

## Palisades Community Bible Church

### Online Bible Study

# If It's Not In The Bible Can We Believe What We Want?

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The inspiration for this study came from a Catholic educational source; "Blue Collar Apologetics." It's a video-based program, with dramatized conversations, that instructs Catholics on how to share their faith. Most importantly, it focuses on how the Catholic can overcome non-Catholic arguments using scripture and logic.

The narrator explains that a good number of things that are fundamental to the Catholic faith are in conflict with Protestant faiths. Their educational tool is aimed at educating Catholics on how to hold onto, and present, the 'truth.' ([www.ewtn.com](http://www.ewtn.com) DVD; HDBLU )

Let me hasten to say that I understand there may be those reading this who are, have been, or who have family members who are Catholic (I was Catholic as a child). What you're about to read is NOT a slam on the religion of Catholicism. I hope to present what the Bible says about issues in which there are disagreements between Catholicism and Biblical Christianity.

### This is a Bible Study

We'll use the differences between Catholicism and Biblical Christianity to do two things; a) improve our ability to discern the Scriptures, and b) understand why Biblical Christians do not practice some things found in Catholicism. I assume that the person reading this wants to walk with Christ, and recognizes the ability to discern biblical truths as important. Such a walk involves walking in the truth presented by the words of God in the Bible.

First, let us focus on the critical areas of AGREEMENTS between Catholicism and Protestantism and let us readily affirm:

**Romans 10: 12 For there is no difference between Jew and Greek: The same Lord is Lord of all, and gives richly to all who call on Him, 13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."**

Catholics and Biblical Christians believe:

- God created all things
- Jesus is the incarnation of God, who was born of a virgin, died by Crucifixion to pay for our sins, was resurrected and sits at God's right hand interceding for those who come to him by faith
- Jesus will come again

- God is one God in the form of the Trinity; father, son and holy spirit
- Sin entered the world through Adam
- Marriage is a holy union between one man and one woman, ordained by God
- The Old Testament and New Testament are the Word of God and the prophecies therein are true

Let's agree that true Catholicism and true Biblical Christianity are one in the same in that faith in Jesus as the Son of God and His blood atonement are what saves us from hell. That is the MOST important object of our focus. Whether we agree or disagree on certain things outside faith in Jesus, is less consequential. Why?...

In Acts 15, The Council at Jerusalem, there was a dispute among the Jews who had turned to Christ. Some asserted that Gentiles coming to Christ must obey the Mosaic laws, as the Jews had. Paul and Barnabas listened and advised them:

**Acts 15: 5 But some believers from the party of the Pharisees stood up and declared, "The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses." 6 So the apostles and elders met to look into this matter.**

**7 After much discussion, Peter got up and said to them, "Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you that the Gentiles would hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. 8 And God, who knows the heart, showed His approval by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as He did to us. 9 He made no distinction between us and them, for He cleansed their hearts by faith.**

**10 Now then, why do you test God by placing on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? 11 On the contrary, we believe it is through the grace of the Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are."**

**Verse 19 It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not cause trouble for the Gentiles who are turning to God. 20 Instead, we should write and tell them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals, and from blood. 21 For Moses has been proclaimed in every city from ancient times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath."**

What we learn is that Jesus is the focus of all men's souls. Outward behaviors such as circumcision, obeying rituals, sacrifices, etc., do not lead to salvation – only Jesus!

**John 6: 29 Jesus replied, "The work of God is this: to believe in the One He has sent."**

**Romans 3:22 And this righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no distinction,**

In fact, rituals and religious mandates very often lead people away from Christ. They can become the focus, even function like an idol, replacing one’s devotion to Jesus with vain activities.

**Titus 3: 5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we did in righteousness, but in accordance with His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He richly poured out upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.**

**Psalm 51: 16 You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. 17 My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.**

**Matthew 9: 13 (Jesus speaking) “...But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”**

So, let us NOT put ritual before Christ. Let us not put vain, man-made works ahead of our Redeemer – always mindful of our daily need for His Grace. Likewise, let us not criticize our Christian brothers and sisters who may have some errors, or blank spaces, in their Theology, but fellowship in love and with truth.

**The Differences Between Catholicism and Biblical Christianity**

I’ll repeat; this is a Bible Study, not a slam on Catholicism. In this Bible Study, we will sharpen our discernment with scriptural knowledge and the leadings of the Holy Spirit. If we happen to engage a Catholic espousing any of the following, let love and grace lead the way! Remember:

**Galatians 6: 14a “But as for me, may I never boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,...”**

| Catholicism  | Biblical Christianity  |
|--|--|
| <b>The Church</b>  |  |
| The Catholic Church is the only true religion. All others are false.   | Any faith affirming that Jesus is the Son of God, and faith in His sacrifice – not our works – for salvation is true Christianity. Any faith denying this is a false religion. |
| <p><b>1 Corinthians 6: 19 “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? 20 You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.”</b></p> <p><b>Matthew 18: 20 “For where two or three gather together in My name, there am I with them.”</b></p> |  |

**Baptism**

Salvation is received at Baptism, even infants. Salvation may be lost due to sin and regained by faith and repentance. You must have a relationship with Jesus.

An outward sign identifying with Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. Performed by those who knowingly place their faith in Christ as having paid the penalty for their sins. Baptism is not salvation, nor the cleansing of sin. It follows salvation in Christ. (See Bible Study: What is Baptism?)

**1 Peter 3: 21 and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,**

**Colossians 2: 12 having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.**

**Acts 11: 16 Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'**

**Mary, the mother of Jesus**

Mary is considered favored among women, and was chosen by God to be the mother of Jesus through a virgin birth. Thus, she is considered HOLY, and may be prayed to as an intercessor to God. She was assumed both body and soul into heaven - free from all stain of original sin, she was taken up by God

Mary is considered favored among women, and was chosen by God to be the mother of Jesus through a virgin birth, but is otherwise simply a human with no other special attributes.

The last reference to Jesus' mother is when Jesus said to the Apostle John **John; 27 Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.**

There is no other information about the end of her life. Catholicism "assumes" that Mary was taken into heaven in the same way as the Prophet Elijah. There is no Biblical foundation for this assumption. In the aforementioned Catholic study, Catholics are taught to reason that, since the scriptures are silent on Mary's death, they are equally silent on what Catholics teach about her death – making it a valid belief.

**Saints**

A special group of holy people, who are venerated. They may act as intercessors between God and Man and may be invoked in prayer. The five-step process includes waiting five years after death, proclaiming

Anyone who believes in Jesus as savior is a saint.

them a servant of God, verifying miracles, Papal authorization and canonization.

**Acts 9: 32** Now as Peter went here and there among them all, he came down also to the saints who lived at Lydda.

**Acts 26: 10** And I did so in Jerusalem. I not only locked up many of the saints in prison after receiving authority from the chief priests, but when they were put to death I cast my vote against them.

**Ephesians 12: 12** to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

**1 Corinthians 1: 2** To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:

**Deuteronomy 18: 10** Let no one be found among you who sacrifices their son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, 11 or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead.

**Isaiah 8:19** And when they say to you, "Inquire of the mediums and the necromancers who chirp and mutter," should not a people inquire of their God? Should they inquire of the dead on behalf of the living?

### Purgatory

Purgatory is a place that a Christian's soul goes after death to be cleansed of the sins that had not been fully satisfied during life. A place of cleansing and preparation for heaven.

No biblical foundation for it. Those that trust in Jesus as savior go to heaven, those that trust in their own works for salvation go to hell.

The concept of Purgatory suggests that there are degrees of sinfulness. If a Christian dies, and hasn't led an exemplary life, and one dies who has led a life of piety and service to others, the notion is that they do not BOTH deserve the same entrance into heaven. The teaching in the instructional video is; "God won't send a person to hell over one little sin. So, Purgatory is a place for reconciliation. However, Jesus' parable of the vineyard contradicts that logic:

**Matthew 20: 1** "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. **2** He agreed to pay them a denarius[a] for the day and sent them into his vineyard.

**3** “About nine in the morning he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. **4** He told them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ **5** So they went.

“He went out again about noon and about three in the afternoon and did the same thing. **6** About five in the afternoon he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, ‘Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?’

**7** “‘Because no one has hired us,’ they answered.

“He said to them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard.’

**8** “When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.’

**9** “The workers who were hired about five in the afternoon came and each received a denarius. **10** So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. **11** When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. **12** ‘These who were hired last worked only one hour,’ they said, ‘and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.’

**13** “But he answered one of them, ‘I am not being unfair to you, friend. Didn’t you agree to work for a denarius? **14** Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you. **15** Don’t I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?’

**16** “So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

Even the thief who was crucified next to Jesus was saved in an instant:

**Luke 23: 42** Then he (the thief) said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” **43** Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

#### Confession of Sin

Sins are confessed to a Priest

Sins are confessed to Jesus

**1 Timothy 2:5** For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, **6** who gave Himself as a ransom for all—the testimony that was given at just the right time.

**John 14: 6** Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

**Romans 8: 27** And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God.

#### Infallibility of the Pope

The Pope is infallible

All are sinners in need of a savior

**Romans 3:23** For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

**Romans 3:10 As it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one;**

**1 John 1:8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.**

### **Good Works**

Good works done after regeneration (at baptism) and justification are (if certain conditions are met) meritorious and can contribute to salvation and attainment of eternal life, but only hand-in-hand with, soaked in, enabled by, grace, which alone saves us.

Good works do not justify anyone before Christ. It is Christ’s work, alone, that justifies. Our good works are expressions of our faith, not the payment for our salvation.

**Ephesians 2: 8 For it is by grace you have been saved through faith, and this not from yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not by works, so that no one can boast**

**Isaiah 64:6 But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.**

**Ephesians 2: 8 “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them”**

Biblical Christians hold fast to the words of God. We follow, as best we can, as the Bible instructs while avoiding vain and self-serving practices. I hope this exercise has helped you see how central Jesus is to the human condition and why we do, and do not do, certain things in our worship and teaching.

Though there are many religions, and many of man’s efforts to reach God, there is but ONE true faith – that of **God reaching out to man** through His Son. Every religion based on man’s self-justification is false.

**John 3: 16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son so that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life.**

On this, Catholics and Biblical Christians agree! The rest is important, but not nearly so important as this one issue:

**John 14: 6 Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.**