIBLE ON PRAYING TO AND VENERATING SAINTS

*Revelation 8:3-4 “And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, **that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.** And the smoke of the incense, **which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand.”***

The Catholic Church teaches that there is one God, the Holy Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Ghost, three divine persons in one God. Jesus Christ is the second person of the Holy Trinity, true God and true man. God alone is adored and worshipped. This adoration or worship, which is given to God alone, is called latria.

Saints in Heaven are not adored, but are venerated as holy men and women of God in Heaven. The veneration which is given to saints, which is not adoration, is called dulia. The veneration which is given to the greatest of all the saints, the mother of God, is called hyperdulia. Hyperdulia is also veneration, not worship or adoration. Now that this has been made clear, let’s look at what the Bible teaches about praying to and venerating saints, how saintly men intercede with God, the relics of saints, and more. There are many things in the Bible on this issue which you might not be aware of.

We must first consider what the Bible teaches about how holy men intercede with God.

THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT MEN INTERCEDE WITH GOD – MOSES HAD AN EXTRAORDINARY POWER OF INTERCESSION WITH GOD

Exodus 32:9-14 “**And the Lord said unto Moses**, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people: **Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.** And Moses besought the Lord his God, and said, Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power... Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants... **And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.”**

Moses’ intercession with God was so great that God even asked Moses to allow Him to destroy the Israelites. This must not be understood in the sense that the Almighty God can be or was constrained by any man, but rather that He was powerfully swayed and influenced by this man’s close relationship with Him. Moses pleaded with

Him not to destroy them, and God relented because of Moses. As we can see, not all men are equal before God. Not all men have the same intercessory power with Him. The intercession of extraordinary and saintly men is powerful and effective.

ABRAHAM HAD AN EXTRAORDINARY POWER OF INTERCESSION WITH GOD

We see another example of this in the case of Abraham:

Genesis 18:26-33 “And the Lord said to him: If I find in Sodom fifty just within the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake. And Abraham answered, and said: Seeing I have once begun, I will speak to my Lord, whereas I am dust and ashes. What if there be five less than fifty just persons? wilt thou for five and forty destroy the whole city? And he said: I will not destroy it, if I find five and forty. And again he said to him: But if forty be found there, what wilt thou do? He said: I will not destroy it for the sake of forty. **[And Abraham, because he had powerful intercession with God, bargained Him all the way to ten] What if ten should be found there? And he said: I will not destroy it for the sake of ten.** And the Lord departed, after he had left speaking to Abraham: and Abraham returned to his place.”

THE BIBLE SAYS THAT THE PRAYERS OF A MAN WOULD CAUSE GOD TO ACCEPT PEOPLE HE OTHERWISE WOULD NOT

The next example we will consider is one where the Bible says that the prayers of a man would cause God to accept people He otherwise wouldn't.

Job 42:7-10 “... the Lord said to Eliphaz... My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering: **and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly**... So [they] went, and did according as the Lord commanded them... **And the Lord also was turned at the penance of Job, when he prayed for his friends...**”

The Lord was turned at the prayers and penance of Job. The intercession and prayers of saintly men obtain graces and favors that the Lord will not always otherwise give. God said that He would only give this grace to Eliphaz if Job would pray for him.

GOD WOULD ONLY GIVE ISRAEL THE VICTORY IF MOSES (A MAN) HELD UP HIS HANDS

Another example of the intercession of holy men is found in Exodus 17. We read that Israel went out to fight against Amalec. God enabled Israel to have the victory as long as Moses held up his hands. However, if Moses let his hands down, Amalec would overcome the Israelites.

Exodus 17:11-13 **“And when Moses lifted up his hands, Israel overcame: but if he let them down a little, Amalec overcame.** And Moses’ hands were heavy: so they took a stone, and put under him, and he sat on it: and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands on both sides. And it came to pass that his hands were not weary until sunset. And Josue put Amalec and his people to flight, by the edge of the sword.”

This is another prime example of how sometimes God only grants certain things through the intercession of holy men.

THE LORD’S STATEMENT ABOUT THE INTERCESSION OF MOSES AND SAMUEL

Jeremias 15:1 “And the Lord said to me: If Moses and Samuel shall stand before me, my soul is not towards this people: cast them out from my sight...”

God says that even if Moses and Samuel stood before Him, He would still reject this people. This is quite revealing. The people described in this passage were so bad that not even the powerful intercession of the great servants of God, Moses and Samuel, could relax God’s anger against them. However, these words show us that the intercession of extraordinary servants of God, such as Moses and Samuel – who have built up a special credit or influence with Him – impacts how God deals with and looks at people, even if it didn’t make the difference in this particular case because of how bad the people were. The intercession of saintly men helps determine what God does for people and what He does to them, as we saw with the examples above.

WHAT ABOUT 1 TIMOTHY 2:5 JESUS IS THE ONLY MEDIATOR?

Before we cover more biblical evidence for the veneration and intercession of saints, we must consider an objection. One of the main objections that non-Catholics raise against praying to saints comes from 1 Timothy 2:5.

1 Timothy 2:5 “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”

Jesus is the only mediator between God and men, they say, so you can’t include

saints or prayers to them. This objection is false for many reasons. Just because Jesus is the only mediator does not mean that others do not mediate as part of the one mediation of Christ. For example, in John 10:16 Jesus says that He is the one and only shepherd; but He appoints Peter to shepherd His sheep in John 21:15-17. Ephesians 4:11 also teaches that there are many pastors or shepherds. The point is that these other sub-shepherds all work under and by the institution of the one shepherd, Jesus.

Another example is that Jesus says He is the supreme judge. We read this in John 9:39 and in many other passages. Certain men of God, however, will also act on His behalf as judges in Heaven, even of angels. We read this in 1 Corinthians 6:2, Matthew 19:28, and elsewhere. Yes, Jesus is the unique mediator, because the mediator is the one who unites man to God. Jesus alone did this by His passion and death. We read this in 2 Corinthians 5:18. But that does not mean that within the one mediation of Christ there are not others who participate in His mediation. In fact, the Bible clearly teaches it.

IF YOU CANNOT PRAY TO SAINTS, THEN YOU CANNOT ASK OTHERS TO PRAY
FOR YOU – PERIOD

If Jesus' unique mediation excluded prayers to saints, then it would also exclude asking a fellow man to pray for you. There is no way around the logic of this argument. **For when you ask a fellow man to pray for you, instead of going to Jesus directly, you are asking another person to act as a mediator with Jesus for you. That's what Catholics do when they pray to saints.** Therefore, if prayers to saints are excluded by the unique mediation of Jesus, then asking others for prayers is definitely excluded as well.

Not only do most Protestants accept the concept of asking others to pray for them – thus contradicting their rejection of prayers to saints – but, in the New Testament, St. Paul himself repeatedly asks others for prayers.

Romans 15:30 “Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye **strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.**”

Paul also tells others that he is praying for them.

Colossians 1:3 “... praying always for you...”

Paul even says that the prayers of others bestow gifts upon him.

2 Corinthians 1:11 “Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.”

THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT PAUL’S SUFFERING INTERCEDES TO WIN GRACES FOR PEOPLE

The Bible also says this about Paul’s suffering:

Colossians 1:24 “[I] now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for his body, which is the church.”

This verse might be a shock to some non-Catholics who are not familiar with it. Paul says that he fills up, for the Church, those things that are wanting or lacking in the sufferings of Christ. Now Christ’s suffering was perfect and of infinite value; so what does this mean? What St. Paul means is that many sufferings are still wanting and needed for the members of the Church to work out their salvation, which was all made possible by Christ’s sacrifice.

He is teaching that his sacrifices and his sufferings, in addition to his prayers, can intercede with God so that God gives others graces to convert or to remain faithful. Those people must still cooperate with the graces, but the efforts, prayers and sacrifices of members of the Church can help grant them. All of this confirms Catholic teaching on the communion of saints, and it refutes the Protestant misunderstanding of 1 Timothy 2:5.

THIS TRUTH IS ROOTED IN THE UNITY OF THE BODY OF CHRIST, WHICH EXISTS AFTER DEATH

The fact that men can go to other men for prayers, and that the saints in Heaven can answer prayers and intercede, is rooted in the biblical teaching on the unity of the Body of Christ. There is a union among the members of the Church of Jesus. This union does not cease when true members die.

St. Paul says in Romans 8:38 and following that neither death nor life separates one from the love of Christ. Nor does it separate the true faithful who abide together in the Body of Christ, whether on Earth or in Heaven.

1 Cor. 12:12,21 “... all the members of that one body, being many, are one body... And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.”

THE BIBLE SAYS THAT THE PRAYER OF A JUST MAN AVAILS MUCH

While the true members of the Church can assist each other by prayers, the prayers and intercession of saintly men is particularly powerful. That's exactly what we saw in the cases of Moses and Abraham. That's why we read:

James 5:16 "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. **The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.**"

This is why prayers to saints – which have the purpose of calling for them to pray to God on our behalf – are so effective.

THE BIBLE ALSO TEACHES THAT DECEASED SAINTLY MEN INTERCEDE

In Matthew 17, we see that Jesus, when He was transfigured before three of His apostles, appeared with Moses and Elias.

Matthew 17:2-3 "And [He] was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun... And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him."

This shows us that saints, even after death, are interested in Earthly affairs and are ready to intercede for us. For the spirits of the just men made perfect, as Hebrews 12 calls the saints, are among the cloud of witnesses with the angels in Heaven who help us.

Hebrews 1:14 "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

Psalms 91:11 "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways."

AFTER DEATH, THE PROPHET SAMUEL APPEARED TO KING SAUL

In 1 Samuel 28 (1 Kings 28 in the Douay-Rheims Catholic Bible), we see a clear example of a dead saint appearing to a man. This was the prophet Samuel, who had been dead for some time. He appeared to King Saul, and rebuked him for his disobedience to God.

1 Samuel 28:12-20 "And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud

voice... And Samuel said to Saul... Because thou obeyed not the voice of the Lord, nor executed his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the Lord done this thing unto thee this day... Then Saul fell straightway all along on the earth, and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel.”

Remember, Samuel had been dead for some time.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION (OR APOCALYPSE) SHOWS US HOW THE PRAYERS OF SAINTS INTERCEDE IN HEAVEN BEFORE THE ALTAR OF GOD

The Book of Revelation or the Apocalypse also gives us a glimpse of how the saints and their prayers intercede for men.

Revelation 8:3-4 “And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, **that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints** upon the golden altar which was before the throne. **And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints**, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand.”

We see another example in Revelation chapter 5.

Revelation 5:8 “... elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, **and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints.**”

IN REVELATION CHAPTER 6, WE SEE DEAD SAINTS ASKING GOD TO ACT ON EARTH

In chapter 6, we see dead saints, who were martyred for the true faith of Jesus, asking God to revenge their blood.

Revelation 6:9-10 “And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, how long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?”

Notice that the souls of these dead martyrs cry out from underneath the altar. Since ancient times, the Catholic Church has placed the relics of martyrs underneath the altar. The fact that the voices of the martyrs come from under the altar – exactly where their relics are located in Catholic churches – is an interesting biblical confirmation of the Catholic practice.

AFTER HIS DEATH, A HIGH-PRIEST WAS SEEN INTERCEDING FOR THE JEWS

The next example we will look at comes from 1 Machabees chapter 5. This was a book which the Protestants removed from the Bible when they split from the Catholic Church. The comments given in the section on Purgatory demonstrate that the Books of the Machabees are part of the true Old Testament. This is proven by the fact that the New Testament quotes from the Septuagint, which contains the Books of the Machabees and the others which the Protestants reject.

This passage concerns a vision of Onias, a high-priest who had died.

2 Machabees 15:12 “Now the vision was in this manner: Onias who had been high priest, a good and virtuous man, modest in his looks, gentle in his manners, and graceful in his speech, and who from a child was exercised in virtues, holding up his hands, prayed for all the people of the Jews: After this there appeared also another man... Then Onias answering... this is he that prayeth much for the people, and for all the holy city, Jeremias the prophet of God. Whereupon Jeremias stretched forth his right hand, and gave to Judas a sword of gold...”

This fascinating passage (which was removed from the Protestant bible) relates the vision of the deceased high-priest Onias. After his death, he was seen holding out his hands and interceding for the Jews by his prayers. Onias also presents the deceased prophet Jeremias, who gives a sword of gold to Judas Machabeus. Judas Machabeus is not to be confused with the traitor of the New Testament, Judas Iscariot. This passage is, therefore, another clear proof of the intercession of deceased saints, and the effectiveness of their prayers.

BOTH MOSES AND SAMUEL WERE DEAD AT THE TIME GOD INDICATED THEY COULD INTERCEDE

Earlier I quoted the following passage to demonstrate that men intercede with God.

Jeremiah 15:1 “And the Lord said to me: If Moses and Samuel shall stand before me, my soul is not towards this people: cast them out from my sight...”

God says that even if Moses and Samuel stood before Him, He would still reject this people. This shows how God considers the intercessory power of saints, even if it wouldn't have swayed Him in this particular case. **This passage is being quoted again here because it must be pointed out that both Moses and Samuel were dead at the time of Jeremias. Thus, Jeremias 15:1 also provides biblical teaching on the intercession of deceased saintly men.**

THE SIGNIFICANCE AND FREQUENCY OF ANGELS IN GOD'S PLAN

As further support for the Bible's teaching on the intercession of saints, we must consider the Bible's teaching on the intercession of angels.

1 Chronicles 21:18 (1 Paralipomenon 21:18 in the Douay-Rheims Catholic Bible) "Then the angel of the Lord commanded Gad to say to David..."

2 Kings 1:3 (4 Kings 1:3 in the Douay-Rheims) "And an angel of the Lord spoke to Elias... saying arise, go up to meet the messengers... and say unto them..."

Acts 8:26 "And the angel of the Lord spoke unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south..."

Throughout the Bible we see that God uses His angels. There are literally dozens of passages one could quote. He uses them to deliver His messages, to give out His instructions, to deliver His justice, and as an answer to prayers.

GOD ANSWERS PRAYERS BY HIS ANGELS

Numbers 20:16 "And when we cried unto the Lord, he heard our voice, and sent an angel..."

Isaias 37:15-20,36 "And Ezechias prayed to the Lord, saying... And now, O Lord our God, save us out of his hand... And the angel of the Lord went out, and slew in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and eighty-five thousand."

God answers prayers by sending His angels. That's clear.

ANGELS ARE ALSO IMploRED, BESEECHED, AND PRAYED TO

The communication and intercession of angels on behalf of God is so frequent, so natural, so intertwined with God's plan, as dozens of passages show, that angels are not only sent by God, but they are beseeched and entreated by men. Angels are asked; they are implored by the people of God, for answers and for assistance, in their temporal and spiritual needs.

Judges 6:12-13 "The angel of the Lord appeared to him, and said: The Lord is with thee, O most valiant of men. And Gedeon said to him: **I beseech thee, my lord**, if the Lord be with us, why have these evils fallen upon us?"

Here we see that Gedeon beseeches the angel. That means that he requests something of the angel; he asks something of him. In the book of Osee or Hosea, we see that Jacob made supplication to an angel. A supplication is a humble or earnest request; it's a prayer. Some translations say that Jacob begged the angel. To beg means to pray.

Osee or Hosea 12:3-4 "Yea, he [Jacob] had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him."

So the Bible teaches that angels not only deliver God's messages, mete out His justice, are sent as an answer to prayers, **but they are prayed to as well.** This is not because the angels are God, of course; but because angels are powerful and supernatural servants of the Most High who have a close relationship with Him in Heaven. Here's another relevant passage:

Luke 1:10-13 "And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense. And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord... And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard..."

We see that the angel heard the prayer and responded. After considering some of these facts and passages, some non-Catholics might say: okay, you have shown that the Bible teaches that angels answer prayers, and can perhaps even be prayed to. But that refers to angels, not saints. In response, I would ask them to carefully consider these words of Jesus:

JESUS SAYS THAT SAINTS SHALL BE AS THE ANGELS OF GOD

Matthew 22:29-30 "Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, **but are as the angels of God in heaven.**"

Jesus teaches that the saints of God in Heaven are as the angels. What Jesus says here not only applies after the final resurrection, but to the saints in Heaven now. For in the same chapter, Jesus goes on to speak of the deceased just men Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as living (Matthew 22:32). The version of this passage in Luke's Gospel brings out this truth even more clearly.

Luke 20:34-36 "And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: **for they are equal unto the**

angels: and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.”

So the saints in Heaven *are as the angels*. Do angels mete out God’s justice? Yes. Do angels answer prayers, on behalf of God, which are sent to Heaven? Yes. Do angels receive supplication and prayer? Yes. Therefore, the saints of Jesus do all of those things.

Now that we’ve seen the link between angels and saints, we need to consider a few more things in this regard. The intercession of angels on behalf of God is extraordinarily powerful and effective. Angels so accurately transmit the message of the Almighty that, in many passages, it’s not totally clear if the angel is speaking or if God is speaking. In some biblical descriptions, the two morph into one, if you will, because the angel is at the full service of the Almighty. Here are just three examples:

Zechariah 12:8 “... the house of David shall be **as God, as the angel of the Lord** before them.”

Luke 2:9 “... an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of God shone round about them...”

Exodus 3:2-4 “And **the angel of the Lord appeared** unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush... **And when the Lord saw that he [Moses] turned aside to see, God called unto him...**”

ANGELS IN HEAVEN (AND THEREFORE SAINTS) ARE INTIMATELY INVOLVED IN MEN’S SALVATION UNDER JESUS CHRIST

We see the importance that Jesus gives to the witness of angels (and therefore so saints) in the following passage.

Luke 12:8-9 “... Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also **confess before the angels of God**: But he that denieth me before men shall be **denied before the angels of God.**”

In addition to His confession before His father (Mt. 10:32), Jesus considers His confession before the angels to be extremely significant.

Jesus also indicates that the angels are intimately involved in, and concerned for, the conversion and salvation of men. Look at what He says here:

Luke 15:10 “Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.”

This statement of Jesus suggests that angels have a connection with, an influence over, the salvation of men. They rejoice when a man converts because they desire his salvation and their intercession assists His conversion. They cheer for Him; they help Him; they pray for him. That's why Catholics understand the intercession of saints to be so important, as well as prayers to them. Saints in Heaven are as the angels of God. When one prays to them, they in turn pray to God, who commonly grants His graces on their behalf because of their close relationship with Him.

THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT ANGELS ARE PRESENT AT ASSEMBLIES OF THE FAITHFUL, AND THAT THEIR PRESENCE DESERVES HONOR

1 Cor. 11:10 "For this cause ought the woman to have a power on her head because of the angels."

This passage concerns head coverings women should have at the worship service. It says they should have this power or covering because of the angels. Think about that. The passage could have said that a woman should have a covering on her head because of God. But it says because of the angels, which indicates that veneration is also due to them. By the way, in the traditional Catholic Church, women cover their heads at Mass. This tradition derives from this biblical precept.

THE BIBLE DESCRIBES ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST AS GOD'S ANGEL

To complete the point and the comparison between angels and saintly men, one should note that Jesus describes St. John the Baptist as the angel who was prophesied to prepare His way.

Matthew 11:10 "For this is he of whom it is written: Behold I send my angel before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee."

John the Baptist was described as God's angel [*aggelon* in Greek] because both angels and saints act as God's messengers. They are an avenue for His instructions, His graces, and for Heaven's answers to prayers.

HEBREWS 12: THE CHRISTIAN COMES BEFORE THE "SPIRITS OF JUST MEN MADE PERFECT" (THE SAINTS IN HEAVEN)

Now we must turn to Hebrews chapter 12. This is a very important chapter with regard to this topic. In Hebrews 12, we find a description of the Church of Jesus Christ and its heavenly majesty. Notice that the Christian, in coming before the heavenly description of the Church, comes before the spirits of the just men made

perfect (the saints). Let me repeat that: he comes before the spirits of the just men made perfect: the saints in Heaven. The Christian is warned about coming before all of the following:

Hebrews 12:22-25 “**But ye are come** unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, **and to the spirits of just men made perfect**, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh.”

The spirits of the just men made perfect, the saints, are in Heaven. We see that they are prominently included in the description of those whom the Christian comes before in the image of the celestial Church. This lends further credence to the fact that prayers to them, and their intercession, are biblically-based and of tremendous value. This is because God is glorified, not detracted, by His saints.

GOD IS GLORIFIED BY THE SAINTS

2 Thessalonians 1:10 “**When he [Jesus] shall come to be glorified in his saints**, and to be admired in all them that believe...”

Saints do not diminish God’s glory; on the contrary, they augment it. They highlight the great and extraordinary things which God does with those who serve Him. Those who are closest to the King can gain favors that are not always given to those who are further away from Him, just like in any other hierarchy, family, company, team, etc. This is the true and Catholic view of Heaven.

THE CATHOLIC VIEW OF HEAVEN, WHICH RECOGNIZES THE INTERCESSION AND PROPER PLACE OF THE SAINTS, GIVES FULL GLORY TO JESUS – THE PROTESTANT VIEW TAKES GLORY FROM HIM

To use an analogy, the Catholic view of Heaven is like the magnificent palace of a King, where there are dozens of levels of servants and attendants. They wait on the King, and they have dedicated everything to Him. They are His true friends, in addition to His servants. Their joy, their lives of service, and their extraordinary example strike each visitor with awe.

All of the King’s servants possess their own splendor. It has been given to them as a result of their place of honor in the palace. The King has bestowed some of His own glory on everyone with Him, even though theirs is infinitely less than His own. **Their**

personal glory contributes to the glory of the entire palace. The profound glory of the King's servants and friends strikes one with wonder. What must be the unique glory of the King Himself, whom all of these individuals serve?

As you see more of the palace, and move closer to the King, the glory of His friends and servants increases. Just like in creation itself, the vivid arrangement of God's design is a delight to behold – with views as diverse as snow-capped mountains to flowing rivers to green jungles to beautiful woods – in Heaven there is a countless variety of people; each has a different story, a different trial, a different sacrifice, a different gift, which were all dedicated and used for God to the fullest, and which culminated in perfect happiness in Heaven. This stunning variety – this brilliant ordering of the heavenly host – inspires one to even more love and awe of the Almighty. This is the Catholic view of Heaven and the heavenly hierarchy. Clearly the glory of the saints does not detract from the glory of God, but magnifies it. As Mary said:

Luke 1:46 “My soul doth magnify the Lord.”

The Protestant view is much different. It's comparable to a palace which is filled only with the King. In this palace, there seems to be no one else present. Which King is more glorious? Which image of the heavenly kingdom is the true one? Which is the biblical one? The answer is that the Bible teaches the Catholic view, the communion of the saints.

THE BIBLE TEACHES THE CATHOLIC VIEW OF HEAVEN, OF JESUS AND OF
THE SAINTS –
IT DOES NOT TEACH THE PROTESTANT VIEW

Daniel 7:10 “A swift stream of fire issued forth from before him: **thousands of thousands ministered to him, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before him:** the judgment sat, and the books were opened.”

This passage is striking, not only because it reveals the awesome power of God's judgment and foreknowledge; but because the mind-boggling number of servants who minister to Him makes the image even more captivating.

Matthew 25:31 “When **the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him,** then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.”

God comes with and is glorified by His ministers, His angels and His saints.

Jude 1:14 “... **Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints.**”

As we see, the Catholic view is clearly the correct and biblical view of the heavenly King and the ordering of the heavenly hierarchy.

THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT SAINTS ARE MODELS OF IMITATION

We've established that praying to saints is biblical. In consideration of their great fidelity to Christ, the Bible also teaches that saints are to be imitated and venerated.

1 Corinthians 4:16 "Wherefore I [Paul] beseech you, be ye followers of me."

Why?

1 Corinthians 11:1 "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."

In truth, a real Christian doesn't follow any man. Rather, this verse means that he venerates the saints, and tries to imitate them in their tremendous spiritual lives and fidelity to the Gospel.

THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT GOD SAVED 276 FOR ST. PAUL

Saints are models of imitation because great saints gain so many graces and so much favor with Christ that their intercession, by the grace of Jesus Christ, can literally help save lives and souls. For example, in Acts chapter 27 we read that Paul was on a ship bound for Italy. A great storm arose which threatened to destroy the ship and kill everyone on board.

Acts 27:21-23 "**But after long abstinence** Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, **whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.**"

An angel told him that all the men would be saved because God has given them all to him. Think about that. It shows the profound intercessory power of holy men. In all, God saved 276 men for Paul.

THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT SAINTS ARE TO BE MARKED OUT FOR AN
EXAMPLE
THAT'S WHY THE CATHOLIC CHURCH CANONIZES SAINTS

Philippians 3:17 “Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example.”

That’s why the Catholic Church canonizes saints, and raises them up for our imitation and veneration. In fact, the Bible does that very thing – marks them out as an example – with the champions of the faith in the Old Testament.

James 5:10 “Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.”

Hebrews chapter 11 goes through a whole list of the Old Testament exemplars of faith and their deeds to point them out for admiration and imitation. Hebrews 12:1 describes these saints as a cloud of witnesses.

Hebrews 12:1 “Wherefore seeing **we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses**, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us...”

THE BIBLE ON THE RELICS OF SAINTS

The Bible also teaches that even the relics of these saintly men are venerated and can be miraculous. First, in Matthew 9:20-22, we see that a woman who touched Jesus’ garment was cured of a hemorrhage. Certainly Jesus was God, and not a mere saint. Many non-Catholics will say it’s superstitious or idolatrous to venerate the relics of saints. But the Bible teaches otherwise.

THE HANDKERCHIEFS AND APRONS OF PAUL WERE MIRACULOUS

Acts 19:11-12 “And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: So that **from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them**, and the evil spirits went out of them.”

Paul was not only given miraculous powers, but the handkerchiefs and aprons which he touched were effective to work miracles. We see a similar thing with St. Peter. In Acts 9, St. Peter raised the dead. In Acts 5:15, we read that his very shadow was considered effective to miraculously heal and cure.

THE CLOAK OF ELIJAH MIRACULOUSLY PARTED THE JORDAN RIVER

In the Old Testament we see the same biblical teaching on the relics of saints. In 2

Kings 2 (4 Kings 2 in the Douay-Rheims Catholic Bible), we see that the cloak of the prophet Elijah miraculously parted the Jordan River.

2 Kings 2:13-14 “He picked up the cloak that had fallen from Elijah and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. **Then he took the cloak that had fallen from him and struck the water with it...** When he struck the water, **it divided to the right and to the left, and he crossed over.**”

THE BONES OF THE PROPHET ELISHA RAISED A MAN TO LIFE

Another example of a miraculous relic comes from 2 Kings 13:21 (4 Kings 13:21 in the Douay-Rheims Bible). We read that the bones of the prophet Elisha were so powerful that they raised a man to life.

2 Kings 13:21 “And it came to pass, as they were burying a man... they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet.”

The bones of saints are one of the most common relics used by Catholics. Far from being idolatrous or superstitious, we see that Catholic relics are rooted in biblical teaching and practice.

THE BIBLE ON THE VENERATION OF IMAGES AND STATUES

Many Protestants reject the use of statues and images of the saints. They think they are idolatrous and condemned in the Bible. However, just as we saw with their position on the relics of saints, their position is not correct on this issue either. One of the main verses they like to quote is Deuteronomy 5:8.

Deuteronomy 5:8 “Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of any things, that are in heaven above, or that are in the earth beneath, or that abide in the waters under the earth.”

They say this passage condemns making or using graven images. But this argument fails for many reasons. First, if one were to take this passage by itself and as they understand it, it would forbid making the likeness of anything on the earth. “*Nor the likeness of any things that are in heaven above or that are in the earth beneath.*”

That would mean that one couldn't make or have a picture of an animal; for such a picture is the likeness of something on the earth. Almost all Protestants, however, would reject that understanding of the passage, even though that's what it says. Not only do most Protestants accept images such as the likeness of animals, but they

accept images and likenesses of other humans. They carry pictures of their family members with them. That is contrary to their interpretation of the words of Deuteronomy 5:8.

Moreover, many of these same Protestants have no problem even with statues being made of prominent military leaders or other figures. With the few who do object to such statutes, basically all of them accept and use graven images such as coins. The coins in their pockets have graven images of men. According to their understanding of Deuteronomy 5:8, they would be committing idolatry and violating the commandment of God by keeping such coins and/or by using them. The point here is that their understanding of the passage is completely wrong. That's why they must be quite selective in their application of Deuteronomy 5:8 and similar passages.

So, does that passage really forbid the making of all graven images? Not at all, as we will see. That's shown by the context of the passage – in particular, the next verse.

Deuteronomy 5:8-9 “Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of any things, that are in heaven above, or that are in the earth beneath, or that abide in the waters under the earth. **Thou shalt not adore them, and thou shalt not serve them...**”

Thou shalt not adore them nor serve them. That's the key. That's what God is forbidding. He's forbidding the making of statues or images to worship them or to worship creatures, such as animals, etc., which many Jews were prone to falling into.

Catholics do not worship statues or images. To say otherwise is a lie. Catholics only worship God. Images and statues serve as reminders of the holy people and deeds which they represent. But there's more.

GOD SPECIFICALLY COMMANDS THE MAKING OF RELIGIOUS STATUES

In the Bible God specifically commands the making and use of statues for religious purposes. The following verse should crush, once and for all, the false idea that the Bible condemns the use of true religious statues and images.

Exodus 25:18-19 “And **thou shalt make two cherubim of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them**, in the two ends of the mercy seat. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubim on the two ends thereof.”

God specifically commands the making of two statues of cherubim. Cherubim are angels. So much for the (false) idea that the making of statues or graven images

is forbidden. Such an idea is a total misrepresentation of the teaching of Sacred Scripture, which forbids them with reference to the idolatrous worshipping of creatures. Other passages in the Bible where we see references to God's command to make statues for true religious purposes are: Exodus 26:1, 1 Kings 6 or 3 Kings 6 in the Douay-Rheims Catholic Bible; and 1 Kings 7:25-36 or 3 Kings 7:25-36 in the Douay-Rheims Catholic Bible.

GOD COMMANDED THE ISRAELITES TO USE THE IMAGE OF A FIERY SERPENT

We also find God commanding the use of images to cure people – images which, at first thought, some would find surprising or worse. God commanded Moses to make an image of a serpent for the people to look upon and be healed.

Numbers 21:8 “And the Lord said unto Moses, make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.”

PROTESTANTS WHO CONDEMN USING STATUES AND IMAGES SHARE THEIR (ICONOCLASTIC) BELIEF WITH MUSLIMS

Non-Catholics who consider the use of religious statues or images to be idolatrous not only condemn the Bible passages we've just covered, but they also share their belief with Muslims. Muslims abominate such statues and images. In fact, in the 8th century, the Byzantine Emperor Leo III became dismayed at some Christian military losses at the hands of Muslims. He falsely concluded that it was a result of God's displeasure with the use of statues and images in Christian churches. Such images were in use all throughout the Christian (Catholic) Church from the earliest days. These images and statues are used to raise the mind to God, to remind us of Him, His holy Mother and His heavenly servants. That's why God commanded them to be made for the temple. But Emperor Leo III undertook a campaign to destroy these images and remove them from Christian churches.

The popes opposed this heresy, which was known as *iconoclasm*. Iconoclasm, which means image breaking, is a heresy which many Protestants today hold. It was rejected and condemned as false by the Catholic Church at the Second Council of Nicaea in 787. This early Catholic council – which is known as the seventh ecumenical council – is the last Catholic council which is accepted by the Eastern “Orthodox,” the Anglicans and some Protestants.

THE PROTESTANT OBJECTION THAT CATHOLICS WORSHIP STATUES AND IMAGES, BECAUSE CATHOLICS SOMETIMES KNEEL OR BOW BEFORE THEM

IN PRAYER, IS REFUTED BY THE BIBLE

Another false idea that must be addressed is the idea that Catholics worship statues because they sometimes kneel or bow before them in prayer. This objection is false and refuted by Sacred Scripture.

The posture of kneeling – and even of lying prostrate on the ground – does not necessarily mean worship or adoration. It does signify that in certain religious contexts and in some false religions; but bowing, kneeling, and even going completely prostrate can be merely a sign of respect, a humble posture.

Anyone who has taken the time to read the Old Testament knows that bowing down prostrate before someone doesn't necessary mean worship. Throughout the Old Testament we read that holy figures bowed down prostrate before other men, not as a sign of worship or adoration, but of respect and humility. For example:

Genesis 33:3 “And he [Jacob] went forward and bowed down with his face to the ground seven times until his brother [Esau] came near.”

Jacob bowed down completely with his face to the ground seven times before his brother Esau. He did this as a sign of humility. This is the same Jacob of whom Jesus says in Luke 13:28: “when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, *and Jacob*, and all the prophets, *in the kingdom of God...*” He was not an idolater, of course.

We read a similar thing of Abraham in Genesis 23:12.

Genesis 23:12 “And Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land.”

Lot bowed himself with his face to the ground in order to venerate angels who came.

Genesis 19:1 “**And there came two angels** to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; **and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground.**”

There are many other passages like this throughout the books of Kings and Samuel.

2 Samuel 9:8 (2 Kings 9 in Douay-Rheims Catholic Bible) “*And he [David] bowed himself [before Saul],* and said, what is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?”

1 Samuel 24:8 (1 Kings 24 in Douay-Rheims Catholic Bible) “David also

arose... and cried after Saul, saying, My lord the king. And when Saul looked behind him, *David stooped with his face to the earth*, and bowed himself.”

Other passages which show that men bowed, etc. before other men, not idolatrously, but merely out of humility and respect, are Genesis 43:26, Ruth 2:8-10 and others. This is sufficient to refute the false assertion that Catholics worship statues when they kneel or bow to assume a humble and respectful posture while invoking the heavenly figure whom the statue or image represents.

THE EVIDENCE IS IRREFUTABLE THAT PRAYING TO SAINTS IS BIBLICAL

We've seen in much detail that the Bible teaches the communion of saints. We've seen that praying to saints is biblical. We've seen that Jesus teaches that the saints in Heaven are as the angels. We've seen that deceased saints and their prayers intercede for men. We've seen that relics and statues are not idolatrous, but biblically based. None of this is to suggest that one cannot pray directly to Jesus.

True Catholics pray directly to Jesus every day, but praying to saints and invoking their intercession is extremely effective, powerful, and often grants graces from Jesus that He is not otherwise inclined to give. It's particularly important and necessary in the case of the greatest of all the saints, the mother of Jesus, the Blessed Virgin Mary, the vessel by which He chose to come to Earth. The veneration and intercession of saints was recognized from the very beginning of the Christian Church, by the fathers of the Church.

CATHOLIC SAINTS SPREAD THE GOSPEL ALL OVER THE EARTH

The miracles, the missionary efforts, and the lives of Catholic saints have been among the most important instruments in the spread of the Gospel throughout the earth. All of what the Catholic saints are and have done is by the grace of Jesus Christ. By cooperating with it, they spiritually conquered the world for Christ, a world that is sadly falling into apostasy and abandoning the Christian Catholic heritage which defined it.

It was the Catholic saint, St. Patrick, who brought the faith of Jesus to Ireland. It was the Catholic saint, St. Boniface, who brought the Gospel to Germany. It was the Catholic saint, St. Augustine of Canterbury, who brought the Gospel to the Angles, to England. It was the Catholic saint, St. Francis Xavier, who brought the Gospel to much of Asia and to the far East. In the 16th and 17th centuries, it was Catholic saints and missionaries, especially Jesuits, who definitively brought the Gospel to North and South America. Many of these lands were inhabited by barbaric and pagan peoples. These would frequently torture and murder foreigners and perceived

enemies. In bringing the Gospel to them, these saints often underwent mind-boggling hardships and endured incredible struggles. They meticulously learned arcane languages, customs and cultures in order to teach these people about Jesus Christ and lead them to His faith. Sometimes they were tortured barbarically. Sometimes they had to travel through almost unbelievable conditions, suffering in sub-zero temperatures without sufficient clothing or sleeping in many feet of snow surrounded by the wilderness.

JESUS PREDICTED THE CONTINUOUS TRADITION OF MIRACLES THAT HAS BEEN SEEN IN THE LIVES OF CATHOLIC SAINTS

This conversion of heathen peoples was also facilitated by the miracles which Jesus granted to His saints. There is a continuous tradition of miracles in the lives of Catholic saints which extends right back to the beginning of the Catholic Church. This reality, which is fascinating to read about in the lives of the saints, was predicted by Jesus.

John 14:12 “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.”

The communion of saints is biblical. Praying to and venerating saints does not detract from God’s glory. On the contrary, it inspires us to center our whole lives more zealously around Christ and doing His will, as they did. Throughout her history, the Catholic Church has remained faithful to the teaching of Jesus and the Bible on angels and saints. This is because the Catholic Church is the one true Church of Jesus Christ.

THE BIBLE TEACHES BAPTISMAL REGENERATION AND THAT BAPTISM IS NECESSARY FOR SALVATION

Most Protestants today do not believe that baptism regenerates. This includes Baptists, Presbyterians, Pentecostals, most Evangelicals, and many others. They do not believe that baptism removes sin from the soul and places man in a state of justification. Their position is that water baptism should be performed, but that it's just a sign of initiation, a sign of a conversion, or a spiritual rebirth that has already happened.

The Catholic position is that baptism is necessary for salvation. The Catholic Church teaches that baptism is necessary for every man because baptism is the cause of spiritual rebirth. Baptism regenerates.

So what does the Bible teach on the matter?

THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT BAPTISM IS FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS

Acts 2:38 "But Peter said to them: Do penance, **and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins: and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.**"

That's quite clear. The Bible says that baptism is for the remission of sins. It takes away sins.

THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT BAPTISM WASHES AWAY SINS

Acts 22:12-16 "And one Ananias... Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked upon him. And he said... **arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins**, calling on the name of the Lord."

This clearly indicates that St. Paul's sins would be washed away in baptism.

JESUS TEACHES THAT ALL MEN MUST BE BAPTIZED TO HAVE THE FAITH AND BE SAVED

Matthew 28:18-20 "And Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and **teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:** Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you..."

In the very last INSTRUCTION THAT JESUS CHRIST GIVES THE APOSTLES BEFORE LEAVING THIS WORLD – He gives His Apostles two commands: to teach all nations and to baptize. This should tell everyone something about the importance and the necessity of baptism. Baptism is bound up, by Jesus Himself, with the very command to teach all nations the Christian faith. That's because no one can be saved without it, as we see in St. Mark's Gospel.

Mark 16:15-16 “And he (Jesus) said to them: Go ye into the whole world, and **preach the Gospel** to every creature. **He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved**: but he that believeth not shall be damned.”

Jesus says that those who believe and are baptized will be saved, **which indicates that the unbaptized will not be saved**. But some ask: why didn't Jesus say, “*he that believeth not and is not baptized shall be damned*,” after saying he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved? The answer is that those who don't believe are not going to get baptized, so it's not necessary to mention baptism again.

ROMANS AND EPHESIANS TEACH THAT ONE COMES OUT OF SIN THROUGH BAPTISM

In Romans 5 and 6, St. Paul explains that Christ reconciles some men to God, removes their Original Sin, and makes them members of the Church of God. He explains that this happens by baptism.

Romans 6:3-4 “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are **buried with him by baptism into death...**”

The reference to being “buried into death” by baptism refers to the spiritual rebirth which baptism gives. It puts to death the old man who lived in original sin, and gives birth to a new life in Christ.

In the Book of Ephesians, the Bible teaches that the souls of the Church are cleansed in water baptism.

Ephesians 5:25-26 “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; **That he might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life.**”

The Church is sanctified and cleansed by the laver (or washing) of water in the word of life. What's this washing of water? It obviously refers to water baptism. The “word

of life” refers to the words which were given by Jesus for the baptismal form (Matthew 28:19). Even John Calvin, the famous Protestant who denied baptismal regeneration, admitted that this passage (Ephesians 5:26) refers to water baptism. (Calvin, *Institutes*, “of Baptism,” Book, 4.15.1)

1 CORINTHIANS 12 TEACHES THAT BAPTISM MAKES ONE A MEMBER OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

1 Corinthians 12:13 “For by one Spirit are **we all baptized into one body**, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free...”

The Bible says that one comes into the Body of Christ and receives the Holy Spirit through baptism.

THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT ALL TRUE BELIEVERS HAVE RECEIVED THE ONE BAPTISM

Ephesians 4:3-6 “Careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. One body and one Spirit; as you are called in the hope of your calling. **One Lord, one faith, one baptism. One God and Father** of all...”

In Ephesians 4, St. Paul is describing the unity in the Church of Jesus Christ. Consider the list that he gives: *One Lord, One Faith, One God, One Father*. Prominently placed with “Lord” and “Faith” and “God” and “Father” is *baptism*. This is because it is through this baptism that a man becomes united to God and incorporated into the unity of the Church. To believe that people in the Church do not have this one baptism is equivalent to believing that they don’t have the one Lord and the one Faith. That’s how necessary baptism is.

THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT FAITH IS RECEIVED THROUGH BAPTISM

In Galatians 3, we see the link between receiving the faith and receiving baptism. We see that one first receives faith through baptism.

In Galatians 3:23, St. Paul says: “But before **faith** came...”

In verse 24, he says: “that we may be justified **by faith**...”

In verse 25, he says: “But after **that faith** is come...”

In verse 26, he says: “For ye are all the children of God **by faith**, in Christ Jesus.”

St. Paul explains exactly what he means by “faith in Christ Jesus” in the very next verse (verse 27).

Galatians 3:27 “**For as many of you as have been baptized in Christ, have put on Christ.** There is neither Jew nor Greek: there is neither bond nor free: there is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

This very interesting chapter of Scripture should give a message to everyone. It's clearly teaching what the Catholic Church has held for 2,000 years: that it is by means of the Sacrament of Baptism that one receives faith. That's why baptism has been called, since apostolic times, “the Sacrament of faith.” Without baptism, one does not have the faith and cannot be saved.

THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT WATER BAPTISM SAVES

Titus 3:5 “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, **but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration**, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”

The Bible says that men are saved by the “washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.” This refers to the spiritual regeneration given in the baptismal waters. The outward pouring of water effects the interior cleansing and renewal of the Holy Spirit. This sacramental action justifies the soul, and applies the merit of the Blood of Jesus Christ while the baptism is occurring.

Protestants have tried to explain this passage away. They argue that the “washing” doesn't refer to the water of baptism, but to the cleansing of the Spirit without baptism. This is refuted by comparing this passage to 1 Peter 3:20-21. They both teach that baptism “saves.” 1 Peter 3:20-21 is clearly referring to water baptism, not just a spiritual washing. This demonstrates that Titus 3:5 is also referring to regeneration through the water of baptism.

1 Peter 3:20-21 “... when they waited for the patience of God in the days of Noe, when the ark was a building: wherein a few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. Whereunto **baptism being of the like form, now saveth you also...**”

1 Peter 3:20-21 is one of the strongest passages in the Bible on the necessity of baptism. Notice the force of St. Peter's assertion here. **Baptism now saves you**. He is talking about water baptism (the Sacrament), of course, because he draws an analogy between the baptismal waters and the Flood waters. Peter compares receiving the Sacrament of (Water) Baptism to being on the ark of Noe. Just as no one escaped physical death outside the ark of Noe during the time of the Flood (only eight souls survived the Flood by being firmly planted on the ark), likewise no one avoids spiritual death or is saved from original sin without baptism! Baptism saves

you. How clear does it have to be that the Bible teaches that water baptism is necessary for salvation?

THE CROSSING OF THE RED SEA WAS A TYPE OF WATER BAPTISM

This brings me to another point. That is typology. As mentioned in the section on the Virgin Mary, a biblical type is a real event or a real person or a real thing in the Old Testament which foreshadows and points forward to something in the New Testament. There are types of water baptism. One type of water baptism and its necessity is found in the crossing of the Red Sea by Moses and the Israelites.

Just as no one escaped physical death at the hands of the Egyptians without crossing through the waters of the Red Sea, no one escapes eternal death without receiving the baptismal waters. St. Paul makes the connection in 1 Corinthians 10:1-2:

1 Corinthians 10:1-2 “Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea...”

OTHER OLD TESTAMENT TYPES OF WATER BAPTISM

In the very beginning God created heaven and earth; and the first thing mentioned in the Bible is the waters. Look at the very first two verses in the first book of the Bible.

Genesis 1:1-2 “In the beginning God created the heaven and earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God **moved upon the face of the waters.**”

This tells us that water has been of major – and even unique – significance to God’s creation from the very beginning. It has been integral to His plan. He has used it to cleanse, to generate new life. It makes perfect sense, therefore, that the element He would choose, in bringing the new life of Jesus Christ to souls by dispensing the merit of His passion and the cleansing of the Holy Spirit, is that primordial element over which His Spirit moved at the beginning of creation.

Another clear type of, or reference to, the sanctifying effects of water baptism is found in Ezechiel 36.

Ezechiel 36:24-26 “For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. **Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and**

from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.”

This clearly refers to the cleansing power of water baptism, which will transmit the new life of Jesus Christ, and will be dispensed to God's people gathered from all over the Earth. The reference to “clean water” in Ezechiel 36 proves that it's referring to justification in the New Testament; for the very same language is found in Hebrews 10:22, to describe the interior change effectuated by justification in Christ. In Hebrews 10:22, that change is described as a heart being sprinkled from an evil conscience. Ezechiel 36 specifically indicates that this cleanness of heart is effectuated by the sprinkling with clean water (in baptism).

Some people object at this point. They bring up the Good Thief on the Cross as an example against the necessity of baptism. But this example fails. First, the law of baptism, which Jesus made binding on every man, became an obligation after Jesus' Resurrection, when Jesus gave the command to preach the Gospel and to baptize all nations in Matthew 28:19. The Good Thief died under the Old Law, before the Law of Baptism became binding on everyone. Second, the Good Thief did not go to Heaven on the day that Jesus was crucified. We know this because no one went to Heaven until after Jesus did. Jesus had the primacy in all things, as St. Paul says in Colossians 1:18.

Jesus didn't ascend into Heaven until after His Resurrection, as John 20:17 proves. So the Good Thief is not an example against the necessity of baptism for salvation. That's why the Apostles' Creed, which Catholics recite, correctly states that Jesus was crucified, died and was buried; He descended into Hell; on the third day He rose again from the dead and then ascended into Heaven. He didn't ascend to Heaven until after His Resurrection, and He descended into Hell on the day of His death. What was this Hell? It was Abraham's bosom, the waiting place of the just of the Old Testament. That's where the Good Thief went with Jesus on the day of His Crucifixion; Jesus called it paradise because He would be there.

JESUS SUBMITTED TO BAPTISM TO SHOW ALL MEN THAT IT'S NECESSARY TO BE BAPTIZED

Baptism is so necessary that even Jesus submitted Himself to it. He was baptized by St. John the Baptist to show that every single man – and Jesus was both true God and true man – must be baptized for salvation. It should be pointed out that in Catholic theology, the baptism given by John the Baptist was not the same as the baptism which Jesus instituted: the true Sacrament of Baptism. It did not have the same force or power.

The baptism instituted by Jesus takes away original and actual sins, as well as all punishment due to sin; the baptism of John was a baptism which stirred people to repentance and was a prefigurement of the baptism which Jesus instituted. That's why those who had only received the baptism of John were baptized again (Acts 19:4-5). But Jesus' reception of baptism at the hands of John is considered to be the transition between John's prefigured baptism and the real baptism of Christ. The baptism of Jesus sanctified the waters so that they could be efficacious in taking away sin, even though the baptism which Jesus would institute would not become binding on all until after the Resurrection.

Luke 3:21-22 "... it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, **and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.**"

The descent of the Holy Ghost signifies the regenerative powers of baptism. The opening of Heaven signifies that Heaven is open to a man once he has properly received baptism. It makes him an adopted son of God, instead of an excluded child of Adam.

BLOOD AND WATER CAME FROM JESUS' SIDE BECAUSE HIS BLOOD IS
POURED OUT IN THE WATER OF BAPTISM

The Bible makes a clear connection between the Blood of Jesus and the water of baptism. In John 19, we see that blood and water came forth from Jesus' side after His death on the Cross. This real event had a symbolic significance as well.

John 19:34 "But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water."

This signified that His Blood (and the merit of His passion) would be poured out with water in baptism. That's why we also read in 1 John 5 that there is a connection between the spirit, the water and the blood.

THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT THE BLOOD OF JESUS, THE SPIRITUAL RENEWAL,
AND THE WATER OF BAPTISM COME AS ONE

1 John 5:8 "And there are three that give testimony on earth: the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three are one."

This refers to the three witnesses in justification: the new life or spirit brought by justification, the water of baptism, and the blood of Jesus. These three must be

present for a person to be justified. The first and the third come together – are poured out – in the water of baptism. That’s why Jesus speaks of being born again of water and the spirit (John 3:5). He could have also truly spoken of being born again of water, blood and the spirit.

JESUS SAYS NO ONE ENTERS HEAVEN WITHOUT REBIRTH OF WATER AND OF THE SPIRIT

John 3:3-5 “Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born? Jesus answered, **Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.**”

Deeply consider that when Jesus teaches this profound truth, He prefaces His statement by saying: “verily, verily” or “truly truly” or “amen, amen,” depending upon the translation you are reading.

This double-affirmation is an act of oath-taking. In a Jewish court of law, no one could be put to death without the testimony of two witnesses (Deuteronomy 19:15). Both of them had to raise their right hand and say: *Amen*. (See Nehemiah 8:6 or 2 Esdras 8:6 as an example of the solemnity of this formula.) Therefore, this solemn language indicates that what Jesus has to say here is extremely serious. Jesus is affirming in a solemn oath that no one enters Heaven without being born again of water and the Holy Spirit.

Jesus tells Nicodemus that *unless a man is born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God*. Nicodemus then specifically asks Him how that happens; **how is one born again?** Jesus answers, in John 3:5, by declaring that unless a man is born **OF WATER AND THE SPIRIT HE CANNOT ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD**. So, being born again means being born of water and the Holy Ghost. This clearly refers to water baptism.

It’s true that non-Catholics have tried to explain away the clear meaning of these words, but to no avail. Many of them say that the water refers to natural birth, and the Spirit refers to the born again process by accepting the faith. That’s impossible because the passage is about the rebirth. Jesus says that the rebirth is of water and the Spirit. Moreover, the phrase “of water and the Spirit” in Greek (*ek hudatos kai pneumatos*) is a single linguistical unit, as Greek scholars point out. It describes being “born of water and the Spirit,” not “born of water” on the one hand, and “born of the Spirit” on the other.

In addition, the extended context of the passage confirms that it's referring to water baptism. In the very next chapter, we read that Jesus' Apostles went out and baptized. Look at John 4:1. So, after the Bible presents the absolute necessity of water baptism, it mentions that the Apostles practiced what Jesus preached.

It's crucial for people to understand that John 3:5 refers to water baptism; for millions have a false and unbiblical concept of what it means to be born again. They think it means coming to a true commitment that Jesus is the Savior. That is incorrect, and was not believed in the ancient Church. It is certainly necessary for a person above the age of reason to accept Jesus Christ, to believe in the Trinity and the Incarnation, and to accept all of His teachings. But the Bible clearly teaches that being born again refers to the spiritual regeneration which water baptism gives. The overwhelming evidence which we've considered from other passages in the New Testament also proves it.

The Sacrament of Baptism removes all original and actual sins for those who properly receive it. It should be noted, however, that receiving that sacrament is not a guarantee of salvation. One can lose the grace of baptism through mortal sins and by denying the true faith of Jesus Christ.

THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH ALL TAUGHT BAPTISMAL REGENERATION AND THAT BAPTISM IS NECESSARY FOR SALVATION

From the very beginning of the Christian Church, the fathers of the Church unanimously believed in the necessity of water baptism and baptismal regeneration. They based that belief on the teaching of the New Testament, John 3:5 and Apostolic Tradition. Here are just four passages. One could quote dozens of others.

In the *Letter of Barnabas*, dated as early as 70 A.D., we read:

"... we descend into the water full of sins and foulness, and we come up bearing fruit in our heart..." (Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, Vol. 1:34.)

In the *Shepherd of Hermas*, dated 140 A.D., Hermas quotes Jesus in John 3:5 and writes:

"They had need to come up through the water, so that they might be made alive; for they could not otherwise enter into the kingdom of God."
(Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, Vol. 1:92.)

In 155 A.D., in *First Apology*, 61, St. Justin the Martyr writes:

“... they are led by us to a place where there is water; and there they are reborn in the same kind of rebirth in which we ourselves were reborn... in the name of God... they receive the washing of water. For Christ said, **‘Unless you be reborn, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.’** The reason for doing this we have learned from the apostles.” (Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, Vol. 1:126.)

St. Aphraates, the oldest of the Syrian fathers, writes in his *Treatises*, 336 A.D.:

“For from baptism we receive the Spirit of Christ... **For the Spirit is absent from all those who are born of the flesh, until they come to the water of rebirth.**” (Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, Vol. 1:681.)

THE PROOF FOR INFANT BAPTISM

Many Protestants do not believe that infants should be baptized. They think baptism should only be given to those who have reached the age of reason and have chosen to receive it. They consider the baptisms of infants to be invalid and unscriptural. This position is false for many reasons.

It should be pointed out, first of all, that most Protestants agree with Catholics on this point. Most of them practice infant baptism. Lutherans, Anglicans, Methodists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and others practice infant baptism. This is obviously not to suggest that infant baptism is proven true by the fact that these groups practice it; but merely to note that Protestants who reject infant baptism are in the minority, even among Protestants.

Second, the Bible teaches that whole households were baptized:

1 Cor. 1:16 “And I [Paul] baptized also the household of Stephanas...”

Acts 16:15 “And when she [Lydia] was baptized, and her household...”

Acts 16:33 “And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.”

Entire households were baptized. Think about these verses. The Bible refers to a woman and “her household.” It refers to a man and his “household.” Why didn’t the passage just generally include children. Scripture connects the two:

Gen. 18:19 “... he will command his children and his household after him...”

Gen. 36:6 “And Esau took his wives, and his sons, and his daughters, and all the persons of his house.”

Since households generally include children – and the Bible repeatedly mentions that whole households were baptized – these passages *by themselves* make the case against infant baptism extremely unlikely. In fact, if a Protestant who rejects infant baptism believes in Scripture alone, he would have to find an explicit teaching in the Bible that infants should not be baptized. But there is nothing like that.

Third, Jesus clearly taught that every man must be baptized to be saved. We saw this in John 3:5. He does not make any distinctions or exceptions. This is very significant because in John 6:53 – a passage on the necessity to eat Jesus’ flesh, which uses language that is similar to John 3:5 – we do see a distinction. In John

6:53, Jesus says:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.”

But in John 3:5, he says:

“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

In John 6:53 (John 6:54 in Catholic versions), Jesus says unless YOU eat the flesh of the Son of man. But in John 3:5, the statement is universally applicable: unless A MAN is born again of water and the Spirit.

The wording is slightly different because receiving the Eucharist is necessary for all who hear the command and can fulfill it, such as those above the age of reason. Jesus said *unless you*, to those to whom He was speaking and to others who hear the command. But the necessity to receive water baptism is universal. Hence, Jesus says *unless a man* is born again of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. Every man necessarily includes infants. It logically follows from the teaching of Jesus in John 3:5 that infants should be baptized.

THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT BAPTISM IS THE NEW CIRCUMCISION – INFANTS WERE CIRCUMCISED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Moving to the next point, which is extremely important, we must consider circumcision. Circumcision was the Old Testament counterpart to Baptism. Circumcision was the way that males in the Old Testament entered a covenant relationship with God. If you were not circumcised, you were not in God’s covenant. It was a type of baptism.

Like other types, not every aspect of circumcision corresponded to what baptism would be. For instance, only males could be circumcised in the Old Testament, but males and females are baptized in the New. But there is no doubt that circumcision was the Old Testament counterpart to baptism. Colossians 2 teaches that baptism is the New Testament circumcision.

Colossians 2:11-12 “**In [Jesus] also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism,** wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith...”

This passage identifies baptism as the new and greater circumcision. It also says that one rises to new supernatural life in Christ by baptism. **Infants were circumcised in the Old Testament.** If baptism is the new circumcision, it follows that infants are to be baptized in the New. If not, then God would have been more generous, more universal, more inclusive in the inferior Old Covenant than He is in the New. But this is not the case.

The salvation which is made available in Jesus is open to all peoples: to Jews and Gentiles. It's unthinkable that Jesus would not establish a means to incorporate children into His spiritual Kingdom and to give them His blessings and salvation.

In fact, notice what Peter says in his famous sermon on Pentecost in Acts 2:

Acts 2:38-39 "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and **be baptized** every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. **For the promise is unto you, and to your children...**"

This passage is speaking of baptism, and the blessings and forgiveness given through it. It says that the promise is also for the children. They receive the forgiveness through water baptism.

Matthew 19:13-15 "Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence."

THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH BELIEVED IN INFANT BAPTISM

The fathers of the Christian Church also believed in infant baptism, having received this tradition from Jesus and the Apostles. Here are just three passages; others could be quoted.

Origen, *Homilies on Leviticus* 8:3, 244-248 A.D. "In the Church, baptism is given for the remission of sins, and, according to the usage of the Church, baptism is given even to infants. If there were nothing in infants which required the remission of sins and nothing in them pertinent to forgiveness, the grace of baptism would seem superfluous."

Pope St. Innocent, 414 A.D. "But that which Your Fraternity asserts the Pelagians preach, **that even without the grace of Baptism infants are able to be endowed with the rewards of eternal life, is quite idiotic.**" (Jurgens,

The Faith of the Early Fathers, Vol. 3:2016.)

St. Augustine, *Letter to Jerome*, 415 A.D. “**Anyone who should say that even infants who pass from this life without participation in the Sacrament [of Baptism] shall be made alive in Christ truly goes counter to the preaching of the Apostle and condemns the whole Church**, where there is great haste in baptizing infants because it is believed without doubt that there is no other way at all in which they can be made alive in Christ.” (Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, Vol. 3:1439.)

BAPTISM DOESN'T HAVE TO BE BY IMMERSION

Some non-Catholics believe baptism must be received by immersion. This is not taught in the Bible. Consider the fact that on Pentecost, in Acts chapter 2, when thousands were baptized, there wasn't a sufficient water supply to baptize them all by immersion. Baptism by effusion (pouring) or sprinkling must have been used.

In addition, baptism by immersion would be very difficult or impossible in extremely cold environments such as the Arctic, and in extremely hot environments such as deserts. In other situations – such as an apostolate to prisoners (e.g., Acts 16) – where freedom of movement is limited, baptizing by immersion wouldn't be practicable. Jesus never would have made it so difficult or impossible to administer baptism in these situations when He was the one who declared that every man must have it.

Some people also say that the word baptism in Greek exclusively means immersion. This is not true. The word is used to signify immersion, but it is also used to signify washings which are not immersions. Examples where baptism means washing, but not immersion, are found in Luke 11:38 and Hebrews 9:10. Baptism is valid if performed either by immersion, effusion (i.e., pouring) or sprinkling, but the water must be moving as it strikes the skin and the proper words (“I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” or their equivalent) must be said.

Another point is that in baptism, the Holy Spirit is poured out. That means that even though baptism by immersion is certainly valid if done properly, one could say that baptism by effusion (i.e., pouring) more precisely signifies the action of the Holy Spirit in Baptism. There is also the fact that paintings in the catacombs, which were made by the earliest Christians, depict baptisms by pouring. This shows that these baptisms by pouring were considered acceptable from the beginning.

The Didache was written around A.D. 70. It's a famous document from the early Church. It's a strong witness to the beliefs and practices of the ancient Christians. In chapter 7, *The Didache* approves of baptism by immersion in a river, but also baptism by effusion or pouring.

The Didache, 70 A.D. “And concerning baptism, thus baptize ye: Having first said all these things, baptize into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in living water. But if you have not living water, baptize into other water; and if you cannot in cold, in warm. But if you have not neither, pour out water thrice upon the head into the name of Father and Son and Holy Spirit.”

This was written while some of the Apostles might have been living or in the first generation after them. All of this shows that the Catholic Church's teaching on baptism is the true teaching of the Bible. This is because the Catholic Church is the one true Church.

THE BIBLE TEACHES PURGATORY

There is proof for Purgatory in the Bible. It's found in 1 Corinthians chapter 3, verse 15. Let's examine this Biblical proof for Purgatory. I will use the 1611 King James Version of the Bible, a famous Protestant translation.

1 CORINTHIANS 3:15 IS IRREFUTABLE PROOF FOR PURGATORY

1 Corinthians 3:11-15 "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. **If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.**"

Now let's look at the last part of this passage again. In 1 Corinthians 3:15, we see: "*If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire.*" So we have a man whose works have been judged. His works are, in fact, burned; and he suffers loss; yet he is saved, but by fire. He suffers loss, but is saved by fire.

WHAT DOES "SUFFER LOSS" MEAN IN THIS PASSAGE?

The Greek word which is translated as "suffer loss" is *zemiothesetai*. It comes from the Greek word *zemioo*. Forms of this same Greek word, *zemioo* – which is translated as "suffer loss" in 1 Cor. 3:15 – are found in other passages in the Bible. **The word is used to mean punishment.** In Exodus 21:22, Proverbs 17:26, Proverbs 19:19 and elsewhere, this very Greek word *zemioo* is used to mean *punishment*. That means that *zemiothesetai*, the word translated as suffer loss in 1 Cor. 3:15, can mean punishment.

So, the man who suffers loss and is saved by fire can mean **a man who is punished and is saved by fire**. Doesn't that sound just like Purgatory? Yes, it sounds exactly like Purgatory because that's what it's referring to. But there is more from the context to demonstrate the point. Who is this man, and why is he suffering loss or punishment and being saved by fire?

THE CONTEXT OF 1 COR. 3 CONCERNS CHRISTIANS AND CERTAIN SINS OR BAD WORKS

The context of 1 Corinthians 3 deals with members of the Church of Christ; it deals

with Corinthian Christian believers. 1 Corinthians 3:3 tells us that some of these Corinthian Christians were falling into sinful imperfections and offenses against God. Some of these bad works or sins are identified in 1 Corinthians 3:3 as strife, divisions and envying.

1 Corinthians 3:3 "... for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?"

So the context of 1 Corinthians 3 deals with the different kinds of works of believers; some of them are not so good. These different kinds of works (good and bad) are described in 1 Corinthians 3:12.

1 Corinthians 3:12-13 "Now **if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble**; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."

There are good works, which are called: gold, silver and precious stones. These signify a better or more perfect adherence to the Gospel of Christ. Then there are other works, which are not so good. These bad works or sins included unnecessary quarrelling, strife, jealousy and divisions (as mentioned above). These are described as: wood, hay and stubble. These are the works that are burned in 1 Cor. 3:15, for which the man suffers loss or punishment; but he is saved, yet so as by fire.

This context fits perfectly with the Catholic teaching on Purgatory. The Catholic Council of Lyons II defined Purgatory this way:

Pope Gregory X, *Council of Lyons II*, 1274: "Because **if they die truly repentant in charity before they have made satisfaction by worthy fruits of penance for sins committed and omitted**, their souls are cleansed after death for purgatorial or purifying punishments..." (Denzinger 464)

Purgatory is not for those who have died in the state of serious (i.e., mortal) sin. All such persons go to Hell, as is made clear in Galatians 5:19-21, 1 Cor. 6:9, and Ephesians 5:5-8. Purgatory is for those of the true faith who have been forgiven for their sins, but have yet to make full satisfaction for the sins they have committed (more on this below).

Therefore, in 1 Corinthians 3:12, the wood, hay and stubble (which are burned) signify the works of a man who has died in the state of justification and has been forgiven of any mortal sins he might have committed. He is therefore eventually saved, but he hasn't made satisfaction for sins committed after baptism.

THE CASE OF DAVID IS AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE OF A MAN WHO HAS BEEN FORGIVEN OF HIS SIN, BUT HASN'T MADE FULL SATISFACTION FOR IT

A great example of a man who has been forgiven of his serious sin, but hasn't made satisfaction for it, is found in the case of David. In 2nd Samuel 11 (2 Kings 11 in the Douay-Rheims Catholic Bible), we read that King David committed adultery with Bathsheba. David also had her husband killed. These are mortal sins. If David would have died in that state, he would have gone to Hell. 1 Cor. 6:9 shows us that no adulterers or murderers will enter Heaven. But David repented of his sin when convicted of it by Nathan in 2 Samuel 12.

2 Samuel 12:13 "And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, **the Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.**"

The Lord took away David's sin, and Nathan said that he would not die. This means that he would not eternally die. The guilt of the sin was forgiven because David truly repented and turned from it, but was that the end of it? No, full satisfaction for this mortal sin had not been made. We read in 2 Samuel 12:14-15 that **David had to suffer the loss of his child to make satisfaction for his sin – a sin which had already been forgiven.**

2 Samuel 12:14-15 "... **because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.** And Nathan departed unto his house. And the Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick."

This provides undeniable proof that the guilt of a sin of a believer can be forgiven without the entire punishment being taken away. The Council of Trent put it this way:

Pope Julius III, *Council of Trent*, on the Sacrament of Penance, Sess. 14, Chap. 8, Nov. 25, 1551 "... **it is absolutely false and contrary to the word of God that the guilt [of a sin] is never forgiven by the Lord without the entire punishment also being remitted.** For clear and illustrious examples are found in the Sacred Writings [cf. Gen. 3:16 f; Num. 12:14; Num 20:11; II Kings 12:13 f.; etc.]." (Denzinger 904)

In this citation from the Council of Trent, we see references to numerous places in Scripture where a sin is forgiven without the entire punishment also being remitted. The example from Numbers 20 should be quoted.

Numbers 20:11-12 “And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also. And the Lord spoke unto Moses and Aaron, **Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.**”

When Moses, in obedience to God’s command, struck the rock in order to miraculously bring forth water, there was a certain level of hesitation in the act or in the manner in which he and Aaron presented it to the people. A Catholic commentary explains it: “The fault of Moses and Aaron, on this occasion, was a certain diffidence and weakness of faith; not doubting of God’s power or veracity; but apprehending the unworthiness of that rebellious and incredulous people, and therefore speaking with some ambiguity” (Douay-Rheims Commentary).

As a result, God told Moses and Aaron that they would not be the ones to bring the people into the promised land. This was their punishment, even though they remained in God’s favor. This punishment was fulfilled. It was Joshua and Caleb who led the people into the promised land.

NOTHING IMPURE SHALL ENTER HEAVEN

This kind of satisfaction for the remaining punishment due to forgiven sins is often done on Earth by good works and prayers, by suffering trials and tribulations, and by a more perfect adherence to the true faith. If such satisfaction is not done on Earth, it is and must be done in Purgatory – assuming that the person dies in the state of grace (justification). The satisfaction must be done because the Book of Revelation, the Apocalypse, makes it clear that nothing impure shall enter Heaven.

Revelation 21:27 “**There shall not enter into it anything defiled**, or that worketh abomination or maketh a lie, but they that are written in the book of life of the Lamb.”

We see the same thing in the Book of Hebrews.

Hebrews 12:14 “Follow peace with all men, and **holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.**”

Now it must be emphasized that Purgatory is not for those who die in mortal sin or outside the true faith. It’s only for those who die in the state of grace, which is also known as the state of justification. It’s for those who die in grace, but haven’t satisfied for the temporal punishment due to their forgiven mortal or venial sins, which were

committed after baptism.

THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT THERE ARE MORTAL SINS AND LESSER (VENIAL) SINS

Mortal sins destroy the state of justification. That's why Galatians 5:19-21, 1 Cor. 6:9, and Ephesians 5:5-8 teach that people who commit such mortal sins lose "their inheritance" in Heaven (justification). Examples of mortal sins are fornication, murder, drunkenness, lying, cheating, stealing, fraud, theft, masturbation, looking at pornography, giving full consent to impure thoughts, homosexuality, heresy, idolatry, violating the commandments, etc. If people die in the state of mortal sin, they will be damned. 1 John 5:16 distinguishes between sins which lead to death and sins which don't.

1 John 5:16 "If any man see his brother **sin a sin which is not unto death**, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. **There is a sin unto death**: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin: **and there is a sin not unto death.**"

In their consciences people know that there is a great difference between murder and something such as unjustifiable outbursts of anger or impatience. The former is clearly a mortal sin, while the latter is a venial sin. (Anger can also be justifiable, by the way.)

Venial sins (i.e., lesser offenses against God) weaken the soul, and make it more vulnerable to mortal sin. Mortal sins destroy the state of justification and put one in a state of damnation. That's why immediately after the verse which proves Purgatory (1 Cor. 3:15), we read this:

1 Corinthians 3:17 "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

This speaks of those who die in mortal sin: unjustified. They will be lost. Mortal sin can be forgiven only by confession to a valid priest, as proven from John 20:23. It can also be forgiven by perfect contrition with the intention to go to confession.

1 Corinthians 3:17 is quite significant to this discussion. It demonstrates that **the context of 1 Cor. 3 deals with sins**. This is important. If 1 Cor. 3:15 indeed refers to a man who is suffering loss (punishment) *for his sins* and being saved by fire (as it is), then there is no doubt that it is referring to Purgatory.

In an attempt to escape that conclusion, some non-Catholics who deny Purgatory

argue that the context of 1 Cor. 3 doesn't deal with sins, just bad works. They construct a (false) dichotomy between sins and bad works, as if they are two separate categories. They say that there are bad works which are not sins. But that attempt fails miserably in light of 1 Cor. 3:17 (above). 1 Cor. 3:17 demonstrates that the context deals with *sins for which some of them are being destroyed* (damned). Further, the New Testament does not teach that there is a difference between sins and bad works.

All of this establishes that the lesser sins or the satisfactions or imperfections which are left over for some and burned up in 1 Cor. 3:15 are indeed punishments for sins in Purgatory.

OTHER INDIRECT PROOFS FOR PURGATORY: MATTHEW 5:25 AND MATTHEW 12:32

Other indirect proofs for Purgatory are found in other parts of the New Testament. The following parable of Jesus is an example.

Matthew 5:25-26 "Agree with thy adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, **and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.**"

We see that Jesus tells the parable of the man who, for his faults, is cast into prison until he pays up or satisfies for his debt. That's exactly like Purgatory.

Matthew 12:32 is also very relevant to this issue.

Matthew 12:32 "And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, **it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.**"

Why would Jesus say that the sin against the Holy Ghost will not be forgiven in this world *or in the world to come*? A father of the Church, such as Pope St. Gregory the Great, understood these words of Jesus to indicate that certain sins will be forgiven or satisfied for in the next world: in Purgatory.

Pope St. Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* (4, 40), 593 A.D. "Everyone is presented in judgment just as he is when he departs this life. But nevertheless, **it must be believed that there is, for the sake of certain lesser faults, a purgatorial fire before the judgment, in view of the fact that Truth [Jesus] does say**

that if anyone speak blasphemy against the Holy Spirit it will be forgiven him neither in this world nor in that to come [Matthew 12:32]. In this statement we are given to understand that some faults can be forgiven in this world and some in the world to come. For if something is denied to one in particular, the intellect logically infers that it is granted for some others. But, as I said before, this must be believed to be a possible disposition for small and lesser sins.” (William Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, Vol. 3:2321)

JOHN 15:2 AND 1 PETER 1:7:
GOD USES FIRE AND DISCIPLINE TO PURGE HIS CHILDREN – THIS
CORRESPONDS TO PURGATORY

The Bible also teaches that God uses fire and discipline to reform and purge His children.

John 15:2 “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, **he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.**”

1 Peter 1:6-7 “Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, **though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.**”

Jesus disciplines His children, to make them more perfect and to bear more fruit. If this is not done unto satisfaction on Earth, it must be done in Purgatory.

BUT DIDN'T JESUS' SUFFERINGS ON THE CROSS MAKE UP FOR
EVERYTHING?

Some non-Catholics like to think that Jesus Christ's passion and death made up for everything, including the penalty due to all future sins. There are no worries about something such as Purgatory, they say, because Jesus Christ paid the price for it all. This argument is false for many reasons.

First, it's proven false by Colossians 1:24.

Colossians 1:24 “[I] now rejoice in my sufferings for you, **and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for his body,** which is the church.”

This verse might be a shock to some who are not familiar with it. Paul says that he

fills up, for the Church, those things that are wanting or lacking in the sufferings of Christ. Christ's suffering was perfect and of infinite value; so what does this mean?

What St. Paul means is that many sufferings are still wanting and needed for the members of the Church to work out their salvation, which was all made possible by Christ's sacrifice. This verse proves that Christ's sacrifice doesn't do away with all worries about the possibility of future punishment due to one's sins. If so, then Paul would never say that his sufferings fill up for members of the Church that which is wanting in the sacrifice of Christ; nor would Jesus speak of the punishments for sins, which He repeatedly does. This verse, Colossians 1:24, also proves the Catholic doctrine of the communion of saints, and the effect of intercessory prayer and sacrifice.

Second, the aforementioned Protestant argument is refuted by the following: If it were true that Jesus' sacrifice made up for everything, including the future punishments due to every man's sins, then no one would have to believe or do anything to be saved. Jesus' sacrifice would have paid the price for it all. But even the non-Catholics who argue that Jesus made up for everything admit that not all men are saved. They admit that people must do something to be saved. With such an admission, they contradict themselves and disprove their argument that Christ's sufferings took care of everything.

Third, this argument is based on a grave misunderstanding of the Redemption of Christ. What is the meaning of Jesus Christ's passion and death? Jesus Christ redeemed the world and destroyed men's sins, as the Catholic Council of Florence defined.

Pope Eugene IV, *Council of Florence*, "Cantate Domino" 1441, ex cathedra: "The Holy Roman Church firmly believes, professes, and teaches that no one conceived of man and woman was ever freed of the domination of the Devil, except through the merit of the mediator between God and men, our Lord Jesus Christ; **He who was conceived without sin, was born and died, THROUGH HIS DEATH ALONE LAID LOW THE ENEMY OF THE HUMAN RACE BY DESTROYING OUR SINS, and opened the entrance to the kingdom of heaven, which the first man by his own sin had lost with all succession...**"

It means every sin that is forgiven is forgiven by Jesus Christ, and specifically by the merit of His passion and death. This forgiveness is granted only to those who follow Him and do what He says must be done, which enables them to benefit from His Redemption. It does not mean that God will not punish people for future sins. It does not mean that the penalty for all the sins of the whole world has been taken away.

THE (TRUE) OLD TESTAMENT PROVES PURGATORY – 2 MACHABEES 12:46

There's another proof for Purgatory. It comes from the Second Book of Machabees. Some non-Catholics might immediately think: that book is not in my Bible. It's true that the Books of the Machabees are not in the Protestant Bible. They are not in the Protestant Bible because Martin Luther, the first Protestant, removed them when he split from the Catholic Church. He also added the word "alone" to Romans 3:28, and criticized other books which were left in the Protestant Bible, such as the book of James.

In all, the Protestant Bible is missing seven books from the Old Testament. These books were removed because they contain things which Catholicism teaches and Protestantism rejects. Even though they were part of the canon or collection of Scripture since the time of the ancient Church, the Protestant Bible rejects them. The fact that the books which the Protestants reject (such as the Books of the Machabees) are truly part of Scripture can be proven from the Bible itself.

THE SEPTUAGINT

There is something called the Septuagint. The Septuagint was the famous Greek translation of the Old Testament which was made by seventy scholars a few centuries before the birth of Jesus Christ. You can read much about the Septuagint on the internet. This famous translation of the Old Testament from Hebrew into Greek contains the seven books which the Protestant Bible rejects. Now here's the interesting part. There are about 350 quotations from the Old Testament in the New Testament which has come down to us. Well, about 300 of those quotations are from the Septuagint version of the Old Testament. In other words, the New Testament, which even Protestants have, quotes the version of the Old Testament which accepts the Catholic books of the Bible. **This means that the New Testament writers accepted the Septuagint version, and thus the seven books which the Protestants reject.** But there's more. In Hebrews 11:35 of the Protestant and Catholic Bibles, we see a reference to an event which is only recorded in the Second Book of Machabees chapter 7.

Hebrews 11:35 "Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection..."

This reference is found in only one place in the Bible. It's found in 2 Machabees 7, which tells the story of the mother and her seven sons. This mother and her seven sons refused deliverance from torture so that they might receive resurrection with the

just. So, in Hebrews 11:35, St. Paul is making reference to the Second Book of Machabees. This demonstrates that 2 Machabees, which the Protestant Bible doesn't have, is part of the true Old Testament. 2 Machabees chapter 12 clearly teaches prayer for the dead and therefore Purgatory.

2 Machabees 12:46 "It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins."

This verse teaches Purgatory. It says it's a holy thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins. The Bible thus teaches that there is a place after death where some of the faithful who will be saved are detained, where they can be aided by prayer. This corresponds to the teaching of 1 Corinthians 3:15, which we already saw, that some people are saved while suffering loss (or punishment) but by fire. That place is Purgatory, and this verse clearly proves it. That's why this book was removed from the Bible by those who wanted to invent a new version of Christianity – one that is not conformable to Tradition or the teaching of the Bible.

THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH BELIEVED IN PURGATORY AND PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD

In addition to all of this biblical proof, Purgatory is proven by the fact that the fathers of the Christian Church believed in it and in prayers for the dead. St. Augustine is a famous father of the Church. St. Augustine is regarded with honor by Catholics, and generally by non-Catholics who claim to be Christian. He clearly believed in Purgatory.

St. Augustine of Hippo, *Sermons*, 411 A.D. "... there is no doubt that the dead are aided, that the Lord might deal more mercifully with them than their sins would deserve. The whole Church observes this practice which was handed down by the Fathers: that **it prays for those who have died in the communion of the Body and Blood of Christ...**" (William Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, Vol. 3:1516)

Notice that St. Augustine says that the whole Christian Church prays for the faithful departed: those who died in proper communion with the true Church.

St. Augustine, *Faith, Hope and Love*, 421 A.D. "That there should be some such fire even after this life is not incredible, and it can be inquired and either be discovered or left hidden whether some of the faithful may be saved, some more slowly and some more quickly in the greater and lesser degree in which they loved the good things that perish – **through a certain purgatorial fire.**" (William Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, Vol. 3:1920)

St. Augustine, *Faith, Hope and Love*, 421 A.D. “Nor can it be denied that the souls of the dead find relief through the piety of their friends and relatives who are still alive, when the Sacrifice of the Mediator is offered for them, or when alms are given in the Church.” (William Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, Vol. 3:1930)

Many other fathers could be quoted, but here are just a few others:

St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Sermon on the Dead*, 383 A.D. “[a man]... finds that he is not able to partake of divinity until he has been purged of the filthy contagion in his soul by the purifying fire.”

Tertullian, *Monogamy*, Post 213 A.D. “A woman, after the death of her husband, she prays for his soul and asks that he may, while waiting, find rest; and that he may share in the first resurrection. And each year, on the anniversary of his death, she offers the sacrifice.”

This proves that even in the 3rd century the practice of the Church was to pray for the faithful departed: those who died with the true faith and apparently free from mortal sin.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures*, 350 A.D. “Then we make mention also of those who have already fallen asleep... for we believe that it will be of very great benefit to the souls of those for whom the petition is carried up...”

St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on 1 Corinthians*, 392 A.D. “Let us help and commemorate them. If Job's sons were purified by their father's sacrifice (Job 1:5), why would we doubt that our offerings for the dead bring them some consolation? **Let us not hesitate to help those who have died and to offer our prayers for them.**”

We can see that Purgatory was taught in Scripture and was believed by the earliest Christians. Why did the ancient Christians believe in Purgatory and prayers for the dead? It's obviously not because this was a man-made doctrine, but because they clearly saw that it was taught in the Bible and was part of the Tradition received from the Apostles.

THE BIBLE DOES NOT TEACH SOLA SCRIPTURA (SCRIPTURE ALONE)

2 Thessalonians 2:15 *“Therefore, brethren, **stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.**”*

According to Protestants, the Bible teaches that Scripture (the written word of God) is the only rule of faith for a Christian. Along with justification by faith alone (*sola fide*), Scripture alone (*sola scriptura*) was one of the central tenets of the Protestant “reformation.”

However, the truth is that the Bible does not teach that Scripture is the only rule of faith for a Christian. We will see that the Bible teaches that both Scripture and apostolic tradition are sources of Christ’s revelation, and that one must accept both of them along with the Church. That’s why the Catholic Church has always taught that there are two sources of divine revelation (Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition); and that the Church instituted by Jesus Christ was given authority to determine the authentic meaning of Scripture and Tradition.

JESUS SAYS THAT ONE MUST HEAR THE CHURCH, WHICH HE NEVER WOULD HAVE SAID IF THE BIBLE TAUGHT SCRIPTURE ALONE

If the Bible is the only rule of faith for a Christian, then logically the Church would not be a rule of faith for a Christian. However, the Bible clearly teaches that one must hear the Church.

Matthew 18:17 *“And if he shall neglect to hear them, **tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man** and a publican.”*

Luke 10:16 *“**He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me;** and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.”*

This teaching of Jesus, that one must hear the Church under pain of being considered a heathen, refutes the entire idea of Scripture alone.

John 15:20 *“... if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.”*

Hebrews 13:17 *“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls...”*

THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT THE CHURCH, NOT THE BIBLE, IS THE PILLAR AND FOUNDATION OF THE TRUTH

1 Timothy 3:15 “But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is **the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.**”

As one former Protestant minister (who eventually saw the falsity of Protestantism) put it: “If I were writing that verse [1 Tim. 3:15] as a Protestant, I would have said that the Bible, not the Church, is the pillar and ground of the truth. But St. Paul says it’s the Church. This means that the Church must be every bit as infallible as the Bible, and that it must present something unique by way of presenting the truth of Jesus Christ.”

The unique role of the Church is that it sets forth the true meaning of Scripture and Tradition in precise terms and dogmas, something the Bible was not intended to do in all of its passages. Moreover, if the Church is infallible and the pillar of truth, there must obviously be a way of recognizing its infallible teaching by means of a continued succession of authority which would safeguard the truth and exercise its authority.

THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT THE SPOKEN WORD IS “THE WORD OF GOD,” IN ADDITION TO THE WRITTEN WORD

A common misconception among Protestants is that the “word of God” refers exclusively to the Bible. The truth is that the Bible repeatedly calls the oral (spoken) tradition “the word of God.” (Jesus Christ Himself is also called the “Word of God” in John 1 and Hebrews 11:3.) By describing the oral tradition as “the word of God,” **the Bible is indicating that the apostolic oral tradition is infallible**; and that it represents, along with Scripture, one of the sources of Jesus Christ’s revelation which must be accepted.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, **when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us**, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.”

St. Paul is clearly referring to the oral (spoken) tradition.

Colossians 1:5-6 “For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, **whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel**. Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day **ye heard of it**, and knew the grace of God in truth.”

The spoken word is described as “the word of truth” and the Gospel. The reference to the “word” having come into the whole world confirms that this passage is referring to the spoken word and not the Bible; for this could not have been said of the Bible at the time.

John 17:20 “Neither Pray I for these alone, but for **them also which shall believe on me through their word.**”

Jesus prays for those who will believe through the “word” of His Apostles. But only a few of His Apostles wrote words in the Bible. Most of them did not. “Their word,” through which people will believe, must therefore be their preaching and the communication of oral tradition, not their writing.

Luke 8:11-13 “Now the parable is this: **The seed is the word of God.** Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. They on the rock are they, **which, when they hear, receive the word** with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.”

This clearly describes the spoken word as “the word of God.”

Luke 4:44, 5:1 “And **he [Jesus] preached** in the synagogues of Galilee. And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him **to hear the word of God,** he stood by the lake of Gennesaret.”

Luke 3:2 “Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, **the word of God came unto John** the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.”

This refers to a revelation given to St. John the Baptist.

Acts 4:31 “And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and **they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.**”

THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT ORAL TRADITION MUST BE ACCEPTED ALONG WITH SCRIPTURE

The following passages completely refute the idea of Scripture alone. They show that the Bible teaches that apostolic tradition must also be accepted. This apostolic tradition was given by Jesus to the Apostles, but not every part of it was necessarily written explicitly in the Bible. As an example, in Jude 1:9 we read:

“But when the Archangel Michael, contending with the devil, disputed about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a reviling judgment upon him, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you.’”

This dispute between the Devil and Michael the Archangel is not described in any detail in the Bible. The writer is drawing on a tradition. The following passages from the New Testament confirm Catholic teaching on the necessity to accept both Scripture and Tradition.

2 Thessalonians 3:6 “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye **withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.**”

2 Thessalonians 2:15 “Therefore, brethren, stand fast, **and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.**”

This clearly shows that the Bible itself teaches that not everything that must be believed is written down, but some of it is delivered by the oral tradition.

2 Timothy 2:1-2 “Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And **the things that thou hast heard of me** among many witnesses, **the same commit thou to faithful men**, who shall be able to teach others also.”

1 Corinthians 11:16 “But if any man seem to be contentious, **we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.**”

1 Corinthians 11:23 “For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you...”

1 Corinthians 15:2-3 “By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory **what I preached unto you**, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received...”

As these passages prove, Jesus’ condemnation of the “tradition of men” (Matthew 15:9, Mark 7:8, etc.) had nothing to do with the true apostolic tradition, which the Bible says we must accept. Jesus was condemning the man-made practices of the Pharisees.

THE CHURCH EXISTED FOR DECADES BEFORE THE BIBLE WAS EVEN
FINISHED

According to scholars, the last book of the Bible (the Book of Revelation) was written in approximately 68 A.D. at the earliest, and approximately 95 A.D. at the latest. Jesus Christ ascended into Heaven in approximately 33 A.D. Therefore, no matter what view one takes on the date of the Book of Revelation, there is no doubt that the Church of Christ existed and operated for decades (30 to 60 years) before the Bible was even finished. So, who guided the Christians during that period? How did they know exactly what they had to believe and do to be saved? It was the Church which taught them. It was the Church which, from the earliest days, served as the rule of faith for the Christian. Doctrinal questions and decisions were being decided for an entire generation before the Bible was even finished. It is thus a fact that the Bible was not and could not have been the sole rule of faith. Indeed it would not be for another 300 years that the Church would officially determine exactly which books make up the Bible.

IT WASN'T UNTIL THE 4TH CENTURY THAT THE CANON OF THE BIBLE WAS FINALLY DETERMINED

This is a crucial point. In the first three centuries after Christ, there were disputes about the precise makeup of the Bible. The official list of biblical books (called the Canon) was not the same everywhere. Some books which were considered to be part of the Bible in some localities were suspected or rejected in others.

For example, the *Didache*, *The Epistle of Barnabas*, *First Clement*, and *The Shepherd of Hermas* were, in some cases, considered inspired Scripture and used in public worship.⁴ Although these were very important ancient works which in many ways expressed true Christian tradition, the Church would declare that these writings were not actually part of the Bible. The matter wasn't settled and clarified universally until the authority of the Catholic Church pronounced upon the list of books. This occurred at the Councils of Rome (382), Hippo (393) and Carthage (397).

Before the Church had made its decision, there were also many doubts about 2 Peter, the epistle of Jude, Hebrews, 2 and 3 John, and the Book of Revelation – all of which were eventually included in the Bible. In fact, “the oldest surviving list of Christian books is the Muratorian Canon, from about 150. This fragment includes all the books of the New Testament except Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, and 2 Peter, and counts as canonical [part of Scripture] the *Apocalypse of Peter* and *The Shepherd of Hermas*, both of which were eventually excluded from the Church's definitive canon.”⁵

There were also spurious gospels floating around, such as the Gospel of Peter, the Gospel of Thomas and others. These were rejected by the Church and not included

4 Henry G. Graham, *Where We Got the Bible: Our Debt to the Catholic Church*, Tan Books, 1977, Chap. 4; also see Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book 4, chap. 20.

5 Mike Aquilina, *The Fathers of the Church*, pp. 28-29.

in Scripture.

Since Protestants reject the authority of the Catholic Church, they have absolutely no way of determining with certainty (i.e. infallibly) which books make up the Bible. The Bible doesn't come with a Table of Contents. That has been added by the one who published your version of the Bible. The Bible doesn't tell us which books are inspired or how many books are in it. Moreover, even if one book did mention other books as being inspired, by what criteria could one determine that that particular book is inspired? In order to arrive at *an infallible* list of books, there must be an infallible authority outside of the Bible. That is the Church. Therefore, if one rejects the infallible authority of the Church and holds to Scripture alone, he remains unable to determine if he has true books.

Faced with this problem, well-known Protestant scholar R.C. Sproul was forced to assert that the Bible is a “**fallible collection of infallible books.**” If you carefully think about it, a fallible collection of infallible books is a contradiction. It logically leaves you with a fallible Bible. This demonstrates that Protestants cannot logically maintain that their Bible is infallible; for they cannot know with certainty if they even have the correct books.

As a case in point, after separating from the Catholic Church, Martin Luther and his fellow Protestants removed seven complete books from the Bible. They removed the books of Tobias (Tobit), Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus (Sirach), Baruch, First and Second Machabees, as well as parts of Esther and Daniel. As a result, Protestant bibles (to this day) have 66 books, while Catholic bibles have 73. Martin Luther and the Protestants made the radical decision to remove these seven books from the Bible, even though they had been almost universally acknowledged as part of the Bible for over a millennium.

Additionally, the seven books which the Protestants removed are found in the Septuagint. The Septuagint is a Greek translation of the Old Testament which was completed a few centuries before the birth of Jesus Christ. Some might ask: what's so important about the Septuagint? Well, as mentioned in the section on Purgatory, the New Testament quotes from the Old Testament about 350 times – and about 300 of those quotes are from the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, and thus the seven books which the Protestants rejected.

It should also be noted that it was not the Bible, but Tradition and the Church, which determined the authorship of the biblical books. The Gospel of Matthew, for example, does not indicate who wrote it. It is from Tradition and the Church that we know it was written by Matthew. Since Scripture is silent on who wrote Matthew, Protestant logic would require one to conclude that it's an open question.

Furthermore, pure Scripture scholarship, without the guidance of the Church, would not have led anyone to the correct biblical canon. The Book of Philemon, for example, does not have the features of the other books of the New Testament. Philemon does not contain a salvation message. It is simply a communication and a request about a runaway slave. The fact that it claims to have Paul for its author would not be sufficient to prove that it's part of Scripture, for any document could make that claim and not all of Paul's letters were included in the Bible.

FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE CHURCH, HERETICS HAVE QUOTED AND MISUSED SCRIPTURE TO CREATE SECTS AND SPREAD HERESIES

In the 4th century the Church battled Arianism. The entire Church was almost overrun by this heresy. Arianism denied the divinity of Jesus Christ. It held that the Son of God did not exist from eternity, but was created at a certain point in time by the Father. The expression of this heresy was often subtle and clever, and the Arians appealed to numerous passages in the Bible to attempt to prove their claim that Jesus is not truly God.

“... it soon became clear that the real difficulty would be to set forth a statement of Christian belief that would absolutely and unequivocally exclude Arianism. **The Arian scholars had their own interpretation for every Scriptural passage bearing on the divinity of Christ.** Each one brought up before the council elicited from them a veritable wave of whispers, winks, nods, and gesticulations conveying in dumb-show that they could safely accept it as part of a conciliar creed, since **they had an Arian explanation of it.** A term had to be found which they could not evade.” (Warren H. Carroll, *A History of Christendom*, Vol. 2, Front Royal, VA: Christendom College Press, 1987, p. 11.)

Understanding the Scriptures in the light of the Apostolic Tradition, in 325 A.D. the Catholic Church at the Council of Nicaea was able to denounce the Arian heresy and correctly explain the Scriptural passages the Arians misused. It declared that Jesus was true God equal with the Father, and it used a term not found in Scripture to do so in a manner that would exclude any Arian equivocation. It declared that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is *homoousios* (consubstantial or “one in being”) with the Father. This conveyed the true meaning of Scripture's teaching on the persons of the Trinity and destroyed the Arian heresy, which attempted to conform every passage of Scripture to its heretical idea.

THE BIBLE COULD NOT BE MASS-DISTRIBUTED UNTIL THE 15TH CENTURY

Prior to the invention of the printing press in the 15th century, it was a laborious and

painstaking task to reproduce the Bible. It had to be done by hand. This difficulty, combined with common illiteracy, meant that few had a Bible for the first 15 centuries of the Church. Would God have left His Church without the means to mass-produce the sole rule of faith for the first 1,500 years of the Church's existence? Obviously not. The notion is ridiculous and self-refuting. In the first millennium, the rule of faith for the Christians was the Church. It remains so today. The Church is the proximate rule of faith, which provides the true understanding of Scripture and Tradition, which are the dual sources of Jesus Christ's revelation.

THE ORIGINAL BIBLICAL MANUSCRIPTS ARE NO LONGER ACCESSIBLE

The original manuscripts of the Bible no longer exist. We possess copies of the originals, but not the original Scriptures. So, where does the Bible teach that copies of the originals will be protected from error and serve as the sole rule of faith for the Christian? The Bible doesn't even teach that the Bible is the sole rule of faith for the Christian; and certainly Protestants cannot prove that it says that copies will be protected from error; for it doesn't say that anywhere. (Moreover, it was Catholics, especially monks, who preserved the Bible by copying it.) If a Protestant argues that God made sure the word was protected in the process of copying, then the Protestant is moving outside the Bible-alone framework. He is admitting that God transmitted the protection of His teaching and His word to authorities and to people outside the Bible (e.g., the Church). If this can apply to the written word, it can also apply to His oral teaching (Tradition).

THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT THERE WERE COUNTLESS THINGS JESUS SAID AND DID WHICH WERE NOT WRITTEN IN THE BIBLE

John 20:30 "And **many other signs truly did Jesus** in the presence of his disciples, **which are not written in this book.**

John 21:25 "And there are also **many other things which Jesus did, which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.** Amen."

Not all of what Jesus said and taught the Apostles was written in the Bible. That's clear.

JESUS COMMANDED HIS APOSTLES TO PREACH THE GOSPEL, NOT TO WRITE

With the exception of the command given to St. John to write the Book of Revelation, Jesus didn't command anyone to write anything. Rather, He commanded them to

preach His Gospel and baptize.

Mark 16:15-16 “And he said unto them, **Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature**. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”

Matthew 28:19-20 “**Go ye therefore, and teach all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: **Teaching them to observe all things** whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

If the written word of the Bible is the only rule of faith, as Protestants claim, then Jesus would have commanded them to write and establish Bible-reading clubs. But He doesn't do anything of the sort. Jesus commanded them to teach all nations all of His truth through the spoken word, through preaching. These simple considerations show that the Protestant position of *sola scriptura* (i.e., Scripture alone) is completely false.

THE BIBLE DOES NOT TEACH THAT PRIVATE SCRIPTURE INTERPRETATION WAS INTENDED BY JESUS

Acts 8:30-31 “And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Isaias, and said, **Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me?** And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.”

So much for the Protestant idea that whoever reads the Scriptures will be enlightened by God automatically. We can see that such is not the teaching of the Bible.

Nehemiah 8:8 “So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, **and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.**”

2 Peter 1:20 “Knowing this first, that **no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.**”

PAUL CONSULTED THE CHURCH, NOT THE BIBLE, WHEN FACED WITH HIS DOCTRINAL DILEMMA IN ACTS 15

Acts 15:1-2 “And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension

and disputation with them, **they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.**”

When faced with a doctrinal dilemma in Acts 15, Paul does not consult the Bible but goes to the leadership of the Church.

Here are a few other examples in the Bible where the teachings or instructions were learned by oral communication and tradition, not by reading the Bible.

1 Corinthians 11:34 “... And the rest will I set in order when I come.”

2 John 1:12 “Having many things to write unto you, **I would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you**, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.”

OBJECTION: PROTESTANTS SAY 2 TIMOTHY 3:15-17 TEACHES SCRIPTURE ALONE

2 Timothy 3:15-17 “And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. **All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable** for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: **That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.**”

This passage does not teach Scripture alone. It teaches that all Scripture is inspired. It teaches that all Scripture is profitable. It teaches that Scripture furnishes a man for good works. But Protestants point to the part which says that it enables a man of God to be furnished *unto all good works*. They claim those words teach a self-sufficiency of Scripture: that nothing else is needed. This is refuted by a number of points.

It is refuted, first of all, by consulting verses with similar wording. In fact, we only need to go back a few verses in the preceding chapter to find an example which proves the point.

2 Timothy 2:21 “**If a man therefore purge himself from these [bad works], he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work.**”

The Bible says that if a man purges himself from certain bad works, he will be prepared for “every good work.” This is the same phrase as 2 Timothy 3:17. Certainly this doesn’t mean that purging oneself from those bad works is sufficient, in itself, for

every good work. Even Protestants would say that the man would still have to accept Jesus, heed the authority of Scripture, and refrain from other things. Thus, this is a prime example of how Protestants are misusing and misunderstanding the phrase in 2 Timothy 3:17. What both of them are saying presupposes (takes for granted) a fidelity to the other Christian ideals and the Christian foundation.

In other words, if a man is a Christian and accepts the authority established by Christ, and if he purges himself from these things, he will be prepared for all good works. Likewise, if a man is a Christian and accepts the Church, the Tradition, etc., then knowing the Scriptures will furnish him for all good works. 2 Timothy 3:17 doesn't teach Scripture alone. Here's another proof of this:

James 1:3-4 "Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But **let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.**"

Does this mean that if we are patient we don't need anything else, including Scripture or the Church or anything? Obviously not. It presupposes a Christian life, and an acceptance of the entire Christian institution (the Bible, Tradition, the Church, etc.).

THE BIBLE SPECIFICALLY WARNS AGAINST MISUSING THE SCRIPTURES TO CREATE FALSE DOCTRINES WHICH LEAD TO DESTRUCTION

2 Peter 3:15-16 "And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; **As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.**"

It's interesting that this admonition about twisting the Scriptures unto damnation comes in the epistle of St. Peter, the one who was chosen to be the first pope. It is St. Peter who warns against misusing the writings of St. Paul. It is Paul's writings which are most frequently misused and misunderstood by Protestants to invent false doctrines, such as justification by faith alone and Scripture alone.

SCRIPTURE ALONE (SOLA SCRIPTURA) WAS AN IDEA THAT ONLY BECAME POPULAR IN THE 16TH CENTURY

The idea of Scripture alone was unknown in the early Church. All the ancient local churches recognized the hierarchical structure of the Church and the role of Tradition and the Church's authority in understanding the Scriptures. Here are just four quotes

from famous fathers of the Church to demonstrate the point.

St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Second Thessalonians*, 4, 2, 398 A.D.

“Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you have been taught, whether by word or by our letter [2 Thess. 2:15].’ From this it is clear that they did not hand down everything by letter, but there was much also that was not written. Like that which was written, the unwritten too is worthy of belief. So let us regard the tradition of the Church also as worthy of belief.” (Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, Vol. 2:1213)

St. Basil the Great, *The Holy Spirit*, 27,66, 375 A.D. “Of the dogmas and kerygmas preserved in the Church, some we possess from written teaching and others we receive from the tradition of the Apostles, handed on to us in mystery. In respect to piety both are of the same force. No one will contradict any of these, no one, at any rate, who is even moderately versed in matters ecclesiastical. Indeed, were we to try to reject unwritten customs as having no great authority, we would, unwittingly injure the Gospel in its vitals.” (Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, Vol. 2:954)

St. Augustine, *Letter to Januaris*, 54,1, 400 A.D. “But in regard to those observances which we carefully attend and which the whole world keeps, and which derive not from Scripture but from Tradition, we are given to understand that they are recommended and ordained to be kept, either by the Apostles themselves or by plenary councils, the authority of which is quite vital in the Church.” (Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, Vol. 3:1419)

St. Athanasius, *Letter II*, Easter 330 A.D. “... he [Paul] immediately proceeded to say, ‘And as I have delivered to you traditions, hold them fast.’ ... But... with him [the Devil] are all inventors of unlawful heresies, who indeed refer to the Scriptures, but do not hold such opinions as the saints have handed down [i.e., Tradition], and receiving them as the traditions of men, err, because they do not rightly know them nor their power. Therefore Paul justly praises the Corinthians, because their opinions were in accordance with his traditions.” (*Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, Second Series*, Vol. 5, p. 511)

SOME FACTS ABOUT MARTIN LUTHER, THE ORIGINATOR OF PROTESTANT “CHRISTIANITY”

Protestantism originated with Martin Luther (1483-1546), an ex-Catholic. Even though Protestants would contend that they follow “true biblical Christianity,” and not a man, they are inclined to defend Martin Luther. This is because Martin Luther was the first identifiable spokesman for their version of “Christianity.” Prior to his separation from the Catholic Church in 1520, there was no public defender of what we now know to be Protestantism, the core doctrines of which are justification by faith alone and Scripture alone.

Even though Luther is the central figure in the history of Protestantism, few Protestants know much about him, or about how he came upon his beliefs. I invite the reader to consider the following facts.

PLEASE CONSIDER MARTIN LUTHER’S TRULY MAN-MADE JOURNEY TO PROTESTANTISM

Martin Luther was born in 1483 and baptized as a Catholic the next day. He entered an Augustinian Catholic friary in 1505, and was ordained a Catholic priest in 1507. Therefore, as a young professing Catholic priest, **Protestantism was unknown to Martin Luther** and indeed to the rest of the Christian world.

On Oct. 31, 1517, Martin Luther tacked his famous 95 Theses on the church door in Wittenberg, Germany. Most Protestants today cite this date as the beginning of the Protestant “reformation.” They think this represented Luther’s public stand for the Protestant faith, for “true and biblical Christianity.” What they don’t know is that Martin Luther’s famous 95 Theses **acknowledged the office of the pope more than 20 times**. At the time of the posting of the Theses – and indeed before it and for some time afterwards – Luther claimed to be a Catholic priest and monk. In his 95 Theses, Luther clearly acknowledges the office of the Pope as instituted by Christ, although he detracts from its dignity and powers in the matter of Indulgences.

The formal title for his 95 Theses is the *Disputation of Doctor Martin Luther on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences*, Oct. 31, 1517. In addition to acknowledging the pope, numbers 25-29 of the Theses acknowledge Purgatory. Luther acknowledges the existence of Purgatory, although he departs from Catholic teaching in what he says about it. Luther also declares his belief in Indulgences, although he contradicts traditional Catholic doctrine on the issue. The following is typical of the contradictions exhibited by Luther.

#71 of Martin Luther’s 95 Theses, Oct. 31, 1517: “Let him be anathema and

accursed who denies the apostolic character of the indulgences.”

The point here is that even on Oct. 31, 1517, the Protestant “faith” was still unknown to Martin Luther and indeed to the rest of the Christian world. There was no statement about justification by faith alone or Scripture alone; there was as yet no repudiation of the papal office or many other Catholic dogmas which Protestants today would reject. What you have, at this point, is a confused and convoluted priest who, while claiming to be Catholic, was clearly falling from the traditional Catholic faith into his own wild version of it (especially with regard to Indulgences). He was no Protestant. Even at this point, the so-called biblical “faith” was unknown to its eventual founder.

In 1518, Luther published a *Sermon on Indulgences and Grace*, in which he attacked the traditional way of dividing Penance into contrition, confession and satisfaction (Dr. Ludwig Pastor, *History of the Popes*, Vol. 7, pp. 355-356). Luther claimed it was not found in Holy Scripture. This, along with Luther’s contradiction of traditional Catholic teaching on Indulgences, prompted the Church to summon him to Rome for an investigation. (It should be noted that there were indeed some abuses by Church men on Indulgences. Such abuses represented a departure from Catholic teaching on the matter. Indulgences cannot be bought. Occasional abuses in this area – which were committed by a few Church men of a world-wide Church – in no way justify repudiating the traditional teaching. This teaching on Indulgences is rooted in the treasury of the merits of Jesus Christ and the saints, and the power of the keys given to St. Peter. According to Catholic teaching, Indulgences are given for certain specified good works or pious actions (such as prayers, etc.). They remove only the temporal punishment of already forgiven sins. They are not, as Protestants would suggest, a means to buy one’s way into Heaven.)

At the beginning of July 1518, Luther is presented with an official summons to appear in Rome and give an accounting of his doctrines. While maintaining his new (and heretical) views on Indulgences and Penance, **Luther claims “that the Roman Church has always maintained the true faith, and that it is necessary for all Christians to be in unity of faith with her.”** (Dr. Ludwig Pastor, *History of the Popes*, Vol. 7, p. 366) That means that, even after having been summoned to Rome to answer for his new ideas, Luther professes that the Roman Church (the Roman Catholic Church) has the true faith. At this point, Luther is undoubtedly drifting into his own personalized view of “Christianity”; but he is still no Protestant, as his statement about the Roman Church demonstrates. The so-called pure, simple and “biblical faith” was still unknown to its eventual founder in July of 1518.

As Luther’s influence spread, and his commitment to new ideas hardened, the actions against him increased. Pope Leo X dispatched the learned Cardinal Cajetan

to handle the case. Cajetan was to examine the situation and, if possible, get through to Luther. This occurred in the fall of 1518, but Luther remained obstinate. Despite his commitment to his new ideas, Luther declared the following at one of these interviews: “The notary read out a declaration on behalf of Luther, **that as far as he could remember he [Luther] had never taught anything against Holy Scripture, the doctrines of the Church, the Papal decretals** [decrees of the popes], or sound reason. But as he was a man subject to error, he submitted himself to the decisions of the Holy Church and to all who knew better than he did.” (Dr. Ludwig Pastor, *History of the Popes*, Vol. 7, p. 373.)

Once again, we see that Luther claims fidelity to papal teaching and to all of Catholic doctrine. He also appeals specifically to the pope, and expresses his willingness to retract if the pope decided against him (Ibid., pp. 375, 377). The so-called “biblical faith” (Protestantism) was still unknown to its eventual founder.

Not long after his meetings with Cajetan in November of 1518, Luther’s views underwent another significant development. He came to the conclusion that the pope, to whose decrees he had just claimed submission, is the antichrist. He writes: “I send you my trifling work that you may see whether I am not right in supposing that, according to Paul, the real Antichrist holds sway over the Roman court.” (De Wette, I., 192; Enders I., 317; Pastor, Vol. 7, pp. 378-379.) Numerous utterances from this time show that Luther had “fully formulated his proposition that the pope was antichrist.”

Yet, at this very time that he was calling the pope “the Antichrist,” Luther appealed to a general council from the pope (Luther’s works, Weimar ed., II., 36 seq.). In other words, Luther considered the decisions of general councils to be definitive and authoritative. This of course contradicts one of the pillars of Protestantism: Scripture alone.

Therefore, even at the point that Luther had firmly set his face against the Papacy as “the Antichrist,” he still hadn’t discovered Protestantism. The so-called “biblical faith” was still unknown to its eventual founder. One should consider this fact deeply; for it demonstrates that whenever Luther did come up with Protestantism, it was nothing more than the creation of a confused mind.

THESE FACTS DEMONSTRATE THAT ALL PROTESTANTS HAVE EMBRACED A PURELY MAN-CREATED RELIGION, WHICH LUTHER WAS INVENTING AND RE-INVENTING BY THE DAY

The true faith of Jesus Christ is a deposit. It does not fall out of the sky to a man who lives 15 centuries after Christ. It was revealed by Jesus Christ to His Apostles 2,000

years ago, and it was passed on by the Apostles to the Church.

Jude 1:3 "... it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for **the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.**"

The true faith thus has a historical link to the apostolic Church; and it can be shown to have been believed by those who came before in the Church. It is passed on from generation to generation. Martin Luther grew up with the Catholic faith. Protestantism was unknown to him as a child; it was unknown to him as a priest; it was unknown to him when he posted his 95 Theses, and even when he first called the pope the Antichrist and was appealing to a general council. At some point, indeed, Martin Luther came up with Protestantism, and his conclusions had no link with his predecessors or even with what he said or believed before. They were truly the inventions and "discoveries" of a man, Martin Luther.

Protestants have thus submitted themselves to a system which Martin Luther came up with among the rest of his contradictory and ever-changing views. These "discoveries" include the idea that man is justified by faith alone, which word for word contradicts the teaching of the Bible (James 2:24) – a contradiction so blatant that Luther felt compelled to criticize the book of James because it contradicted him. In fact, Luther wanted to throw James out of the Bible and into the stove (i.e., the fire), until his friends persuaded him that such a move would be too radical.

OUTRAGEOUS ACTIONS AND QUOTES OF MARTIN LUTHER – HE CRITICIZES THE BOOK OF JAMES

Martin Luther, *Preface to the New Testament*, 1522: "Therefore St. James' epistle is really an epistle of straw, compared to these others, for it has nothing of the nature of the gospel about it."

Here we see the apostate priest, Martin Luther, denigrating the Book of James because it contradicts his new idea of justification by faith alone.

Martin Luther, *The Licentiate Examination of Heinrich Schmedenstede*, July 7, 1542: "That epistle of James gives us much trouble, for the papists embrace it alone and leave out all the rest. Up to this point I have been accustomed just to deal with and interpret it according to the sense of the rest of the Scriptures. For you will judge that none of it must be set forth contrary to manifest Holy Scripture. Accordingly, if they will not admit my interpretations, then I shall make rubble also of it. I almost feel like throwing Jimmy into the stove, as the priest in Kalenberg did."

Martin Luther even added the word “alone” to Romans 3:28 in his German translation of the Bible. He made it say “faith alone,” when that is not in the text or what it means.

MARTIN LUTHER SAID A MAN COULD COMMIT FORNICATION AND MURDER 1,000 TIMES A DAY AND NOT LOSE HIS JUSTIFICATION

Martin Luther also said that a man could commit fornication and murder 1,000 times a day and would not lose his justification. He said this to express his doctrine of justification by faith alone: that is, no matter how much a person sins, he is still saved as long as he believes (by faith alone). In the same context, he declared: “be a sinner and sin boldly.”

The authenticity of these quotes is not disputed, but openly admitted by Protestant defenders of Luther.

Martin Luther, *Letter to Melancthon*, August 1, 1521: “If you are a preacher of grace, then preach a true and not a fictitious grace; if grace is true, you must bear a true and not a fictitious sin. God does not save people who are only fictitious sinners. **Be a sinner and sin boldly, but believe and rejoice in Christ even more boldly**, for he is victorious over sin, death, and the world. As long as we are here [in this world] we have to sin. This life is not the dwelling place of righteousness, but, as Peter says, we look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. It is enough that by the riches of God’s glory we have come to know the Lamb that takes away the sin of the world. **No sin will separate us from the Lamb, even though we commit fornication and murder a thousand times a day.** Do you think that the purchase price that was paid for the redemption of our sins by so great a Lamb is too small? Pray boldly—you too are a mighty sinner.”

As mentioned previously, the true faith is a deposit. It doesn’t fall out of the sky for the first time to a man who lives 1,500 years after Christ, and it doesn’t come from the abyss below – as Martin Luther’s teachings on justification, fornication and murder do.

LUTHER’S PREOCCUPATION WITH THE DEVIL AND CRUDE SUBJECTS

Martin Luther also had a preoccupation with the Devil, with the bathroom, and with matters one can only call disgusting. Even Protestant scholars have noted that Luther’s fascination with crude subjects is disquieting. He admittedly had much interaction with the Devil. “These [demons] would haunt the imagination of Martin

Luther who had visions, which he believed to be actual physical occurrences, of the devil hurling [excrement] at him and his hurling it back. Indeed, in one of his many anal combats with the devil – in which Luther would challenge the devil to ‘lick’ his posterior – Luther thought the best tactic might be to ‘throw him into my anus, where he belongs.’” (H.W. Crocker, *Triumph*, Roseville, CA: Prima Publishing, 2001, p. 237.) After he had come to his position against the Papacy, Luther called the “Papal decretals the Devil’s excretals.” He also said that the pope and cardinals should be killed, and that he and his supporters should wash their “hands in their blood.” (Pastor, *History of the Popes*, Vol. 7, p. 393.)

Luther claims that he came up with justification by faith alone while on the toilet. He claims that it came as “knowledge the Holy Spirit gave me on the privy in the tower.” (Quoted in William Manchester, *A World Lit only By Fire: The Medieval Mind and the Renaissance*, Little Brown & Co., 1993, p. 140.) In fact, Luther’s idea that people need to commit real and “honest” sins seems to have originated from a conversation with the Devil. This is from Luther’s *Table Talk*.

“[Luther said:] When I awoke last night, the Devil came and wanted to debate with me; he rebuked and reproached me, arguing that I was a sinner. To this I replied: **Tell me something new, Devil!** I already know that perfectly well; I have committed many a solid and real sin. **Indeed there must be good honest sins** – not fabricated and invented ones – for God to forgive for God’s beloved Son’s sake, who took all of my sins upon Him so that now the sins I have committed are no longer mine but belong to Christ. This wonderful gift of God I am not prepared to deny, but want to acknowledge and confess.”

With these facts in mind, it should be quite clear how those who followed Luther’s eventual conclusions (the core of which are *faith alone* and *Scripture alone*) **are simply following the machinations, inventions and discoveries of a man**. They are following the inventions of a man who was guided and used by the Devil to create a false version of “Christianity” which would lead countless people astray.

25,000 DIFFERENT NON-CATHOLIC DENOMINATIONS – DOCTRINAL CHAOS IS THE BAD FRUIT OF MAN-MADE RELIGION

2 Peter 2:1 “But there were also false prophets among the people, **even as there shall be among you lying teachers, who shall bring in sects of perdition**, and deny the Lord who bought them: bringing upon themselves swift destruction.”

Following Martin Luther’s excommunication from the Catholic Church in 1520, which marked the beginning of the Protestant movement, over 20,000 different denominations have been created in about 500 years. **In 1980, David A. Barrett’s *World Christian Encyclopedia* (Oxford University Press) gave the number of different denominations as 20,780.** He projected that there would be 22,190 denominations by 1985.

This would mean that there are approximately 25,000 (or possibly 30,000) different denominations today. Even if, for the sake of argument, one were to take a conservative estimate, and give the number as only 15,000 different denominations, this equates to more than one new sect having been created every two weeks.

When we consider the fact that the original founders of Protestantism didn’t even agree with each other on major points of doctrine, such denominational chaos shouldn’t be a surprise. Protestantism is man-made religion, in which each person ultimately determines for himself what he thinks the Bible teaches. Martin Luther (the initiator of Protestantism) condemned the doctrinal views of John Calvin and Huldrych Zwingli, two other leading Protestant figures. They all claimed to follow the Bible.

Basically all of these thousands of non-Catholics sects purport to be Christian and claim to follow the Bible, even though they disagree with each other on crucial doctrinal matters, such as: the precise nature of justification; whether human works and sins are a part of salvation; whether men have free will; predestination; whether infants need baptism for salvation; what Communion is; whether it’s necessary to confess to the Lord; which books of the New Testament apply to us today; the structure of the Church’s hierarchy; the role of bishops and ministers; the Sabbath; the role of women in church; etc. *ad nauseam*. Most of these groups even claim that the individual “Christian” will be led by the Holy Spirit when privately reading the Bible. The disunity of these sects constitutes an irrefutable proof that their doctrine is not of the Spirit of Truth; and that their principle of operation (i.e., Scripture alone apart from the Church and Tradition) is not the doctrine of the Bible and the Apostles.

Ephesians 4:4-5 “One body and one Spirit; as you are called in one hope of

your calling. One Lord, **one faith**, one baptism.”

HOW OLD IS YOUR CHURCH?

If you are a Lutheran, your religion was founded by Martin Luther, an ex-monk of the Catholic Church, in approximately 1520.

If you belong to the Church of England, your religion was founded by King Henry VIII (an ex-Catholic) in the year 1534. Henry VIII decided to create his own church when Pope Clement VII would not grant him a divorce with the right to remarry.

If you are a Mennonite, Menno Simons (an ex-Catholic) created your religion in 1536.

If you are a Presbyterian, John Knox (an ex-Catholic) founded your sect in Scotland in the year 1560.

If you are a Congregationalist, your religion began with Robert Brown in Holland in 1582.

If you are a Baptist, John Smyth created your sect in Amsterdam in 1605.

If you are of the Dutch Reformed church, your church began with Michaelis Jones in New York in 1628.

If you are a Quaker, your religion began with George Fox in 1652.

If you are a Protestant Episcopalian, Samuel Seabury created your sect in the American colonies in the 17th century, as an offshoot of the Church of England.

If you are Amish, Jacob Amman created your religion in 1693, as an offshoot of the Mennonites.

If you are a Methodist, your religion was launched by John and Charles Wesley in England in 1744.

If you are a Unitarian, Theophilus Lindley founded your sect in London in 1774.

If you are a Mormon (“Latter Day Saints”), your religion comes from Joseph Smith, who revealed it in Palmyra, N.Y. in 1829.

If you are a Seventh Day Adventist, your religion was created by Ellen White in 1860.

If you worship with the Salvation Army, William Booth started your sect in London in 1865.

If you are of the “Jehovah’s Witnesses,” your beliefs came from Charles Taze Russell in 1872.

If you are a “Christian Scientist,” Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy devised your religion in 1879.

If you belong to one of the religious organizations known as “Church of the Nazarene,” “Pentecostal Gospel,” “Holiness Church,” “Pilgrim Holiness Church,” “Assemblies of God,” “United Church of Christ,” etc., your religion is one of the thousands of new sects founded by men in the last century.

If you are Catholic, you know that your religion was founded in the year 33 by Jesus Christ, the Son of God, true God and true man; and that this one Church, to which people must belong to be saved, will exist until the end of time.

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