

Final Words on Catholicism

“For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on KNOWLEDGE.” – Romans 10:2

Over the past couple of months, I have written a series of articles to refute the claims that were made by the current Catholic Pope which were quoted in *The Post and Courier* on July 11, 2007. In this particular article, Pope Benedict XVI “...*REASSERTED the primacy of the Roman Catholic Church, approving a document that says other Christian communities either are DEFECTIVE or NOT TRUE CHURCHES and that CATHOLICISM provides the only true path to SALVATION.*” Pope Benedict went on to say that only the Catholic Church “*has the fullness of the means of salvation.*”

If you remember, at the time the Pope’s statements were printed, I was busy with about 30 other Northbridge members on a mission trip to Arkansas where God used us to lead hundreds of people to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ through the sharing of “the gospel”. I didn’t even know about the Catholic leader’s claims until several days AFTER *The Post and Courier* article was made public. Suddenly, in the middle of the mission trip, I was bombarded by questions from members of Northbridge, as well as by many Christians living in Arkansas, as to my thoughts on these official Catholic positions. Thus, because of the “responsibility” entrusted to me by God to be the guiding and protective shepherd of Northbridge Baptist Church (2Timothy 4:1-5; 1Peter 5:1-3), as well as because of my background of being raised in a Catholic family and being confirmed into the Catholic Church at the age of 13, I felt compelled to respond to this obvious CATHOLIC insinuation that the members of this “Baptist” church were members of a “defective” church and not on the “true path” to salvation.

During my articles, I have made a sincere effort to accurately present and explain some of the basic doctrines (i.e. official teachings) of the Catholic Church as it pertains to their version of the “gospel” and how they believe someone obtains “salvation” (i.e. eternal life in heaven with God!). As I wrote on this subject, I was not just giving you “my opinion” on what Catholics believed about these important biblical concepts. If you want to verify my sources and/or to dive deeper into understanding “Catholicism”, you are welcome to borrow these books or look for them in your local bookstore:

- (1) **The Catholic Catechism**, by John A. Hardon, Doubleday Publishing, copyright 1981.
- (2) **Compendium, Catechism of the Catholic Church**, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, copyright 2006.
- (3) **The Catholic Way**, Bishop Donald W. Wuerl, Doubleday Publishing, copyright 2001.
- (4) **Catholic & Christian, An Explanation of Commonly Misunderstood Catholic Beliefs**, by Alan Schreck, Anthony Messenger Press, copyright 2004.

If you read through these, or any of the many approved Catholic doctrinal books, you will be able to discover for yourself what I have tried to reveal in my newsletter articles. That is, the “Catholic” gospel and the so-called “Protestant” gospel that I preach are NOT THE SAME. For example, I teach that at the moment someone UNDERSTANDS and BELIEVES, by faith, that Jesus Christ died on the cross to pay for our sins...and that He arose from the dead as proof that He was who He claimed to be (i.e. God, the Son), and then that person RECIEVES Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, immediately THAT PERSON IS “BORN AGAIN” (John 3:3), freely JUSTIFIED (Rom 3:24), and eternally SAVED (Rom 10:9-13). Catholicism teaches that a person is “saved” when they are BAPTIZED. But “saved” to and from what? Although Catholics have been taught that baptism “washes away” the original sin of Adam and infuses into the soul of the person baptized a measure of “actual grace” from God which helps that person to grow in their relationship with God, they are also taught that they MUST participate with this “power of grace” from within by continuing to participate in the Sacraments and membership in the Catholic Church in order to POSSIBLY go to heaven when they die. However, if they die after committing sins that have not been “properly” forgiven through the Catholic Sacrament of Penance, then they are not “saved” from being punished for those sins. Instead, they should expect to spend some time in a dreadful place called “PURGATORY” for an extended period of time.

Catholicism clearly teaches that even some “baptized” (i.e. saved???) Christians will NOT go to heaven at all when they die, because they committed MORTAL SINS that were not properly dealt with BY THE CATHOLIC CHURCH before they died. Catholicism also teaches that most “baptized” (i.e. saved???) Catholics are also taught that most Christians will have to first go to purgatory when they die and the only way out of “purgatory” is for you to “suffer” for a long time (or one of your faithful Catholic friends or relatives can shorten your time of suffering by PRAYING and/or by PAYING for your soul after you die!). It is still official Catholic doctrine that a person can pay INDULGENCES to the Catholic Church in order to shorten the amount of time that a lost loved one “suffers” in

purgatory. So, I ask you, if a Catholic person is “saved” by baptism, what is he saved from?

That is why, as your pastor, I reject all of these “developed” Catholic teachings as being “unbiblical” or improper interpretations of the Scriptures they use as the basis for these beliefs. I have tried to make it clear in all of my articles that we are “justified” (i.e. totally forgiven of our sins and “proclaimed” righteous in God’s eyes) at the very instant we truly accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior (Rom 4:4-8, 22-25). Jesus SUFFERED for all of our sins so that we would be SAVED from having to pay for them ourselves (2Cor 5:21)!!!

So, in closing, I hope that you read these articles with the understanding that what I am angry about and preaching against is CATHOLICISM (i.e. official teachings of the Catholic Church) NOT people who are Catholics, themselves. I know for a fact that there are people who faithfully attend Catholic Mass each week who are truly “born again” believers (even when they have not been taught what that biblical term means). At the same time, I know that there are also many Baptists who attend Baptist worship services each week who have never been “born again” (even when they know what this means)! Therefore, the goal of my writing these articles has never been to proclaim all CATHOLICS are going to Hell and all BAPTISTS are going to HEAVEN. Rather, my goal was to PERSUADE all who God leads to read these articles (whether Catholic or Protestant) to put their faith and total confidence in the BIBLICAL gospel “once and for all entrusted to the saints” (Jude 3) and NOT in Pope Benedict’s misleading claims that the man-made gospel of Catholicism is the true pathway to salvation! (Rom 10:1-4) –**Pastor Louis**