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Elder Dick Roesch

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Our Separated Brethren

Good morning. It's my privilege to be with you today.

Some months ago I decided to look more closely at the Roman Catholic Church's doctrines and makeup as compared to what we believe in this assembly. Most of the time when you see me up here I'm usually talking about Justification by Faith and/or Sanctification. Today will be no different. The Roman church sees these two doctrines interchangeably. So, I thought I would try to explain some of their beliefs so you might better understand – from a Scriptural point of view, why Roman Catholics do what they do. I must admit this has been a most confusing, frustrating, difficult and yet, enlightening study.

I've had the time to look back on my lifespan from a different perspective; to review and reflect upon events in my life; what choices were made and the consequences of those choices, and to see the providence of God working through these events, and to be grateful for His protection, grace, and loving kindness. As I try to compare and explain beliefs today, part of it will come from a reflection of a 35 year Roman Catholic background, with 17 of those years in a religious order.

In 1977 I trusted in Christ alone for my salvation, but had little Biblical teaching until I came into this congregation in 2001, (a providential move). Today, I am the product of God's grace and teachers I have been under at this church along with books, tapes, CDs, DVDs and conferences recommended by these teachers who have devoted themselves to preserving the authority of Scripture alone.

One of the big chores I have had was to learn new Scriptural and theological meanings and terminology. Words like *Dispensation, Gospel, Justification, Sanctification, Hermeneutics, Israel, Eschatology, Church, Free Grace theology, rewards*, along with theological phrases and ideas, *Biblical framework*, and *Biblical doctrine*. It was like being a small child again, hearing words, learning them, but not quite able to put them together. Then hearing phrases with these words in them and mulling these over, asking questions, using Bible and theological dictionaries a lot, and eventually understanding comes. I only bring this up because I want to encourage the men of this assembly to venture deeper into things like the Biblical Framework Series, where you can gain a lot of understanding of Scripture and doctrine in order to become more confident in the leadership position you have in your families.

I hope this presentation will help you understand why Biblical hermeneutics (rules for Biblical interpretation) is important, why Scriptural doctrine is important, and why Scripture must be the final authority. We need to be able to discern now, more than ever, Biblical beliefs that are “right” from beliefs that are “almost right”.

One thing you have to recall is that the history of the Roman Catholic Church is our legacy. We came out of that church. So the confusion in communicating with Roman Catholics is that there are many common doctrines, words, and concepts which we as Bible believing, Dispensationalists, and Free Grace theologians also hold; doctrines like the Trinity, Incarnation, and Hypostatic Union. The big differences, of course, are the presuppositions that Roman Catholic Church formed from their Scriptural interpretation, and this brings in a lot of confusion.

This holds true not only for the Roman church, but also for many of the major Protestant denominations, Charismatic and Pentecostal groups, who got off the train of Biblical learning at the early Book of Acts, or at the Augsburg Confessions in 1530, or at the Council of Trent in 1545, or at the Westminster Confessions in 1646.

Here are some examples of phrases we have in common with Roman Catholics:

We say: "Jesus Christ is our Savior."

Rome says: "Jesus Christ is our Savior."

We say: "Jesus Christ came to save us from our sins."

Rome says: "Jesus Christ came to save us from our sins."

We say: "We are saved by grace alone."

Rome says: "We are saved by grace alone."

We say: "We are justified by faith alone"

Rome says: "We are justified by faith alone"

So, what's going on?

The first thing that must be understood is that the basis of Roman Catholicism is founded on a mixed hermeneutic; allegorical interpretation and spiritualizing, literal interpretation (used in concert with their presuppositions), with misinterpreted figures and types formed from a foundation of Greek philosophy - with reason and logic supreme. This is the first and greatest division we face when dealing with Roman Catholics, and it is the one that causes the most confusion and frustration!

Many of the references I use will be from the Roman Catholic Catechism or the Catholic encyclopedia.

Beginning with the Catechism, here is how the Prologue starts:

The first paragraph of the Catholic Catechism says,

1 He (God) calls man to seek him, to know him, to love him with all his strength. He calls together all men, scattered and divided by sin, into the unity of his family, the Church.

To accomplish this, when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son as Redeemer and Savior. In his Son and through him, he invites men to become, in the Holy Spirit, his adopted children and thus heirs of his blessed life.

Paragraph 2 says,

2 So that this call should resound throughout the world, **Christ sent forth the apostles** he had chosen, commissioning them **to proclaim the gospel:**

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.".....

Here are three of the more common presuppositions that you've probably heard before. There will be many more as we finish up our study today:

Christ established this Church with Peter as visible head.

Christ gave the keys to the "Kingdom" to Peter and his successors (Apostolic Succession)

Christ gave the power to forgive sins to the disciples ("priests" of His Church).

The early church got off on the wrong foot hermeneutically, or at least the "western" side and with all the confusion the early church went through with Greek influence, Jewish influence, Gnosticism, fighting off various heresies, developing doctrines of the Trinity and Christology, teaching, studying Scripture, training up the next generation of elders, evangelizing, and having to earn a living, we can understand why the "early church fathers" might not always be the most reliable of resources. This had to be a very confusing time. The teachings of Aristotle played a big part in shaping the mind-set of the church at Rome, as later evidenced by Thomas Aquinas in his writings. Virtue and perfection, morality and ethics, mysticism and philosophy are all interwoven into a religious system which Rome calls "Christianity".

In thinking about my approach for this presentation, I wanted to pick out some key doctrines or beliefs that more likely pinpoint the real problems within their system and how in contrast we view these doctrines and beliefs. I came up with three: **the Fall, the Depravity of man, and Atonement.** Imbedded in these three areas are other doctrines which will come to light.

I think with these three areas we will see clearly why we differ so greatly on the matter of salvation. You will also see and understand better some of the terminology as their beliefs are discussed and compared to what we believe.

Let's begin with the Fall and its consequences:

How you view the Fall effects how you look at the Atonement of the Cross.

[The following abbreviations will be used to show references as we continue: Catholic Catechism (CC); Catholic Encyclopedia (CE).]

How Rome sees the Fall.

390 The account of the fall in *Genesis* 3 uses figurative language, but affirms a primeval event, a deed that took place *at the beginning of the history of man*. Revelation gives us the certainty of faith that the whole of human history is marked by the original fault freely committed by our first parents. (CC)

398 In that sin man *preferred* himself to God and by that very act scorned him. He chose himself over and against God, against the requirements of his creaturely status and therefore against his own good. Constituted in a state of holiness, man was destined to be fully "divinized" by God in glory. (CC)

399 Scripture portrays the tragic consequences of this first disobedience. Adam and Eve immediately lose the grace of original holiness..... (CC)

From a Scriptural view:

First of all, we do not take Genesis 3 “figuratively”. And we see Genesis Chapter 2 feeding into Genesis Chapter 3. What does Gen 2:17 say? “.... but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die.” This is *spiritual* death: “in the day that you eat” i.e. “spiritual” death at the moment you eat from that tree; and then in Genesis 3:19 God explains to Adam that he will eventually die a “physical” death and return to the dust from which he came. The tree was real, and the consequence of eating from that tree was immediate spiritual death (loss of relationship with God, their Creator), then eventually, physical death.

This is the spiritual death in which each of us is born. It is the imputed sin of Adam.

We are born “spiritually” dead, and if we are not “regenerated”, our destiny is the “lake of fire”.

Here’s a quick review of “spiritual death”

The Two Aspects of Spiritual Death

Total depravity:

Man is not as bad as he could be.
Man still has conscience and good qualities.
Man is capable of every sin.
Man is devoid of love and obedience to God.
Man is enslaved to sin.
Man is dead in his trespasses and sin.
(Jn. 5:42; 8:34; Rom. 7:23; Eph. 2:1; 4:18)

Total inability:

Man cannot bring his life into complete conformity to God’s law.
He cannot change his fundamental preference for sin.
Man, in his fallen state, is unable to respond to God.
He cannot do any act that will commend him to God.
(Jn. 6:44; Rom. 7:18; 8:7; 1 Cor. 2:14)

From Arnold Fruchtembaum

The Biblical view of imputed “Spiritual death” and “Depravity of man” is not recognized in Catholic teaching.

Here is what the Roman Catechism teaches about the consequences of Original sin:

417 Adam and Eve transmitted to their descendants human nature wounded by their own first sin and hence deprived of original holiness and justice; this deprivation is called "original sin". (CC)

(By “*holiness and justice*” I assume they are speaking of what we call “righteousness” or “right standing with God”.)

418 As a result of original sin, human nature is weakened in its powers, subject to ignorance, suffering and the domination of death, and inclined to sin (this inclination is called "concupiscence"). (CC)

Here’s what the two views looks like in comparison:

Two Views of Original Sin

Rome's View

Original Sin is:

(Inherited from our parents)

➤ wounded human nature
weakened in its powers
subject to ignorance,
suffering,
the domination of death
and inclined to sin.

Man: spiritually wounded
with hope

Biblical View

Original Sin is:

➤ The Imputed sin of Adam
spiritual death (Gen 2:17)
Depravity of Man

and

➤ sin nature
(Inherited sin from parents)

Man: spiritually dead
without hope

From the Catechism teachings above, we learn that man was created in a state of holiness and justice, then lost that original holiness and justice by freely disobeying God's commandment. Therefore mankind cannot become what God intended— children who would share in His Divinity. Inherited from our parents, human nature has been “weakened” and “wounded”. Therefore the emphasis is getting rid of this barrier of “original sin” so man can get back to the state of “holiness and justice” that Adam had before the Fall.

In the Biblical view we see everyone born spiritually dead (imputed sin of Adam), plus an inherited sin nature from our parents.

Remember the three stages of righteousness?

God knows only Positive Righteousness
(Galatians 4:9)

(-) Minus righteousness
(how we are born).

(0) Zero righteousness
(where Adam was at creation).

(+) Positive righteousness
(Christ's Righteousness as man; earned
by His perfect obedience during His life).

(-) Minus righteousness (how we are born).

(0) Zero righteousness (where Adam was at creation).

(+) Positive righteousness (Christ's Righteousness
as man; earned by His perfect obedience during
His life).

God can deal only with those who have *positive* righteousness. (Gal 4:9).
Those without Christ's Righteousness have only their own works for credit.
This is called "relative" righteousness and will not save you.

Atonement

Then, we come to Atonement.

This is how Rome sees the Atonement

Regarding Genesis 3:15, "the seed of the woman",

411 The Christian tradition sees in this passage an announcement of the
"New Adam" who, because he "became obedient unto death, even death on a
cross", makes amends superabundantly for the disobedience, of Adam. (CC)

480 Jesus Christ is true God and true man, in the unity of his divine person;
for this reason he is the one and only **mediator** between God and men. (CC)

“The restoration of man from the bondage of sin to the liberty of the children of God through the satisfactions and **merits** of Christ.” (CE)

617 The Council of Trent emphasizes the unique character of Christ's sacrifice as "the source of eternal salvation" and teaches that "his most holy Passion on the wood of the cross **merited justification** for us. (CC)

618 The cross is the unique sacrifice of Christ, the "one mediator between God and men". But because in his incarnate divine person he has in some way united himself to every man, "the possibility of being made partners, in a way known to God, in the paschal mystery" is offered to all men.....

Apart from the cross there is no other ladder by which we may get to heaven. (CC)

By voluntary submission to His Passion and Death on the Cross, Jesus Christ **atoned** for our disobedience and sin. He thus made **reparation** to the offended majesty of God for the outrages which the Creator so constantly suffers at the hands of His creatures. *New Advent.com*

Reparation is a theological concept closely connected with those of atonement and satisfaction, and thus belonging to some of the deepest mysteries of the Christian Faith. It is the teaching of that Faith that **man is a creature who has fallen from an original state of justice** in which he was created, and that through the Incarnation, Passion, and Death of the Son of God, **he has been redeemed and restored again in a certain degree to the original condition.**" *New Advent.com*

We are restored to grace **through the merits of Christ's Death**, and that grace enables us to add our prayers, labors, and trials to those of Our Lord "and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ " (Colossians 1:24). *New Advent.com*

We can thus make some sort of reparation to the justice of God for our own offences against Him,

and by virtue of the Communion of the Saints, the oneness and solidarity of the mystical Body of Christ, we can also make satisfaction and reparation for the sins of others. *New Advent.com*

“...we have the central fact made known in the Apostolic preaching, that mankind was fallen and was raised up and redeemed from sin by the blood of Christ.....”

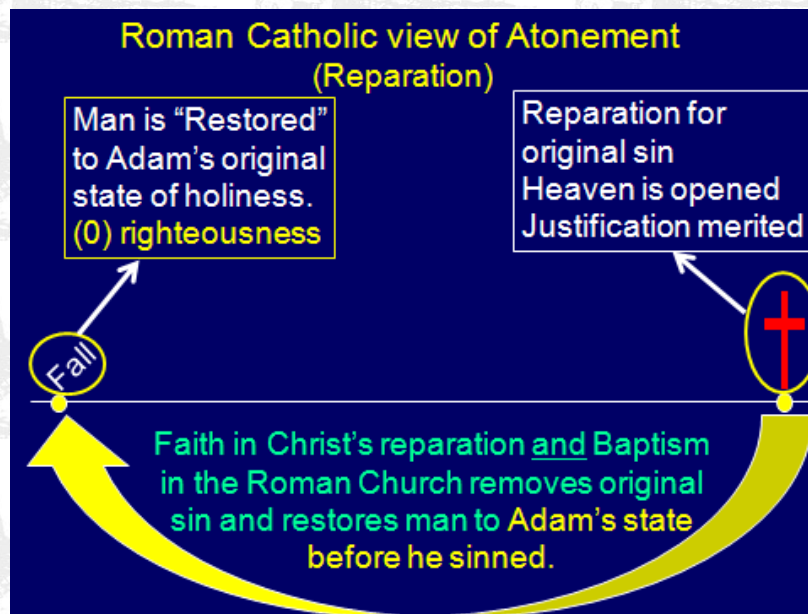
By whatever names or figures it may be described, that work is the reversal of the Fall, the blotting out of sin, the deliverance from bondage, the reconciliation of mankind with God. And it is brought to pass by the Incarnation, by the life, the sufferings, and the death of the Divine Redeemer. All this may be summed up in the word *Atonement*. (CE)

By “reversal of the Fall”, it would seem to indicate that Christ made reparation to God for the sin of Adam so that man could get back to (0) righteousness and a “clean slate” in order to start the process of “justification” through the Sacraments of the Church.

On God's part, it is the acceptance of satisfactory amends whereby the Divine honor is repaired and the Divine wrath appeased.

On man's part, it is both a deliverance from the slavery of sin and a restoration to the former Divine adoption, and this includes the whole process of supernatural life from the first reconciliation to the final salvation. (CE)

“...the penalty alone was voluntarily assumed by the Redeemer and, in paying it, He washed away our sins and restored us to our former supernatural state and destination.” (CE)



Reparation for original sin; Heaven is opened; Justification merited.

Man is "Restored" to Adam's original state of holiness (zero righteousness).

Faith in Christ's reparation and Baptism in the Roman Church removes original sin and restores man to Adam's state before he sinned.

Regarding the doctrine of Atonement, a crucial question must be asked:

Christ's Work on the Cross

Is Jesus Christ "**Mediator**" or "**Substitute**" ?
This is a pivotal point as we consider the Atonement.

If He is a **Mediator only** as Rome says,
then He offers up His suffering and death to God
for the sake of sinners as "reparation", and
His merits of grace are transferred to the Church
so man has justification made available to him.

If He is **Substitute**, as Scripture states,
then **all** of humanity's sins are imputed to Him and
He suffers and dies in our place to pay the penalty,
endure the punishment, provide satisfaction, and
God deals with the sin issue once and for all.

Is Jesus Christ "Mediator" only or "Substitute"?

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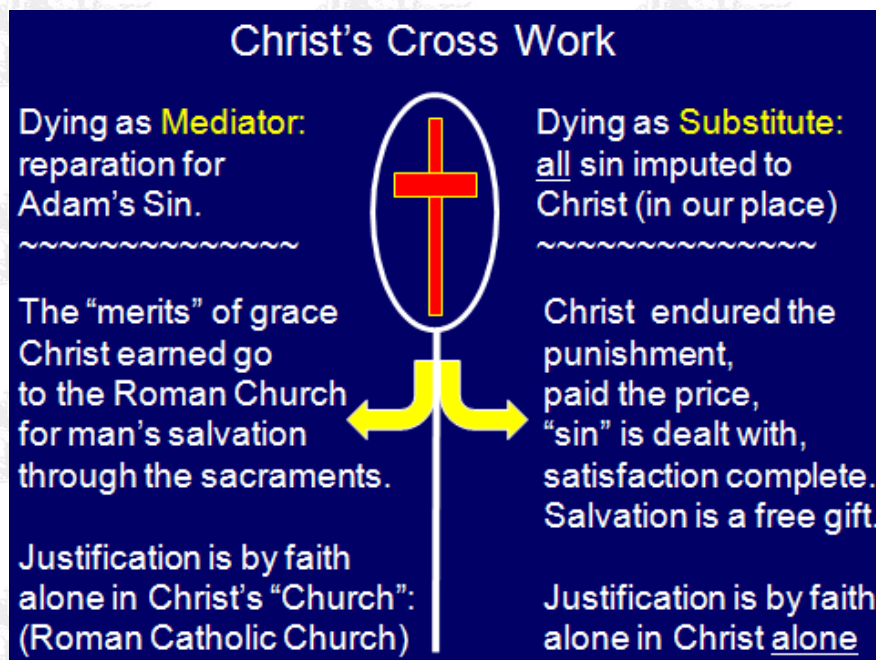
If He is Substitute, as Scripture states, then all of humanity’s sins are imputed to Him and He suffers and dies in our place to pay the penalty, endure the punishment, provide satisfaction, and God deals with the sin issue once and for all.

Here’s what Paul Enns (*The Moody handbook of theology*) writes, “The doctrine of substitution is important in that through Christ’s death the righteous demands of God have been met; it was a legal transaction in which Christ dealt with the sin problem for the human race. He became the substitute for humanity’s sin.”

To the Roman Church, the Atonement is moral and spiritual, rather than judicial.

The word “Substitutionary” is not associated with Atonement in Rome’s theology.

This then, is the dividing line between Roman Catholicism and Biblical truth:



So, now we see that the focus is on the Roman Catholic Church.
The Catholic encyclopedia tells us:

“Only by entering the Church can we:

- a. Participate in the redemption wrought for us by Christ
- b. Unite us to the family of the second Adam
- c. Engraft us into the true Vine.

It is to the Church that Christ has committed those means of grace through which the gifts He earned for men are communicated to them.

The Church alone dispenses the sacraments.”

“It alone makes known the light of revealed truth. Outside the Church these gifts cannot be obtained.

From all this there is but one conclusion:

Union with the Church is not merely one out of various means by which salvation may be obtained: it is the only means.”

What about those who don't know that the Roman Catholic Church is the only way to salvation?

Baptism of desire.

From the Catholic Catechism:

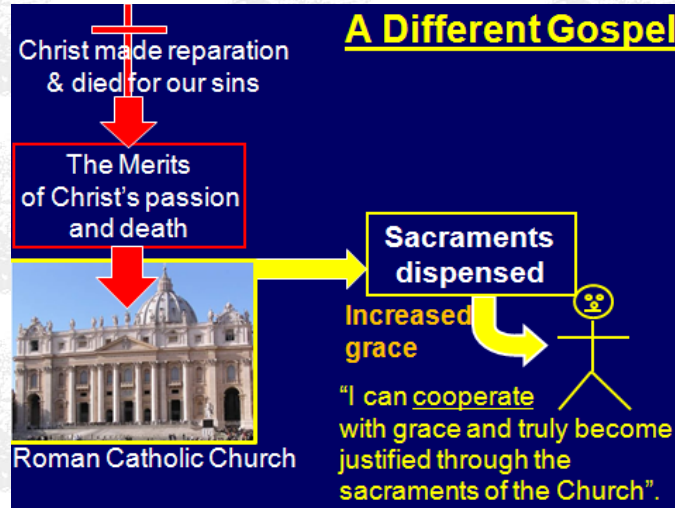
1260 "Since Christ died for all, and since all men are in fact called to one and the same destiny, which is divine, we must hold that the Holy Spirit offers to all the possibility of being made partakers, in a way known to God, of the Paschal mystery.”

Every man who is ignorant of the Gospel of Christ and of his Church, but seeks the truth and does the will of God in accordance with his understanding of it, can be saved.

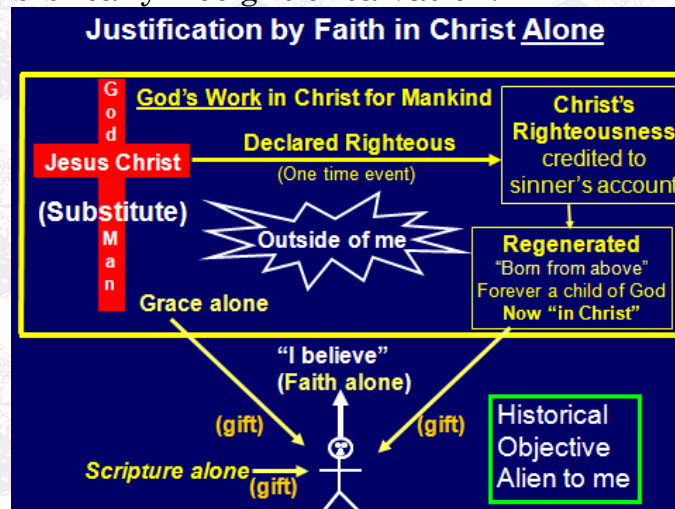
It may be supposed that such persons would have *desired Baptism explicitly* if they had known its necessity.

From looking at Roman Catholic teaching, they have a completely different gospel!

Read



As opposed to the biblically free gift of salvation:



Here are some examples of confusion and reinterpretation of "substitutionary" and "imputation":

2 Corinthians 5:21 "He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

From a Biblical point of view, we would see this verse as a “substitutionary” Christ dying in our place and the imputing of Christ’s righteousness to the believer.

[Other such “substitutionary” verses would be: Isaiah 53:4-6, 2 Cor. 5:21, Gal. 3:13;

1 Tim. 2:6; 1 Pet. 2:24, and 1 Pet. 3:18.]

Rome would likely say “Yes, Christ was sinless, and our Representative. He died on the cross, so we might participate in the merits of grace, through the Church’s sacraments, to become truly righteous before Him”.

Another verse, which I have held dear for years:

Eph 2:8-9 “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

From Biblical point of view, another salvation and security verse.

Rome would likely say,

Yes, “For by grace (Christ’s merits) you have been saved (from God’s judgment on Adam) through faith (Baptism in RCC); and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God (through the Church); not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

But by now, you can begin to see the difficulty and confusion in trying to communicate Biblical teaching if you don’t believe in substitutionary atonement.

Rome would continue:

“Jesus Christ is our Savior.” (He satisfied God for the offense of Adam).

“Jesus Christ came to save us from our sins.” (all people inherit Adam’s original sin).

“We are justified by faith alone” (The Sacrament of Baptism in the Roman Catholic Church).

It matters little what verse you present to the Roman Catholic - they could agree with it, because their presuppositions and indoctrinated mind-set will restructure the verse and make it fit their belief system.

Without using a consistent normal, plain, grammatical/historical approach to interpretation, they don't really have a chance of correct understanding. My heart goes out to these people because I was one of them and also to the Protestant groups that are hermeneutically crippled.

Regarding **individual salvation**, the Council of Trent stated:

“Against the heretical tenets of various times and sects we must hold

- that the initial grace is truly gratuitous and supernatural;
- that the **human will remains free** under the influence of this grace;
- that man **really cooperates in his personal salvation** from sin;
- that by justification man is **really made just**, and not merely declared or reputed so;
- that justification and sanctification are **only two aspects of the same thing**, and not ontologically and chronologically distinct realities;

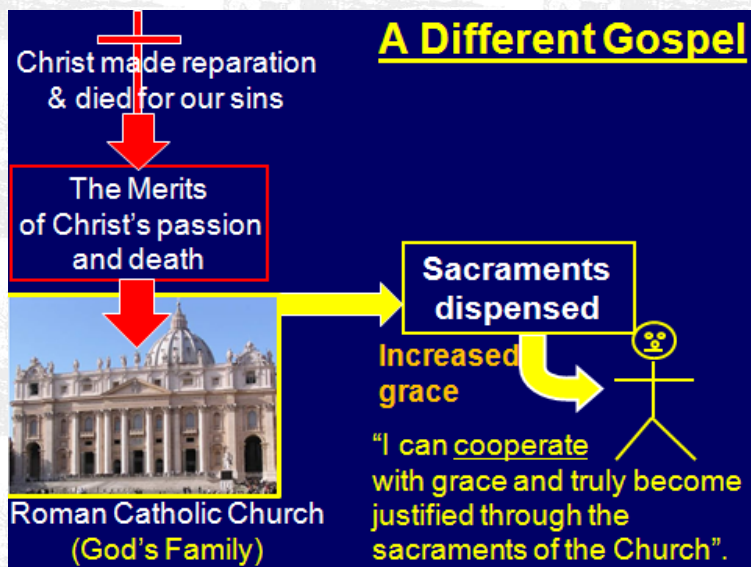
that justification **excludes all mortal sin from the soul**, so that the **just** man is no way liable to the sentence of death at God's judgment-seat.”

Summary of Catholic thought

Man was created with original holiness and justice.

At the Fall, man was ‘wounded’ or injured by Adam's original sin and lost his holiness and justice.

Heaven's door was closed.



Christ became our Mediator to make “amends” for “original sin” which comes to us through our parents.

Through His Incarnation, life, suffering, and death, Christ satisfied God. Christ “merited” justification for man and the gates of heaven are opened again.

Christ instituted His Church on earth (His Kingdom) to administer justification through the ‘sacraments’ of His Church.

Those who are baptized in His “Church” (RCC) have “original sin” removed, along with the forgiveness of any personal sin committed up to that point.

Now the individual is reconciled to God and is restored to original “holiness and justice”, is a member of God’s Family- the Church, and is pronounced to be “in Christ”.

The Sacraments of the Church are there as a means of sanctification leading to justification. Because the Fall only ‘wounded’ man’s nature, he can now co-operate in working out his own salvation, that is, becoming justified before God.

The Roman Catholic Church is a self-contained religious “system” with power, authority, and 1500 years of development. Rome is the victim of her own propaganda; what she has taught, she believes, and because she believes it, it must be true.

Having learned more about the Roman church in our study, here is an extended list of how she sees herself:

Christ came to establish this Church (the Kingdom of God on earth).

Christ instituted this Church as the one and only “true” Church.

This Church is the New Covenant and the New Israel.

This Church is now the Messianic Kingdom. Christ rules in hearts through the Roman church.

Christ established this Church with Peter as visible head.

Christ gave the keys to the “Kingdom” to Peter and his successors (Apostolic Succession)

Christ gave the power to forgive sins to the disciples (“priests” of His Church).

Christ gave the Scriptures to this Church with the authority and obligation of interpretation.

This Church has the mind of Christ.

The Roman Catholic Church is now the “Gospel” to be preached.

The Roman Catholic Church is the dispenser of Salvation.

All who believe and are baptized in this Church receive forgiveness of Original sin and are God’s children.

The “Sacraments” of this Church assist in the process of justification.

So it would seem that the Reformation battle cries are still relevant:

Grace alone

Faith alone

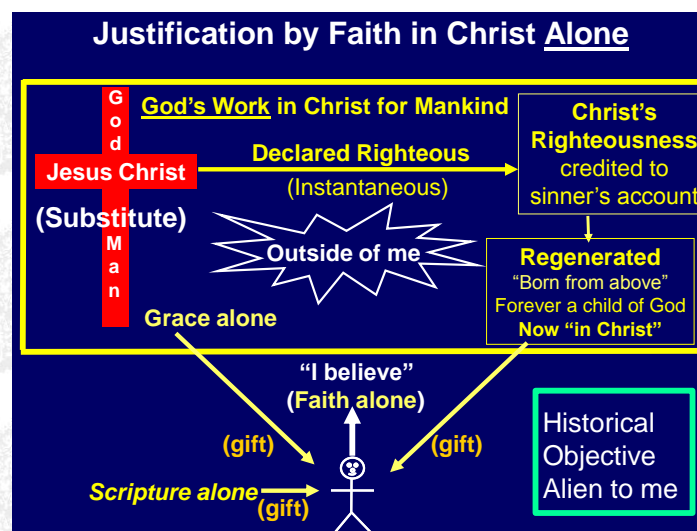
Christ alone

Scripture alone

Let’s review the Biblical view of Atonement again:



Christ took upon Himself the punishment for all the sins of all mankind (past, present, future) and paid the penalty in our place; as “substitute”. From noon to 3pm while the earth was covered in darkness, in the court of heaven, ALL of humanity’s sins were imputed to Christ and He was declared “guilty”. He suffered the punishment and paid the price for sin in order that we would not have to (He, in our place), and reconciled us to God. That is the Substitutionary Atonement. What Christ has done for us as a Substitute is the Good News of the gospel! Original sin is gone, personal sin is gone, ALL sin is gone; now salvation is a free gift, by faith.



Now, simply by accepting (believing) what God has done for us by the finished substitutionary work of Christ on the cross, each person appropriates to himself salvation (justification) and receives eternal life. It is the belief in this objective, historical event that produces “assurance” of

salvation, because the issue is what Christ has done in our place – *not what we do*.

Let me repeat that: It is the belief in this objective, historical event that produces “assurance” of salvation, because the issue is what Christ has done in our place – *not what we do*.

Christ’s Righteousness is then transferred (credited) to our account. His Righteousness is not “infused” into our souls. We are declared “not guilty” in the court of heaven.

“Salvation” has already been accomplished (almost 2000 years ago) and is a gift offered to mankind. God’s justice and wrath have been satisfied, payment has been “paid in full”, the punishment has been administered and endured by our Substitute, Jesus Christ, and we are reconciled with our Creator.

Although we cannot always judge who is and who is not a believer, we can make some judgments from what different churches teach. I think the Roman Catholic Church has led their followers into another gospel, which is not “good news” at all.

What made this study so difficult is the fact that we do use the same terminology, same phrases, and have some doctrines in common. I was always in a position of having to discern “right” from “almost right”, recognizing Satan’s attempts to misguide and mislead the mind into false and deceitful unbiblical thinking.

Let’s take a look at this comparison of beliefs from the point of view of the Angelic Conflict, where Satan is trying to defend his arrogant position of his five “I wills”, and his hatred is intense against God’s love for us. We see this expressed in events of Scripture.

- After the announcement of Genesis 3:15 (the promise of a Savior), Satan tried to contaminate mankind’s bloodline (DNA) in Genesis 6:1-2 “the sons of God (fallen angels) taking “wives for themselves, whomever they chose.....”
- He tried to eliminate the Jews with the midwives who were told to kill any boy child coming out of the womb while they were in Egypt;

- He almost cut off the Davidic line, except for an eight year old boy named Joash who was kept hidden in the Temple until it was safe for him to become king;
- He manipulated the rage of King Herod into killing all the male children two yrs. old and under in and around the city of Bethlehem;
- He entered Judas Iscariot to betray Christ and eventually kill Him.

Dr. Ryrie writes in his *Basic theology*:

“Today Satan promotes a form of godliness while denying its power (2 Tim. 3:5).

To do this, Satan disguises his servants as servants of righteousness (2 Cor 11:15). He promotes a doctrinal system through the demons who in turn use people who advocate a false asceticism or unbridled license (1 Tim. 4:1–3).”

I think what Dr. Ryrie writes is true, and I would take it back to the struggles and early formation of the church. There is no reason to believe that Satan, once he caught on to what was going on with the formation of the Church, would not try to mislead, confuse, and promote things that would “seem” right, but would miss the mark. We mustn’t think that the church at Rome was immune from it. I think Satan’s first and most powerful strategy was in the area of hermeneutics.

If scholarly and influential men of the early church, like Origen, Clement of Alexandria, and Augustine, can be persuaded that the allegorical method is the correct way to interpret Scripture, then confusion of the true meaning of Scripture begins. Then it is an easy step to promote Scripture passages or verses out of context to fit and support the Greek philosophy and Gnosticism of the day. That’s how the early monasteries began, with people “separating” themselves from the world to attain a high spiritual and moral state by practicing self-denial, self-mortification, and the like, called ‘asceticism’. It is somewhere around this time that seeing Christ’s cross work as “Substitute” moved to the work of “Mediator” or “Representative”.

Greek and Roman reasoning takes center stage and gradually it becomes reasonable to obtain “unity” and control of teaching, doctrine, and religious practice by promoting a structured hierarchy within the organization of the

church. This gradually develops into the authority structure of the Pope, bishops, and priests.

By not recognizing the difference between Israel and the Church as separate entities, it is easy to make the church be an “extension” of Israel, and to see where the liturgy, priesthood, vestments, moral law, references to “sacrifice”, atonement, etc., come from.

The church at Rome, through the centuries, ultimately dissolved into a church of moral and ethical codes of living, enveloped in “scriptural” liturgy, and called it “Christianity”. The church at Rome had opportunities to change her mind about submitting to the authority of Holy Scripture, in fact all the way up to 1545 when the Council of Trent convened.

Scripturally, the church of Jesus Christ is not the Roman Catholic Church. In my opinion, the gates of hell have already prevailed against her and she publically acknowledged this throughout the sessions of the Council of Trent when she publicly proclaimed that she had absolute authority in all things spiritual. She announced her authority over Holy Scripture and then proclaimed “church traditions” to be at the same level of authority as the Bible, and even worse, incorporating the Apocryphal books into the canon of “inspired” books. As she solidified her position and displayed her power with condemnations and anathemas, she closed the doors on Biblical theology and the gospel of salvation “by grace alone, through faith alone in the substitutionary work of Christ alone” and at that point she was no longer the “church at Rome”, but became the Roman Catholic Church. The time for her turning back and submitting to Holy Scripture is long gone. Her Scriptural misinterpretations and her “traditions” have carried the day.

Do not get your hopes up of having much of a Biblical discussion and easy conversion with your Catholic friends and relatives. You’ve seen what Biblical confusion there is. The best we can do is pray that God will call them out and prepare us to help them when they do.

Unfortunately, the Roman church is not the only group with incorrect and misinterpreted doctrine. There are many Protestant groups that are being misled by improper understanding of Scripture. This is why we need sound

doctrinal teaching and Biblical training, and a consistent usage of a correct hermeneutic; to be able to discern the “right” from the “almost right”.

So who then, are our “separated brethren”?

I contend that they are those who stray from a normal, plain, grammatical/historical interpretation of Scripture, be they Roman Catholic or “Protestant”.



This has been a very challenging study for me. However, being able to look back from a Biblical perspective at the Roman Catholic material, especially their encyclopedia and catechism, as well as other articles, makes me ask the question once more: “what makes one a “Christian”? The word “Christian” has lost its Biblical meaning.

Dr. Fruchtenbaum asks and answers the same question, Who is a “Christian”? He writes,

“The content of faith is the gospel, involving the substitutionary death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. That which determines whether or not a person is a Christian is his willingness to place his faith, or belief, in Jesus as the substitute for sin.”

I agree. And it looks to me that Rome has deceived her followers.

Here’s the bottom line:

What's the Bottom Line?	
<u>I am a Roman Catholic</u>	<u>I am a Christian</u>
Good person Moral Thoughtful Considerate Philanthropist	 Christ is my righteousness I am a Sinner/Saint
	
Christ is my mediator. RCC is my way to salvation (by faith through works)	Christ is my substitute. Christ alone is my salvation (by faith alone)

As I was considering all these confusing ideas and beliefs, it occurred to me how marvelously ingenious Satan can be with misdirection and counterfeiting.

I offer this for your consideration.

Satan's ingenious "creativity"

It begins with his five "I wills":

"I will ascend to heaven,

I will exalt my throne above the stars of God:

I will sit on the mount of assembly, in the recesses
of the north:

I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;

I will be like the most High".

Lewis Sperry Chafer writes this (Systematic Theology - Volume 2, Page 49):

"Satan's sin may thus be summarized as a purpose to secure

(1) the highest heavenly position;

(2) regal rights both in heaven and on earth;

(3) Messianic recognition;

(4) glory which belongs to God alone; and

(5) a likeness to the Most High, the "possessor of heaven and earth."

To me, The Roman Catholic Church is an "almost right" truth, and fulfills a "look alike" church image as opposed to the true church image of Holy Scripture.

Through the declarations of the Council of Trent, I see that:

(1) The Roman Church places herself in the highest heavenly position by claiming the

keys to the kingdom, power to forgive sin, and authority over Holy Scripture.

(2) The Roman Church claims regal rights both in heaven and earth by claiming Papal authority, being the “one and only true Church”, and having the mind of Christ.

(3) The Roman Church claims Messianic recognition by claiming that the Church is the “New Covenant” and the “New Israel”.

(4) The Roman Church demands glory which belongs to God alone by claiming salvation is through the Church alone).

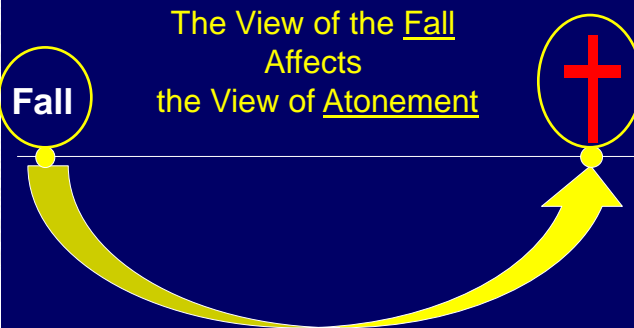
(5) The Roman Church claims for herself a fit dwelling place for a likeness to the Most High, the “possessor of heaven and earth” by the sacrament of “the Holy Eucharist”.

I see the Roman Catholic Church as Satan’s greatest and most ingenious accomplishment since Christ’s death. He has carefully formed an insidious “counterfeit” to Biblical salvation!

I hope this has given you some insight as to what Roman Catholics believe as opposed to what we believe from a different hermeneutic. I know it’s not easy to hear these things about people who are your friends, neighbors, or relatives who are involved with this religion. The upside is that many Catholics don’t really know what they believe and remain in that church because “we’ve always been Catholics”, so encourage them to think “Substitutionary” Atonement.

So, to conclude, what is the basic thing we learned today?

Interpretation is Important (Hermeneutics)



Proper Interpretation of Scripture is important!

How you see the doctrine of the Fall will affect how you see the doctrine of the Cross.

There are many more areas to explore in the Roman Catholic Church like the Mass, the Holy Eucharist, the Sacraments in general, Catholic spiritual life, Communion of Saints, etc., depending on my time and your interest, but I hope that this has been a good overview. Let's pray.

¹References to the Greek prepositions “Anti” and “Huper” (*for*) in regards to “substitution”:

- Systematic Theology by Lewis Sperry Chafer, Vol 3, page 55.
- The Messianic Bible Study Collection by Arnold Fruchtenbaum, Vol 100, page 5.
- Ryrie's Basic Theology by Charles Ryrie, pages 329-333
- The Moody Handbook of Theology by Paul Enns, Page 323

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