Eastern Catholic Re-Evangelization Center

The Book of Armaments

Eastern Catholic Re-Evangelization Center

Defending Your Catholic Faith

by

Gary Michuta

CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE - SALVATION

CHAPTER THREE - SACRED TRADITION

CHAPTER FOUR - THE PAPACY

CHAPTER FIVE - THE EUCHARIST

CHAPTER SIX - MARY AND THE SAINTS

Chapter One

Salvation & Justification

(How are we Saved?)

What Is Salvation and Justification?

The doctrine of Sola Fide (Latin: Only Faith) is the formal principle of the Protestant Reformation that teaches that a man is justified (or saved) before God through Faith Alone.

This booklet will examine this doctrine of Sola Fide and the wider question of salvation as it is commonly understood by anti-Catholic Protestants.

The best place to begin is to first define our terms. Most discussions concerning Justification will center around three terms: Grace, Faith and Works. Often, Catholics and Protestants will use the same terms and mean very different things by them. As a Catholic apologist, you ought to be aware of some of the differences both groups understand by these terms and to use them accordingly.

A Word of Warning

This chapter will examine how to explain and defend the historic view of salvation and justification. While it is relatively easy to provide a single answer to what the Church teaches in this regard, is it not nearly as easy assessing "the Protestant view." The reason being that "the Protestant position" doesn't exist.

Protestantism does not possess a single unified body of teaching, but rather it is made up of literally tens of thousands of denominations, groups and sects each with their own understanding of the Christian faith. Even within denominations, you may encounter Protestants who differ in belief from the denomination with whom they are officially affiliated. For this reason, this chapter (or any other work) cannot give "the Protestant view." Instead, when we speak of the "Protestant position," what we will mean is the position that you are most likely to encounter by anti-Catholic Protestants. Therefore, this is only the broadest presentation of "the Protestant position."

Defining Terms:

Let us begin with Justification. Justification is a term not commonly used by Catholics. What does it mean? After the sin of Adam and Eve, all of their children were born into this world in a fallen condition. We are all born into this world in a state of Original Sin, that is we do not have God's divine life within us to make us capable of enjoying supernatural bliss in Heaven. Justification is the remedy to this state. The Council of Trent, which met to reaffirm the Faith against the backdrop of the Protestant Reformation, defined justification as:
"...being a translation from that state in which man is born a child of the first Adam, to the state of grace and of the adoption of the sons of God through the second Adam, Jesus Christ, our Savior." (Trent, Session 6, chapter 4).

The Catechism of the Catholic Church spells out very

nicely all the aspects of that transformation in paragraphs 1990 - 95 (see Appendix C in the back of the book).

Justification is often used interchangeably with the term Salvation. Salvation can also speak of how one is "saved" from the state of Original Sin by being made a child of God. It can also have a broader application to how one gets to Heaven. In this chapter, although we recognize that there are differences in meaning, we will use both terms interchangeably just as most people commonly do today.

Grace

Another important term to know is Grace. Grace is the participation in God's own divine life. It enables us to do what is right, it transforms us and makes us holy. Grace is a supernatural gift from God, which by His own initiative out of His own undeserved (i.e. merciful) kindness towards us.

Therefore, there are two aspects of Grace. What grace is (namely, God's life within us) and Why grace is given (As a merciful gift). You can see these two different aspects of grace expressed in Scripture (see the textbox to the right).

Although Catholics and Protestants both accept this definition, they tend to emphasize one aspect of this definition over and against the other. Protestants tend to stress grace as God's undeserved kindness towards us while Catholics tend to emphasize the nature of grace and what it does (transforms us and makes us holy). The reasons for these different interpretations will be more clear in our next section when we discuss the process of Justification. For now, it is important to be aware of these two aspects of God's grace.

Faith

A second important term is Faith. The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines Faith as,

"By faith, man completely submits his intellect and his will to God. With his whole being man gives his assent to God the revealer" (CCC, 143).

Faith is therefore the trust and acceptance of whatever God has revealed so much so that it is integrated in our lives and manifested in obedience. This is essentially what is meant when "man completely submits his intellect and his will to God."

GRACE AS DIVINE FAVOR

Act 13:43 - "Now when the meeting of the synagogue had broken up, many of the Jews and of the God-fearing proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, were urging them to continue in the grace of God."

Act 15:40 - "But Paul chose Silas and left, being committed by the brethren to the grace of the Lord."

Gal. 1:15 - "But when God, who had set me apart even from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased..."

Eph. 2:8 **- "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God..."**

2 Timothy 1:9 **- "…who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity."**

GRACE AS SUPERNATURAL LIFE AND POWER

Luke 2:40 - "The Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him."

Act. 4:33 - "And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all."

Act 6:8 - "And Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people."

Romans 12:6 - "Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith;"

1 Cor. 15:10 **- "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me."**

2 Cor. 9:8 **- "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed;"**

2 Cor. 12:9 **- "And He has said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.'"**

2 Timothy 2:1 - "You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

As you can see, like Grace, Faith has two aspects to it as well. It consists of intellectual trust and acceptance of what God has revealed and it consists also of a submission of will so that we are faithful to what we know is true.

Again, Catholics and most Protestants would agree with this definition, but would prefer to emphasize one part instead of the other. For Protestants, the emphasis is placed on believing that is placing your trust wholly on the Lord, in what He has done and on what He has promised. Catholics, on the other hand, place the emphasis on the submission of will. The Catechism, echoing St Paul's words in the Letter to the Romans, calls this the "obedience of faith" (CCC 143)

Fr. William Most points out in his book Catholic Apologetics Today that the phrase that St. Paul uses in Romans 1:5 and 16:26 "the obedience of faith" connotes that both faith and obedience are two aspects of the same thing. When we say "the city of Chicago," we mean "the city that is Chicago." Likewise, when St. Paul speaks of "the obedience of faith," he means "the obedience that is faith."

The Book of Hebrews speaks of Faith in this manner especially in its eleventh chapter. Here the writer of Hebrews lists examples of those who by faith gained approval. Many of these examples emphasize the "obedience of faith" and not simple trust or belief. Below, Hebrews eleven is chopped up into examples of Faith. Write down whether each example is of mere intellectual assent, the obedience of faith or both.

11:3 - By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the Word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.

11:4 By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts,

11:5 By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; AND HE WAS NOT FOUND BECAUSE GOD TOOK HIM UP; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God.

11:7 By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household.. .and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

11:8 By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.

FAITH AS TRUST AND INTELLECTUAL ASSENT

Matthew 6:30 - "But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith!"

Matthew 8:26 - "He said to them, 'Why are you afraid, you men of little faith?' Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm."

Matthew 16:8 - "But Jesus, aware of this, said, 'You men of little faith, why do you discuss among yourselves that you have no bread?'"

FAITH AS THE SUBMISSION OF WILL

Matthew 9:2 - "And they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, 'Take courage, son; your sins are forgiven.'"

Romans 1:5 - "…through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name's sake…"

Romans 1:17 - "For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.'"

Romans 16:26 - "…but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith."

11:9 By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land…

11:11 By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised.

11:17-19 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; it was he to whom it was said, "IN ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE CALLED." He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back.

11:20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even regarding things to come.

11:21 By faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff.

11:22 By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave orders concerning his bones.

11:23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

11:24-26 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.

11:27 By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen.

11:28 By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, so that he who destroyed the firstborn would not touch them.

11:29 By faith they passed through the Red Sea as though they were passing through dry land; and the Egyptians, when they attempted it, were drowned.

11:30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days.

11:31 By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace.

11:32-39 And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah,of David and Samuel and the prophets, who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection; and others experienced mocking and scourging, yes, also chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawed in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground. And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised."

As you can see, it is difficult to sometimes distinguish between belief and the obedience of faith. In fact, Scripture sometimes speaks of faith as a work. For example Jesus' followers once asked, "Therefore they said to Him, "What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered, "Believe" (see John 6:28-29). Jesus' reply suggests that faith is a work both of God and us. Likewise, St. Paul says in Galatians 5:6, "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love." Faith works!

Works

Ok, what is a work? When Catholics refer to "works" they usually mean "good works." For Protestants, it is of little account whether a work is good, bad or indifferent. For them, "works" represent anything that we do. Therefore, prayer, the sacraments, helping an old lady cross the street, all these are works.

Differences In Emphasis	Catholic	Protestant
Grace	What Grace Is...	Why God Gives It....
Faith	The Obedience of Faith	Belief and Trust
Works	Good works	Any Works Done By Humans

-In Brief-

a) Catholics and Protestants use the same terms, but with different meaning and emphasis

b) Grace: Catholics stress what grace is (i.e. God's life within us). Protestants stress why God gives grace (i.e. God's undeserved kindness or mercy to us).

c) Faith: Catholics see Faith as a total submission to what God has revealed. Protestants see faith as a belief or trust in Christ that He has died personally for their sins and that they have received grace. It does not include obedience.

d) Paul twice links faith and obedience in Romans: Romans 1:5 and 16:26

e) Hebrews 11 illustrates that faith includes an aspect of obedience. The men of old believed and obeyed.

f) Works: Catholics generally understand "works" (although we normally do not use this term) as "good works" or the "corporal acts of mercy." For Protestants, works is an entirely negative term designating anything that we do.

Understanding Justification

If you are completely unfamiliar with the topic of justification, the best place to start is to consider justification chronologically.

The first part to consider is the Preparatory Stage: What has to occur to enable one who is born in the state of Original Sin to desire to be justified and transformed into an adopted child of God? Is it because they are good people and God is obliged to justify them?

The second stage is Justification Proper. How are we made right with God? Does God merely treat us as if we are just or does God transform us?

The last stage considers what happens after one has, through faith and baptism, become just. Are we to do good works? Do we receive merit?

Justification is perhaps best understood chronologically as it occurs when a sinner becomes justified. The first part is the preparatory stage.

The Canons of Second Orange decreed that we cannot even think of something good (that is pertaining to our salvation) without the grace of God (See appendix B). God must take the first step. Moved by God's grace, the sinner comes to faith and being predisposed by God's grace begins to move away from the things of the world and move towards God. The preparatory stage ends with the sinner desiring to bring these first movements of the Holy Spirit to completion with perfect union with Christ through baptism.

The Preparatory Stage

The process of justification is started by God who bestows grace and it begins in the sinner with faith. Hence, the Council of Trent states that faith is "the beginning of human salvation, the foundation and root of all justification, without which it is impossible to please God and to come to the fellowship of His sons." Faith is "the foundation and root of all justification" because our justification is founded upon faith and from faith springs the supernatural virtues of hope and charity, which are also necessary for salvation.

> Another aspect emphasized by Trent is the gratuitous nature of God's actions. Twice, both in chapter 8 and in the very first canon of this session, Trent explicitly condemns the notion that we can earn justification by our works (or by our faith). It is entirely a gift from God. In fact, any Catholic who states that we justify ourselves by our works is condemned by Trent's first canon.

As you may have suspected, Catholics and Protestants are very much in agreement in this stage. There certainly are details that may or may not be agreed upon by all Protestants. As we have already noted, there is no *the* Protestant position. I would venture to say that all Protestants would wholeheartedly agree with Canon 1 of the sixth session of the Council of Trent. In fact, it has been my experience that once I have clarified this point, most Protestants are relieved to find that

	Preparatory Stage	Justification Proper	After Initial Justification
Protestant	Works do not merit Justification	Only called righteous	Sanctification only
Catholic	Works do not merit Justification	Called and made righteous	Justification and Sanctification

the Catholic Church condemns the idea that we can earn or merit the grace of justification.

Justification Proper

It is in this second stage that Catholics and Protestants differ quite a bit. The Church teaches that although our justification begins with faith our justification is established in a perfect manner when we are baptized. We will discuss the biblical justification (no pun intended) for this in our treatment on the sacraments. In the box in the previous page, we have reproduced the pertinent sections of the Catechism of the Council of Trent which speaks of how we are reconciled to God in justification.

For Protestants, at least the ones that you are most likely to meet in dialogue, faith is the instrumental cause of our justification. Justification is by faith alone. Baptism, which is usually seen as a work, is usually disassociated from justification. For Protestants of the baptistic variety, believe that baptism does not regenerate or bring about a new creation, rather it is merely a sign that one has already been saved. Some Protestant believe that baptism does regenerate, but they are quick to point out that our regeneration (receiving a new nature and being made holy) is not the basis upon which we are justified. We are justified by faith alone.

Another important difference in this stage in justification is how God makes us acceptable in his sight.

Protestants hold that in justification, God does not make us righteous (that is change our nature), but He merely calls us righteous. The technical word for this is imputation. Christ's righteousness is imputed to us. We are treated by God as if we had the righteousness of Christ even though we remain fallen sinners. An analogy that Martin Luther gave for this concerns a pile of dung. Luther said that when God looks at us in our fallen nature, we are nothing but a dung heap. In justification, God covers us with Christ's righteousness like snow may cover a dung heap. Therefore, when God looks at us after justification he sees the white snow of Christ's righteousness, while by our nature we will remain as we were - dung. This transition is said to be real because it happens in God although it doesn't happen in us.

Another analogy that is commonly used is that of a bank account. Picture if you will an accounting book. A large unpayable debt is listed under your name. Under Christ's name is a positive figure or an infinite amount of money. In justification, to use this analogy, God writes into your account Christ's payment of your debt. Your debt is imputed to Christ's infinite account.

Catholics hold that one may be able to see some sort of imputation at work in justification. At least, the Council of Trent does speak of us being "called" righteous by God. Catholics are quite to point out that God's Word is a creative word. After all, God spoke all things into existence and all things are held in existence through his Word. An important proof text that you need to keep in the back of your mind in this regard is Isaiah 55:11, which reads:

"So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding {in the matter} for which I sent it."

Examples of this can be multiplied in the New Testament. When Christ says, "Be healed!" People

are healed. When Christ says to the crippled, "Stand and walk!" The crippled stood up and walked. When Christ said to Lazarus, "Arise!" Lazarus arose. When God declares us to be righteous, we become righteous. We can't help but change.

In addition to a declaration of our being righteous, we are made righteous by God. The technical term for this is infusion. Christ's righteousness is both imputed to us and infused into us in justification. We receive a new nature in justification. In other words, we are also recreated (or regenerated) and made holy (sanctified).

After Initial Justification

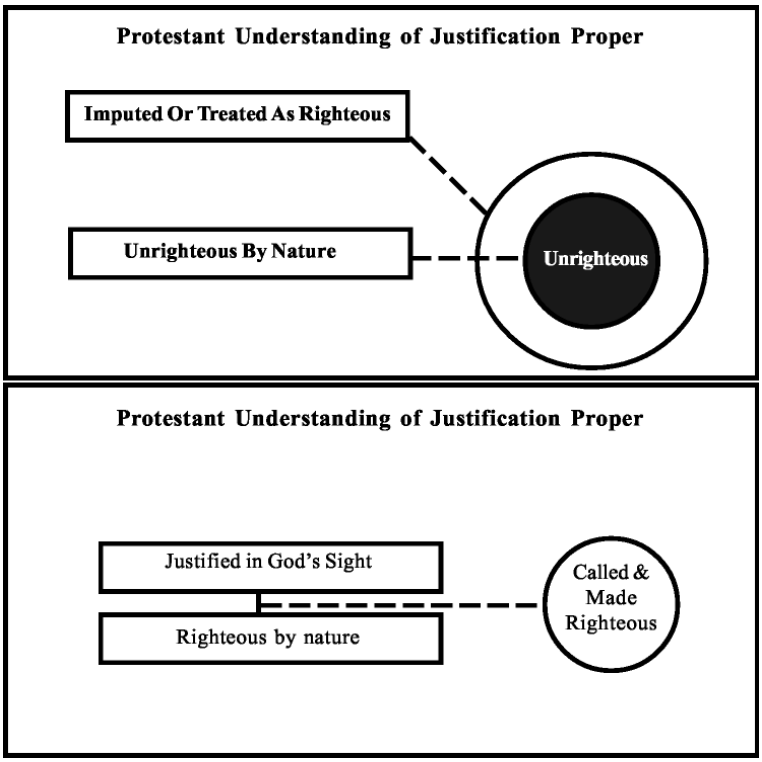
The impact of these very different understandings on the nature of justification directly affects the Catholics' and Protestants' views of what happens after one is justified.

Since justification affects a change in nature, justification is inextricably linked to sanctification (i.e. the process of being made holy). After initial justification, the justified person can deepen their union with Christ and grow in both justice and holiness through good works. The flipside to this is that through evil works we can weaken our union with Christ and become less righteous and holy. If the evil work falls into the category of a mortal sin, we can become unrighteous and unholy. The remedy to this status is the sacrament of Confession. The reconciliation made through Confession enables us to regain what we have lost through sin. It is not a "re-justification."

Generally for Protestants, there is a sharp distinction made between justification and sanctification. We are imputed to be righteous in justification. That status does not change. Once you are declared to be righteous on Christ's behalf, that status will remain. However, the process of being made holy is a separate case. We can become more or less holy in this life, but our change in holiness does not affect our justification.

It is usually said by Protestants that our sins destroy our fellowship with God. God may even be angry or displeased with us. However, one can never cease to be justified because this was done by Christ's death on the Cross and not by our works. If our works have no part in our being declared righteous, our works place no role in our losing our righteousness.

The logical conclusion to this line of thought is that once we are saved (justified), we are always justified no matter what we do. This is called the doctrine of Eternal Security or the Perseverance of the Saints. Although I run the risk of being repetitive, this is not universally held by all Protestants by any means. Some believe that it is possible for one to turn one's back on God and lose one's faith and their justification before God. Others hold on to something similar to the idea of mortal sin. The most common view held by Fundamentalists and many evangelicals is that good works must necessarily follow justification much like light and heat must be associated with the fire. If there is not light or heat, there is no fire. If one does not do good works then that person was never truly saved or justified. They only thought that they were saved. We will speak more to this later.



Preparatory Stage	Justification Proper	After Initial Justification
It is furthermore declared that in adults t**he beginning of that justification must proceed from the predisposing grace of God through Jesus Christ,** that is, from His vocation, whereby, **without any merits on their part,** they are called; that they who by sin had been cut off from God, may be disposed through His quickening and helping grace to convert themselves to their own justification by freely assenting to and cooperating with that grace; so that, while God touches the heart of man through the illumination of the Holy Ghost, **man himself neither does absolutely nothing while receiving that inspiration, since he can also reject it, nor yet is he able by his own free will and without the grace of God to move himself to justice in His sight.** (Trent, Session 6, chapter 5). "... [W]e are therefore said to be justified by faith, because faith is the beginning of human salvation, the foundation and root of all justification, without which it is impossible to please God and to come to the fellowship of His sons; and **we are therefore said to be justified gratuitously, because none of those things that precede justification, whether faith or works, merit the grace of justification.** For, if by grace, it is not now by works, otherwise, as the Apostle says, grace is no more grace (Trent, Session 6, chapter 8) Canon 1. If an**yone says that man can be justified before God by his own works, whether done by his own natural powers or through the teaching of the law, without divine grace through Jesus Christ, let him be anathema.**	For though no one can be just except he to whom the merits of the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ are communicated, yet this takes place in that justification of the sinner, when by the merit of the most holy passion, the charity of God is poured forth by the Holy Ghost in the hearts of those who are justified and inheres in them; whence man through Jesus Christ, in whom he is ingrafted, receives in that justification, together with the remission of sins, all these infused at the same time, namely, faith, hope and charity. For faith, unless hope and charity be added to it, neither unites man perfectly with Christ nor makes him a living member of His body. For which reason it is most truly said that faith without works is dead[40] and of no profit, and in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but faith that worketh by charity." (Trent, Session 6, chapter 7) "...[T]he single formal cause is the justice of God, not that by which He Himself is just, but that by which He makes us just, that, namely, with which we being endowed by Him, are renewed in the spirit of our mind, **and not only are we reputed but we are truly called and are just,** receiving justice within us, each one according to his own measure, which the Holy Ghost distributes to everyone as He wills, and according to each one's disposition and cooperation."(Trent, Session 6, chapter 7) "Thus, neither is our own justice established as our own from ourselves, nor is the justice of God ignored or repudiated, **for that justice which is called ours, because we are justified by its inherence in us, that same is [the justice] of God, because it is infused into us by God through the merit of Christ."**(Trent, Session 6, chapter16)	Having, therefore, been thus justified and made the friends and domestics of God, advancing from virtue to virtue, they are renewed, as the Apostle says, day by day, that is, mortifying the members of their flesh, and presenting them as instruments of justice unto sanctification, they, through the observance of the commandments of God and of the Church, faith cooperating with good works, increase in that justice received through the grace of Christ and are further justified, as it is written: He that is just, let him be justified still; [54] and, Be not afraid to be justified even to death; and again, Do you see that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only? This increase of justice holy Church asks for when she prays: "Give unto us, O Lord, an increase of faith, hope and charity." (Trent, Session 6, chapter 10). "For this is the crown of justice which after his fight and course the Apostle declared was laid up for him, to be rendered to him by the just judge, and not only to him, but also to all that love his coming. **For since Christ Jesus Himself, as the head into the members and the vine into the branches, continually infuses strength into those justified, which strength always precedes, accompanies and follows their good works, and without which they could not in any manner be pleasing and meritorious before God,** we must believe that nothing further is wanting to those justified to prevent them from being considered to have, by those very works which have been done in God, fully satisfied the divine law according to the state of this life and to have truly merited eternal life, to be obtained in its [due] time, provided they depart [this life] in grace ..."(Trent, Session 6, chapter 16)

-In Brief-

a) Justification is the process by which we are made "right" or "Just" by God. When we are justified, we become acceptable to God and become "heaven-worthy."

b) The process of Justification can be broken down into three stages (the preparatory, justification proper, and that which follows initial justification.

c) The Preparatory Stage – How a sinner (i.e. someone who still has Original Sin) is moved to become justified.

d) Protestants and Catholics agree that there is nothing that we can do that merits justification (in the preparatory stage). God's grace must come first.

e) Justification Proper – How does God make us acceptable to Him?

- Protestants believe we become acceptable to God (justified) by a legal decree of God. Christ's righteousness is "credited" to us (or imputed) to us. We do not become just, but when God looks at us He sees Christ's righteousness.

- Catholics believe that we are both call and made just by God. We receive a new nature in justification. We are both imputed and infused with Christ's righteousness.

f) After Initial Justification – Catholics believes that sins and good works affect our righteousness before God. There are a number of positions within Protestantism. Generally, Protestants believe that works done after Justification affect your sanctification (holiness) not your righteousness (because it is a legal decree).

How Protestants Use The Bible

Protestant / Catholic dialogues and debates from the beginning of the Reformation through to the 1980's were mostly like two ships passing in the night. The Protestant apologist would propose argument A. The Catholic would counter this argument by proposing another argument named B and so on and so on. In the end, neither side really gained an appreciation of their opponent's position and often times all the objections posed in these dialogues were never directly addressed.

During the mid to late 1980's the modern apologetic movement began. Some place it beginning with the book Catholicism and Fundamentalism by Karl Keating, but the real change occurred with the conversion of Dr. Scott Hahn. Hahn grew up in a nominally Protestant home. He eventually made his way to seminary and became a Protestant minister with a strong anti-Catholic bent. Even though he very much opposed the Catholic Church, Hahn's studies in Scripture began to uncover doctrines that really didn't fit into this faith. They were Catholic beliefs although he could not bring himself to admit it at the time. Finally through a long and difficult journey of study and discernment, Hahn came to the conviction that to refuse to enter the Catholic Church would be a refusal to accept what God has revealed in Scripture and so he became Catholic. Scott Hahn recorded his conversion story on audiotape and it was an enormous seller. But Hahn's first important contribution to the modern apologetic movement came via a tape set he made shortly after his conversion to Catholicism called, Answering Common Objections.

In this tape set, Hahn did something that was not present in any of the standard Catholic apologetic manuals. He was able to present the Catholic Faith using the same texts and similar arguments that he posed as a Protestant. In other words, instead of answering Protestant argument A with a counter argument B. Hahn took Argument A and showed that in many cases it not only didn't contradict the Catholic Faith, but it supported it. No longer did

Catholic and Protestant dialogues sail past each other as two ships in the night, but Hahn showed that one can actually board the other person's ship and take its helm. This section will attempt to direct you in how to do the same in regards to the topic of salvation and justification.

This section is not a comprehensive study on the subject. There are literally dozens of arguments that could have been included in this project. But this would only produce a much longer study and would likely bore even the most ardent apologist to tears. We will only explore one or two arguments that bring the discussion unto the opponent's home court. Before we do this, we must first understand how Protestants understand the Bible.

Let's begin by looking at a typical discussion on salvation between Peter Protestant and Carl Catholic.

Peter Protestant:

"Catholicism is wrong because it teaches that we are justified by works, but Scripture teaches in Romans 4:2-5 "For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS." Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness."

Carl Catholic:

"But justification requires us to do good works just as James asked his readers, 'What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?' (James 2:14). Likewise, later in the same letter James writes: 'You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone' (James 2:24). Clearly, justification includes good works."

Peter Protestant:

"Yes, but the bible teaches that salvation is by grace through faith (and continues by quoting other verses)."

What is going on in this classical dialogue? Why wasn't Carl the Catholic's argument sufficient to prove that justification involves good works? It may be that he was ignored. It is also possible that Peter Protestant was not familiar with those passages from James and didn't know how to respond. Chances are, however, that he did know them and they were not effective because Peter Protestant has already integrated James 2:14, 24 into his own personal theology in such a way so as to render them ineffective.

Just as Peter Protestant's argument was not effective with Carl Catholic because he already has a larger understanding or synthesis of the Scriptures so as to render Romans 4:2-5 to be perfectly Catholic. Peter Protestant has already integrated his understanding of James 2:14, 24 to be perfectly Protestant.

In many arguments there are primary and secondary obstacles. A person may have many objections to the Catholic Faith, but often there lies only one or two intellectual obstacles that are really key. We have a similar situation here. Peter and Carl's dialogue is not making headway because Carl is addressing only secondary texts and secondary arguments. He first needs to find out what is Peter's primary text or argument, address it and then all the secondary texts and arguments will fall into place.

Trump Verses

Pretend that you had just given your life to Christ at a Protestant crusade. You are given a free copy of the Bible to read and you were told that everything you need to know is found within its pages.

You were wondering what is baptism. So you flip open your bible and read Leviticus 2:11, "No grain offering, which you bring to the LORD, shall be made with leaven, for you shall not offer up in smoke any leaven or any honey as an offering by fire to the LORD." Well, that's not very helpful. Next, you flip open to the New Testament and scan the pages for the word baptism. You stop at 1 Corinthians 10:1-2, "For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea..." That's not very helpful either. You think to yourself, "Ok, maybe baptism can wait. What's important now is whether works play a role in justification." You flip through your bible and see Romans 4:2-5 where it speaks of justification not being involving works. Then you flip to the back of the New Testament and read James 2:14, 24 that justification is by works and not by faith alone. On the surface, these two passages appear to be contradictory. One seems to say that justification is not by works but by faith alone the other says that it is not by faith alone but by works. What is a poor Christian to do? To solve this problem, you need to determine which text should take precedence over the other texts, but how?

Look at the textbook in the box. Answer the following questions: Should Matthew 7:12 be used to interpret Romans 3:28 or should Matthew 7:12 be interpreted in light of what is said in Romans 3:28? Which text do you think should have the most authority and why?

Which Text Should Hold a Place of Primacy?

Matthew 7:12

[Jesus says] "In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets."

Romans 3:28

[St. Paul writes], "For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law."

Should Matthew 7:12 be used to interpret Romans 3:28 or should Matthew 7:12 be interpreted in light of what is said in Romans 3:28? Which text do you think should have the most authority and why?

I would suggest that if a Catholic and a Protestant were asked to choose between these two texts they would make different choices for different reasons. The Catholic would likely choose Matthew 7:12 over Romans 3:28. First, this passage was spoken by Jesus Himself who is an infinitely greater authority than St. Paul. Second, it is taken from the Gospels, which records the words and actions of Our Lord as opposed to the book of Romans, which was a letter. Third, Jesus says that "do unto others as you would have them do unto you" IS the Law and the Prophets (namely, all of scriptures). If Jesus' words are a summary of all of Scripture, would that fact alone suggest that we ought to interpret all of Scripture (including Romans 3:28) in light of Matthew 7:12? Protestants would disagree choosing Romans 3:28 as a primary text and this is why.

Protestants, whether knowingly or unknowingly, use a principle that is sometimes called "Scripture interprets Scripture." The Protestant Westminster Confession of Faith explains this principle very nicely. If a passage in Scripture does not seem clear or it is difficult to understand, one must interpret it by other passages in Scripture that speak most clearly about that issue. Moreover, those passages which treat the most important subjects (e.g. Justification, salvation, et al) should be used to interpret secondary issues (e.g. works, sacraments, worship, et al). Therefore, since Romans 3:28 speaks more clearly about the most important issue of how we are justified Paul's words actually takes precedence over Jesus' words or put another way, Romans 3:28 trumps Matthew 7:14. For the same reasons, Romans 4:2-5 trumps James 2:14, 24.

Catholics may be scratching their heads. How could one verse be more clear than the other verse? Paul is just as clear in his teaching in Romans 4:2-5 as James was in his? Moreover, both writers are considering the same topic. How can someone give the nod to one to interpret the other? The answer is that there is at root a kind of self-deception.

Let's roll the tape back to our hypothetical scenario when you had just been saved at a Protestant crusade. Since salvation comes through hearing, how did you first hear the gospel? It was preached to you by the person heading the crusade. Which verses did he use? How did he use them? Not only were you hearing "the word of God," but you were also hearing the "word of God" within a particular interpretative scheme. Certain verses or passages were being held out to you as primary, while others were used only secondarily or not at all.

If you flip open your brand new bible, what would you find on the back of the front cover? Most likely it will be a helpful list of where to find passages that address certain topics. Chances are if you flipped to salvation or justification you will definitely find Romans 4:2-5 and Romans 3:28, but not James 2:14-24 or Matthew 7:14.

When you follow the advice of the people at the crusade and join a "bible-believing church" what will you hear? The same passages will be emphasized and the same trump verses will be used to interpret the other parts of the Bible.

In other words, the real reason why certain passages are given a primacy over other passages is because of Protestant tradition. It is an interpretative legacy that has been handed down from Martin Luther to the present. This interpretative legacy is rarely acknowledged by Protestants themselves. As we will see in the next chapter on Sola Scriptura, the very idea of an authoritative interpretative tradition is explicitly denied by the doctrine of Sola Scriptura. Nevertheless, it exists.

It has been my experience that the one verse in Scripture ranks highest among the interpretative hierarchy of passages in the New Testament and therefore speaks most clearly on the most important subject of Scripture (salvation) is Ephesians 2:8-9, which reads: "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." Ephesians 2:8-9 is probably the "ace of spades" among all New Testament passages and it is the interpretative lens through which all passages of Scripture is ultimately understood. A close second would likely be either Romans 3:28 or Romans 4:2-5, which were quoted earlier.

Protestant Westminster Confession of Faith
Chapter 1 - On Holy Scripture

VII. All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all; yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed, for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them.

IX. The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture, is the Scripture itself; and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it may be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly.

Why Classical Catholic Apologetics Fail.

Given this idea of trump verses and a hierarchical interpretative scheme, it is not difficult to see why Carl Catholic's appeal to James 2:14 and 24 was ineffective against Peter Protestant's appeal to Romans 4:2ff. Since Romans 4:2-5 (and especially Ephesians 2:8-9) "most clearly" rules out any possibility of works justifying a person, James 2:14 and 24 must certainly be speaking about another "kind" of justification and a different "kind" of Faith is being addressed by James that differs from Paul. As Martin Luther explained:

"...Insist on it, then, that inwardly, in the spirit, before God, man is justified through faith alone, without all works but outwardly and publicly, before the people and himself, he is justified through works, that is, he thereby becomes known and certain himself that he honestly believes and is Pious. Therefore you may call the one a **public justification**, and the other an **inward justification**, but in this sense that the public justification is only a fruit, a result, and a proof of the justification in the heart. Accordingly, man is not justified by it before God but must previously be justified before Him. Just so you may call the fruits of the tree the obvious goodness of the tree, which follows and proves its inner, natural goodness.

"This is what St. James means in his Epistle when he says (2:26): 'Faith without works is dead,' that is, the fact that works do not follow is a certain sign that there is no faith, but a dead thought and dream, which people falsely call faith." -(What Luther Says, vol.3, pp.1231, 1232, emphasis mine).

But this merely sidesteps the issue. James teaches that a man is justified by works and faith. This, for Luther, flatly contradicted Paul. Therefore, Luther called into question whether James was apostolic and canonical Scripture (see the textbox in the next page). James is subordinated to Romans (and other passages) either by changing what is being talked about or by denying its canonical weight.

No matter what traditional proof text Carl Catholic brought up, it would have been trumped by Peter.

Peter Protestant:

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves , it is the gift of God, not the result of works so that one may boast (Ephesians 2:8-9)."

Carl Catholic:

"Yes, but what about James 2:24 that states we are justified by works and not by faith alone?"

Peter Protestant:

"Salvation is "not of works lest any man boast" (Ephesians 2:9).

Carl Catholic:

"But Christ says that if you wish to inherit eternal life you must keep the Commandments. (Matthew 19:16-17)."

Peter Protestant:

"If you keep the Commandments it is only because you have been saved by faith. Otherwise, it is by works" (Ephesians 2:9).

Carl Catholic:

"But Jesus says, 'He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.' Here He is talking about the Eucharist."

Peter Protestant:

"No He isn't. Eating His flesh must mean believing in Christ since it is not of works lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Carl Catholic:

"But Scripture says that 'baptism now saves you' (Peter 3:21)."

Peter Protestant:

"Baptism is a work and it cannot save. Only faith saves (Ephesians 2:8-9). Therefore, 1 Peter is really speaking about everything that baptism represents namely coming to faith in Christ and being born again."

See how easy it is to subordinate and interpret these common passages to the objector's interpretation of Ephesians 2:8-9. Anything that suggests an action or sacrament that is necessary for salvation is automatically reinterpreted to mean that it is speaking of faith or something that represents saving faith.

"But this James does nothing more than drive to the Law and to its works . . . in direct opposition to St. Paul and all the rest of the bible, it ascribes justification to works . . . This defect proves that the epistle is not of Apostolic provenance . . . In sum he [James] wished to guard against those who depended on faith without going to works, but he had neither the spirit nor the thought nor the eloquence equal to the task. He does violence to scripture and so contradicts Paul and all of scripture. He tries to accomplish by emphasizing law what the Apostles bring about by attracting men to love. I therefore refuse him a place among the writers of the true canon of my Bible."

Martin Luther, quoted in John Dillenberger, John Calvin's Intro to the New Testament.

-In Brief-

a) The Bible is a description of the contents of Faith, but it is not in a format that allows us to use it as a catechism.

b) “Scripture interprets Scripture” is a Protestant axiom that means that the less clear passages of Scripture are explained by the clearer passages.

c) All Scripture, therefore, is not equal for Protestants. Some Scriptures “trump” other Scriptures (due to the axiom of “Scripture interprets Scripture.”

d) The “trump” verses are usually the ones that were used to evangelize the person. They are interpreted to reflect Protestant theology and all Scripture that is contrary to this interpretation is harmonized.

e) Effective Catholic apologetics must address the trump verses first and than bring in other texts

The Catholic Gospel: Ephesians 2:8-10

Now that we have laid the foundation it's time to put all that we have learned into action and formulate an apology.

In this section, we will examine how a Catholic can make a simple and concise explanation of justification using one of the most important and frequently cited proof texts used by Protestants - Ephesians 2:8-10.

Occasionally, I'm called upon to help lend a hand with other apologists. On one occasion, I was invited to join a group of Protestants and Catholics who met together to discuss doctrinal differences between the two religions. The original discussion group started off small. But the Catholics who were involved were not typical Catholics. They knew apologetics and they knew it well. Each meeting, more and more Protestants were being asked to join in. Apparently, my friends were proving to be more of a challenge than they had originally thought. On one occasion, the spokesman for the Protestant side brought in a ringer from his Church. This gentleman was a hardcore Calvinist who knew the Bible very well. In turn, the Catholic side asked me to join.

At our first meeting, I sat and listened to the discussion to see how this dialogue worked. Unfortunately, much of what was said pretty much ran along the line of a classical apologetic dialogue. Even worse, the discussion did not stay on topic, but went all over the map. At the end, I asked the group if they would be willing to have a person from their side make a presentation on how they understand a person is to be saved and that we would make a presentation as well. By doing this, I explained, both of us will know what each other believes and we can then base our discussions on the presentation and not what we think the other side believes. This suggestion went well with the group. Since it was my suggestion, I was elected to give the Catholic presentation of how we are saved.

When the next week rolled around, I noticed that there were a few more people in the group than the last meeting. It turns out that some of the anti-Catholic leaders invited some Catholic girls that they've been "witnessing to" about the Church and they wanted them to hear from the horse's mouth that we believe in a "work righteous" view of salvation. I was elected to speak first.

I opened my statement with the following words: "Tonight, I would like to explain how Catholics understand justification and salvation. At first, I was thinking of reading a section of the Council of Trent which met to explain this doctrine in detail but it occurred to me that since Catholic doctrine is biblically based, it would be best to explain it using one

of the most clear and powerful passages of the Catholic gospel in Scripture - Ephesians 2:8-10."

The anti-Catholics were stunned. They all knew Ephesians 2:8-9 by heart and for them it was the clearest and most powerful proof text *against* the Catholic Church. I'm going to present it as the Catholic gospel?

I then proceeded to explain, step by step, how Ephesians 2:8-10 mirrors the thoughts of Trent and how it explains the true role of "works' in justification. After the presentation, there was silence. No one moved. The leader of the anti-Catholic side requested that we take a five minute break before he presents his side. During that break, the leader's demeanor turned from stunned silence to panic. He came up to me and said "I can't believe you used Ephesians 2:8-10! That's a Protestant verse!" Apparently, this person was going to make this passage in Ephesians the cornerstone of his case against the Catholic Church. Needless to say, the fence-sitting girls that they invited to hear a Catholic explain "work righteousness" didn't get what they had hoped.

> "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 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."
>
> Ephesians 2:8-10

This is why I recommend, if you want your dialogues to be effective, to begin by addressing Ephesians 2:8-10 first and use all the secondary arguments. Not only for tactical reasons, in that you use your opponent's arguments against them, but rather because this passage is incredibly lucid and understandable to explain justification. On top of that, it is also a text that your non-Catholic objector will most likely know by heart (with the possible exception of verse 10).

Remember how we broke justification down into chronological order with the Preparatory Stage, Justification Proper and Post Initial Justification. The same can be done here with this passage.

Preparatory Stage - Ephesians 2:8-9

During our chronological overview, we mentioned that the first stage of Justification was the Preparatory time. This was when a sinner is moved by God's grace to come to faith and thus begins the process of Justification. During this stage, we emphasized two aspects: 1) that Faith is the beginning of salvation and the foundation and root of all justification and 2) That it is a gift from God.

The texts that we highlighted were:

"[W]e are therefore said to be justified gratuitously, because none of those things **that precede justification,** whether faith or works, merit the grace of justification." (Trent, Session 6, chapter 8).

And also the following: "If anyone says that man can be justified before God by his own works, whether done by his own natural powers or through the teaching of the law, **without divine grace** through Jesus Christ, let him be anathema."
(Trent, Session 6, canon 1).

The question is whether in Ephesians 2:8-9 is speaking of good works done prior or after justification. Clearly, Ephesians is speaking (at least in these two verses) of those things done prior to justification since it says, "For by grace you **have been saved** [past tense] through faith..." The works that Paul condemns in this passage are those things that precede justification, which is precisely Trent had decreed: Justification is begun by God giving us predisposing grace to come to Faith. It is not a product of our work (or even our faith), but rather it is wholy from God.

Justification Proper - Ephesians 2:10a

The second stage is Justification Proper. It explains how we are justified and saved. You may recall that Protestants and Catholics hold two views. Protestants see our justification before God as merely the product of a legal decree: God calls us righteous. Christ's righteousness is imputed to us by God, but there is no change in our nature. That takes place during sanctification. The Catholic position is that we are both called and are made righteous by God. Not only are we reputed to be righteous, but we are made righteous. We partake of the divine nature and we are regenerated in justification.

When you look at the first half of Ephesians 2:10, you find the following description of how we have been saved:

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus..."

	Preparatory Stage	Initial Justification	After Initial Justification
Ephesians	(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."	(Eph. 2:10a) "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus…"	(Eph. 2:10b) "…which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."
Explanation	Nothing done prior to initial justification can merit the grace of justification	We are created anew in Christ when we are saved (justified)	Good works are necessary after justification, but it is possible that we may not walk in them.

The use of the word "for" (Greek: gar) links verse 10 with what is said in the prior two verses. It is by grace that we are made the handiwork of God. We are created (or recreated) in Christ Jesus. Notice that Paul does not say, "we have been declared righteous in Christ." Rather, we are said to be a new creation in Christ. This sounds suspiciously like infused righteousness and not mere imputed righteousness.

After Initial Justification

After we have been saved through grace and faith by being made a new creation, what then?

According to your summary earlier, Catholics and Protestants differ most of all in this post initial justification phase. Catholics believe that justification (being made right with God) and sanctification (being made holy) is one in the same thing. Therefore, we need to grow in grace, holiness and justice for the rest of our lives. We also noted that it is possible for us refuse God's grace and cease to be holy and just. For Protestants (again this is a generalization), justification is done. The only thing left is our sanctification which is associated with but not linked to our justification.

Ephesians 2:10:

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."

Notice that God has saved us by his grace through faith by making us new creations in Christ **for good works,** God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. For good works? Didn't Paul state that are were not saved by works "so that no one will boast?"

The distinction that Paul must be making is a chronological one. Those works that were performed prior to justification are ruled out "so that no one will boast." However, those works performed after we have been saved and recreated are good and we ought to walk in them.

The Pelagians and Antinomians

Catholics and Protestants both make two big mistakes in understanding each other. Protestants believe that Catholics are Pelagians. Pelagianism is an ancient heresy that taught that we do not need grace to be saved. We were not born so much into the state of Original Sin as to a bad example. Therefore, if we motivate ourselves to do good works we can justify ourselves.

Catholics, on the other hand, assume that all Protestants believe that good works aren't necessary for the Christian and that Protestantism teaches that a justified saint can go on sinning with impunity. This view is called Antinomianism. It comes from two Greek works *anti* which means "against" and *nomos* which means "law."

In the Catholics' defense, antinomianism is the ultimate logical end of Protestant theology. However, in the Protestant defense, most Protestants reject this extreme view. Good works are commanded by God and it is necessary (in the sense that good works are the fruit of a truly saved person) to be done. Likewise, evil works are to be avoided.

Because of these two common errors, Catholics and Protestants will go round and round in circles during dialogues in regards to the nature of works. The Catholic apologist may even be led to believe that his objector is speaking out of two sides of his mouth. When it comes to any Scripture that speaks of the necessity of good works, the Protestant will object because he or she

assumes that the Catholic is being a Pelagian. But when the Catholic accuses the Protestant of being an Antinomian, the Protestant is quick to underscore the necessity of good works.

I have found that using Ephesians 2:8-10 to explain in a chronological manner justification help clear up a lot of these misunderstandings. It you do it carefully enough, you and your Protestant friend will be able to agree that prior to justification good works are negated while after justification good works are commanded.

Once this meeting of the minds has occurred, it is important to first address the question of what type of works (prior to justification or after) are meant whenever a passage is brought up. The results are often very enlightening.

For example, let's now introduce James 2:24, "See that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone."

Protestants will interpret this passage to mean that good works manifest that a man is justified, not that the works themselves affect our justification. "If someone is truly justified," Protestants typically argue, "then the saved person must do good works. It is impossible for them not to."

Ephesians 3:10 speaks differently. The good works that are preformed after justification "may" or "may not" occur. If Paul wished to show a strict necessity between true saving faith and works, he should have used the indicative case since it speaks of thing that will occur. Here again, we have an instance in this passage that mirrors much closer the Catholic position on works done after justification than the Protestants.

The textbox to the right is a section from a standard biblical reference work by John Gill. In it, he explains how James 2:24 does not teach that we are justified by our works instead of faith alone. Read this section and based on our apology, answer the following questions.

1) Does John Gill's explanation as to why works cannot justify pertain to the Preparatory stage of Justification, Justification Proper or After Initial Justification?

2) When James 2:24 speaks of works, which stage of justification is he referring to?

3) Why does John Gill need to redefine terms in James?

John Gill's Exposition of the Bible

"James 2:24

Ye see then how that by works a man is justified…

Not as causes procuring his justification, but as effects declaring it; for the best works are imperfect, and cannot be a righteousness justifying in the sight of God, and are unprofitable in this respect; for when they are performed in the best manner, they are no other than what it is a man's duty to perform, and therefore cannot justify from sin he has committed: and besides, justification in this sense would frustrate the grace of God, make void the death of Christ, and encourage boasting in men. Good works do not go before justification as causes or conditions, but follow it as fruits and effects:

and not by faith only: or as without works, or a mere historical faith, which being without works is dead, of which the apostle is speaking; and therefore can bear no testimony to a man's justification; hence it appears, that the Apostle James does not contradict the Apostle Paul in (Romans 3:28) since they speak not of the same sort of faith; the one speaks of a mere profession of faith, a dead and lifeless one; the other of a true faith, which has Christ, and his righteousness, for its object, and works by love, and produces peace, joy, and comfort in the soul. Moreover, the Apostle Paul speaks of justification before God; and James speaks of it as it is known by its fruits unto men; the one speaks of a justification of their persons, in the sight of God; the other of the justification and approbation of their cause, their conduct, and their faith before men..."

-In Brief-

a) Protestants consider Eph. 2:8-9 as one of the clearest explanations of justification and also a verse that flatly contradicts Catholicism.

b) Catholic apologist ought to have Eph. 2:8-10 memorized.

c) "By grace you *have been saved* through faith and this is not of yourself it is a gift from God" refers to the preparatory stage.

d) "For we are God's handiwork created in Christ Jesus" refers to Justification Proper.

e) "…for the good works that God has prepared before hand" refers to After Initial Justification.

f) "…that we *may* walk in them" shows good works do not *necessarily* follow true Justification.

The Tale of Two Branches

In the textboxes to the right, there are five passages from Scripture: Romans 2:5-9; Revelation 20:12-13; Matthew 7:21-27; Matthew 25:14:30 and Matthew 25:31-46. Read all five passages and answer the following questions:

1) What venue or event do all the of these passage touch on?

---

2) What action occurs in every passage?

---

3) Upon what basis does one inherit Eternal Life?

---

4) Upon what basis does one become damned?

---

5) Does this action apply to all of humanity or only a select few?

Romans 2:5-9

But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek..."

Revelation 20:12-13

And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds.

Matthew 7:21-27

“Not everyone who says to Me, `Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.” Many will say to Me on that day, `Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' "And then I will declare to them, `I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.' "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock.”And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. "Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.”The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell--and great was its fall."

Matthew 25:14-30

For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them. "To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey. "Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents. "In the same manner the one who had received the two talents gained two more. "But he who received the one talent went away, and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. “The one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, `Master, you entrusted five talents to me. See, I have gained five more talents.' “His master said to him, `Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' "Also the one who had received the two talents came ` up and said, `Master, you entrusted two talents to me. See, I have gained two more talents.' "His master said to him, `Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, `Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed. ‘And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.' "But his master answered and said to him, `You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no seed. `Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. ‘Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.' "For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away.” Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Matthew 25:31-46

"But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne.” All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. "Then the King will say to those on His right, `Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. `For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.' "Then the righteous will answer Him, `Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? `And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, clothe You? `When did we see You sick, or in prison, come to You?' "The King will answer and say to them, `Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.' "Then He will also say to those on His left, `Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.' "Then they themselves also will answer, `Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?' "Then He will answer them, `Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' "These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

Justification: A One Time Event Or A Process?

Back on the previous pages, we produced a chart comparing how Catholics and Protestants differ in their views of justification. For Catholics, justification is a process that begins with grace and faith that works through love. For Protestants justification is a change in status and it is therefore a one time event. What continues on is our sanctification. Our justification is finished.

This idea of a one time event raises a difficulty with the sacred text. Earlier we read five passages that depict the General Judgment, when God will come to judge the living and the dead. However, upon what basis are we to be judged? Did the Just Judge look to see if someone placed their trust in Jesus? Did they escape wrath because they had Christ's righteousness imputed to them? No. God will render to everyone according to their deeds. In other words, it is upon the basis of our works that determine whether we will go to Heaven or we will go to Hell.

Let's step out of our Catholic apologetic shoes and consider how we, if we were Protestant, would find a solution to this problem. As Protestants, we believe that we are saved and justified once for all when we come to faith in Christ. At the same time we know in Scripture that only those who do good deeds (that is good works) will enter into Heaven.

Answer the following questions:

If you were a Protestant how would you connect these two points together so that everyone who is justified will make it to Heaven? What type of connection must be made between Justification by Faith alone and the works that get us into Heaven?

Typically, Protestants will solve this problem by proposing something that on the surface sounds very Catholic, but differs from the Catholic position in a significant way.

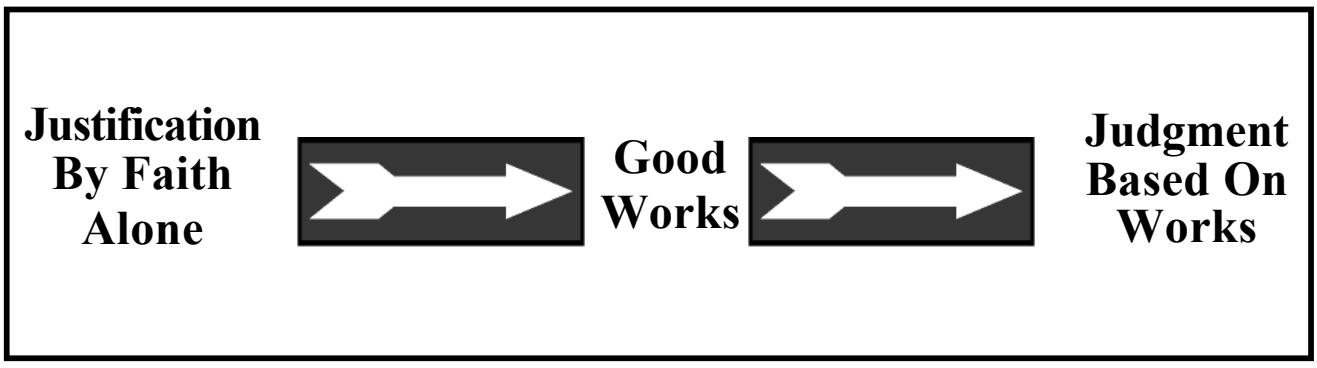
Protestants generally will say that the type of faith that alone justifies must be a "living faith" that is one that produces works. The common phrase that is used to describe this is: "We are justified by faith alone, but not faith that is alone." Put another way, we are justified by Faith Alone, but if that faith is truly justifying it **must necessarily** produce good works. Otherwise, it wouldn't be the type of faith that justifies.

This sounds very Catholic in one sense because the Faith by which we begin our justification involves the submission of intellect and will or as we mentioned earlier the "obedience of faith." Therefore, both faith and faithfulness runs through the process of justification.

The Protestant position given above differs in that it places faith and obedience into a strict cause and effect relationship. True justifying faith **necessarily causes** good works. The result is that everyone who is truly justified must necessarily produce good works which in turn provide the basis by which we go to Heaven.

Problems with Scripture

Again, this is another example of where classic Catholic apologetics fails. If Catholic apologetic manuals treat this subject at all they would do so through antidotal evidence or posing a hypothetical situation. Protestants come to their conclusion that good works must necessarily follow true justifying faith through a posteriori reasoning; namely they reason backwards to show that good works are necessary for salvation because of the quality of saving faith. Therefore, whatever antidotal evidence or hypothetical situation that is posed to them, they are forced to conclude that that person could not have been *truly* saved to begin with even though they have no cooperative evidence (outside the presence of mortal sins) that such is the case.



The only way, in my opinion, to breach this type of reasoning is to present biblical examples that illustrate two points:

1) That a person is in fact saved or justified.

2) That that same person ceased to follow after holiness and he or she was damned.

Both of these points must be present and explicitly stated by you when your presenting this apology. If you can show in the Bible even one example of someone who is *truly* saved and through the failure to produce good works was *truly* damned then the Protestant position falls apart. But where do you go?

Adam and Eve

One place you may go is to the beginning of Genesis with Adam and Eve. They both were created in fellowship with God, but they sinned and fell. They were kicked out of Paradise and no longer lived in happiness. God promised that they would be redeemed by Jesus. However, if this wasn't promised would Adam and Eve have gone to Heaven?
The difficulty with this apology is that most people see Adam and Eve as a special case. Moreover, the argument fails to prove our second point: that Adam and Eve were damned. Actually, most Protestants would never accept that possibility even as a hypothetical proposition.

King David

A second good test case is King David. David had faith in God. Indeed, in 1 Samuel 13:14 he is called a man after God's own heart. He was filled with the holy spirit and anointed by God to be the King of Israel (1 Samuel 16:13).

However, David sinned against the Lord in a most grievous way: He committed adultery with Bathsheba the Hittite and murdered her husband (2 Samuel 11:1-5 and 2 Samuel 11:25-27 respectively).

After David had sinned and was confronted by Nathan the prophet of God's punishment, David repented. Psalm 51 is the product of his repentance which he penned after this occasion. Psalm 51:11-12 is of particular importance to your discussion:

"Do not cast me away from Your presence And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation And sustain me with a willing spirit."

What in this verse suggests that David was truly saved?

What in these verses suggest that David stood to lose his salvation?

The example of David is little more difficult to brush aside. Both the narrative of First and Second Samuel strongly suggest that he was truly saved. Also, the words of Psalm 51 not only affirm this belief but also show that David felt he was in danger of losing his salvation.

The difficulty of this scenario is that (given the

Sample Dialogue:

Read the dialogue and answer the following questions:

Cathy Catholic: "Peter, I have a question about your doctrine of salvation by faith alone. Let's say that there is a pastor who was "born again at the age of fourteen. Lived a life of holiness. He got married and formed a church where he was able to bring others to salvation. Then, one day he committed adultery, murdered his wife and committed suicide laughing with glee. Did that pastor go to Heaven?"

Peter Protestant: "Of course, not."

Cathy Catholic: "But he was justified by faith alone? How could he be damned?

Peter Protestant: "Obviously, this pastor was not truly saved. If he was, he would never have done those things"

Cathy Catholic: "Yet, this pastor was 'born again.' He was baptized and he lived a life that showed the fruit of a true conversion. How can you say he wasn't saved?"

Peter Protestant: "He must have thought he was saved and maybe he was able to fool others into thinking it was so, but he couldn't have been *truly* saved because no one who would have come to saving faith would have done such things."

What prevented Peter Protestant from accepting Cathy Catholic's argument? Why didn't Cathy's antidotal evidence work? What could Cathy have done to make her argument more persuasive?

fact that the Protestant position is based on a posteriori reasoning) your objector will simply say that David was ultimately not damned to Hell because God was able to make an opportunity for David to repent.

Although this is an answer, it is not a very good answer because the words of David in Psalm 51 strongly suggest that there was a change in status. David would not have begged God not to take his spirit from him if he didn't believe that such a thing was possible.

St. Paul

Our last test case will be St. Paul. No Protestant worth their salt would ever deny that St. Paul was a "born again" Christian. This aspect of the argument needs no substantiation.

Even though St. Paul was truly saved and justified by Faith, he still was fearful that if he didn't continue to grow in grace and avoid sin he would be condemned by God.

Ezekiel 18:21-24
Turning From Your Righteousness

"But if the wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed and observes all My statutes and practices justice and righteousness, he shall surely live; he shall not die. All his transgressions which he has committed will not be remembered against him; because of his righteousness which he has practiced, he will live. "I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked," declares the Lord GOD, "rather than that he should turn from his ways and live? But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness, commits iniquity and does according to all the abominations that a wicked man does, will he live? All his righteous deeds which he has done will not be remembered for his treachery which he has committed and his sin which he has committed; for them he will die."

The proof text for this is 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, which reads:

> "Do you not know that the runners in the stadium all run in the race, but only one wins the prize? Run so as to win. Every athlete exercises discipline in every way. They do it to win a perishable crown, but we an imperishable one. Thus I do not run aimlessly; I do not fight as if I were shadowboxing. No, I drive my body and train it, for fear that, after having preached to others, I myself should be disqualified."

The word that St. Paul uses in verse 27 that is translated "disqualified" is the Greek word *adokimos*. *Adokimos* means disqualified, worthless, rejected. It is commonly used for those people who are not going to inherit Eternal Life. Paul, himself, uses this same Greek word in this manner in 2 Corinthians 13:5,

> "Examine yourselves to see whether you are living in faith. Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless, of course, you fail the test."

This is probably the strongest antidotal evidence against unconditional salvation. St. Paul was justified, yet he understood that there was a real chance that he could be rejected by God by turning from this righteousness (see textbox on Ezekiel 18:21-24).

The common response to this argument (if there is a response) is that this fear of Paul's was not founded because God provided him with the grace not to be rejected. After all, both Catholics and Protestants believe Paul to be in Heaven hence we call him *Saint* Paul.

The problem with antidotal evidence or test cases of this kind is that it always allows the possibility that one or both of the two main points may or may not be certain. For this reason, one's primary arguments should not be antidotal, but come from Our Lord's parables. Parables? Why?

Since parables spell out the status of their characters and their final outcomes, there is no need for guess work whether these things are so. For example, let's look at the parable of the "sowing of the seed" found in Luke 8:5-8:

> "A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path and was trampled, and the birds of the sky ate it up. Some seeds fell on rocky ground, and when it grew, it withered for lack of moisture. Some seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew with it and choked it. And some seeds fell on good soil, and when it grew, it produced fruit a hundredfold."

We are not permitted to speculate on the details of this parable since it is not using actual real life characters; rather it is laying out a rule or principle. We cannot speculate whether the birds eat the seed

or whether he carried them somewhere else to be planted. The author of the parable (Jesus) has the right to dictate what did and did not happen in this hypothetical case. If such a speculation would be possible than Jesus' point that the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts that they may not believe and be saved (Luke 5:12). If our arguments are going to be placed above any possible speculation, they ought to be grounded within a parable.

Are there any parables that could be of use for our purposes? Yes, the "sowing of the seed" parable is a good one, but it lacks clarity for our discussion. Jesus interprets this parable as:

> "Those on the path are the ones who have heard, but the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts that they may not believe and be saved. Those on rocky ground are the ones who, **when they hear, receive the word with joy, but they have no root; they believe only for a time and fall away in time of trial.** As for the seed that fell among thorns,**they are the ones who have heard, but as they go along, they are choked by the anxieties and riches and pleasures of life, and they fail to produce mature fruit.** But as for the seed that fell on rich soil, they are the ones who, when they have heard the word, embrace it with a generous and good heart, and bear fruit through perseverance."

The Vine and the Branches
John 15:1-6

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."

The difficulty of this text is that it is not certain whether those who fell away during the time of trial are damned or whether those plants that are choked by the thorns are damned as well. The former seems likely and the latter seems less likely. The problem is that is no certain evidence in this parable.

A stronger case can be made with the parable of the "unfaithful servant."

"Who then is the faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge of his servants, to give them their rations at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. Truly I say to you, that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But if that slave says in his heart, 'My master will be a long time in coming,' and begins to beat the slaves, *both* men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk; the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect *him,* and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and assign him a place with the unbelievers"

(Luke 12:42-46).

Notice that the servant starts out as "faithful and wise." This is not a description of someone who is an unbeliever. But he abuses those in whom he was placed in charge and when the Master comes back he will "cut him in pieces, and **assign him a place with the unbelievers."**

It seems clear that being cut to pieces and assigning him a place with the unbelievers speaks of damnation. It seems clear that there is a change in status from being 'faithful and wise" to being "assigned a place with the unbelievers" based on evil works.

There is also the parable of the "unmerciful servant" in Matthew 18:21-35. Peter had asked, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a certain king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves."

This parable shows that there was a servant who owed ten thousand talents, which was an incredible amount of money that could not be paid back. When the king demanded payment, the servant fell to his knees and begged for more time. "And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt." This corresponds to when we are justified, our sins or

debts are completely wiped away. "But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized him and began to choke him, saying, 'Pay back what you owe.' When the King heard of this he summoned the servant and said, 'You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you entreated me. 'Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, even as I had mercy on you?' "And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. So shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart."

The King forgiving his servant's debt certainly corresponds to the Christian being forgiven when they are justified. Point1: That someone is truly saved can be established with some certainty since unbelievers do not have their debt forgiven by God. Point 2 is less certain. Unlike the parable of the "unfaithful servant," this parable does not assign the unmerciful servant to the place of the unbeliever, rather he is beaten until the whole debt can be paid back. But can this debt ever be paid? Does this parable relate to Hell or to Purgatory? One point is clear in this parable, it applies to all Christians since Jesus states in verse 35, "So shall My Heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart."

For my money the best proof text to show that someone can be truly saved and if they do not continue in holiness they will be damned is the parable of the "vine and the branches."

The parable goes like this: Jesus is the vine and we are the branches. Every branch that abides in the vine (who is Christ) will bear fruit and God will prune that branch so that the fruit will be abundant. Every branch that does not abide in the vine (who is Christ) will be cut off, gathered together and burned.

Point 1 - Are the branches truly justified Christians?

There are several pointers in this passage that indicate that they are. If you were to do a word study in the New Testament concerning the meaning of being "in Christ" you would find that this speaks only of justified believers and not unrighteous non-believers. For example:

Romans 6:7 - "Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God **in Christ Jesus."**

Romans 8:1 - "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are **in Christ Jesus."**

1 Cor. 1:30 - "But by His doing **you are in Christ Jesus,** who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption."

2 Cor. 5:17 - "Therefore *if any man is in Christ, he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. "

Gal. 5:6 - "For **in Christ Jesus** neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love."

Eph. 2:4-6 - "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ by grace you have been saved, and raised us up with Him, and seated

John Calvin
Commentary on the Gospel of John

John 15:2. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit. As some men corrupt the grace of God, others suppress it maliciously, and others choke it by carelessness, Christ intends by these words to awaken anxious inquiry, by declaring that all the branches which shall be unfruitful will be cut off from the vine. But here comes a question. Can any one who is engrafted into Christ be without fruit? I answer, many are supposed to be in the vine, according to the opinion of men, who actually have no root in the vine.

John 15:6. If any one abide not in me. He again lays before them the punishment of ingratitude, and, by doing so, excites and urges them to perseverance. It is indeed the gift of God, but the exhortation to fear is not uncalled for, lest our flesh, through too great indulgence, should root us out.

He is cast out, and withered, like a branch. Those who are cut off from Christ are said to whither like a dead branch; because, as the commencement of strength is from him, so also is its uninterrupted continuance. Not that it ever happens that any one of the elect is dried up, but because there are many hypocrites who, in outward appearance, flourish and are green for a time, but who afterwards, when they ought to yield fruit, show the very opposite of that which the Lord expects and demands from his people.

us with Him in the heavenly *places,* **in Christ Jesus.** "

Eph. 2:10 "For we are His workmanship, created **in Christ Jesus** for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

You will find similar results if you do a word study of the phrase "in Me" in the Gospel of John. Everyone who is in Christ is a justified Christian. Most Protestant apologists won't deny this.

Point 2 - Those who are "in Christ" can cease to abide in Christ and be damned.

John 15:6 states as much. Those branches that do not remain or abide in Christ the vine will not bear fruit and will be cut off and burned in the fire.

The only response that denied this interpretation comes from the commentary of an old time Baptist preacher named J. Vernon McGee that said it was not referring to Hell, but something similar to the purifying fire mentioned in 1 Cor. 3:11-15.

> "For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames."

How would you answer J Vernon McGee's argument?

How does what is being said in John 15:6 differ from what is being said in 1 Cor. 3:11-15?

How Does John 15:1-6 Disprove The Notion That Good Works Must Necessarily Follow True Justification?

If being "in Christ" (i.e. the branch abiding in the vine) is a truly justified person, which I believe would be difficult if not impossible to disprove, and good works (i.e. fruit) must necessarily follow those who are truly justified, then every branch in this parable ought to be bearing fruit.

However, there are two types of branches that are "in the vine" - those which bear fruit and those that do not. Both are "in the vine," but both do not have the same results.

This parable teaches that there can be truly justified and saved persons who cease to follow Christ (i.e. abide in the vine) and if they continue in this path they will be cut off from Christ and be damned.

If the argument from this passage is set up properly, there is no response that can be given that doesn't end up mangling the text.

Take for example this common response:

"Well, when Jesus says that the branches "do not abide [remain] in the vine, He is really saying that they never were 'in the vine' to begin with."

How would you respond?

John Calvin takes another tact. Re-read the passage from John 15:1-6 and read the Protestant Reformer John Calvin's take on the two most important verses of this passage.

Answer the following questions:

From what perspective is the parable of the vine taken from? Is it from the perspective of the vine (Christ) or the branches (Christians) or from the fruit (the good works)?

From what perspective is John Calvin's interpretation taken from?

-In Brief-

a) Ephesians 2:8-10 is the setup punch. It shows that good works are necessary after Initial Justification, but not during the preparatory stage.

b) Every depiction of the Final Judgment shows that God will judge us on our works and not whether we truly believe. The Protestant response is typically that everyone who is truly saved *must* (automatically) do good works. It is impossible, they argue, that someone could be truly saved and fail to do good works so as to make it into Heaven.

c) John 15 speaks of Jesus as the true vine and all His disciples as the branches. If everybody *must* do good works, than all the branches *must* produce fruit. But, there are branches that are "in Christ" (i.e. truly saved) that do not bare fruit. They are cut off from Christ and burned.

d) It is important to emphasize that being "in Christ" refers to those who are justified (See Ephesians 2:8-10) and that the branches that do not bare fruit are "in Christ" but they do not remain and they are cut off. (See Rom. 6:7; 8:1; 1Cor. 1:30; 2Cor. 5:17; Gal. 5:6; Eph. 2:4-6)

Salvation As Our Inheritance

Only after you have addresses the key topics outlined in the preceding sections will this apology be effective. Just as we based our apology on justification by Faith on the trump verse of Ephesians 2:8-10, we now use a very popular theme within many Protestant circles to disprove the doctrine of Eternal Security that is our adoption as children of God.

I'm sure that you've heard the question being asked, "Have you been born again?" Just as justification by faith alone and good works had to be linked to the Final Judgment, another link is often made between our being reborn as children of God and us inheriting Eternal Life. The argument runs like this:

"Catholicism is wrong because it teaches that you can lose your salvation. We are saved, however, by being made children of God through adoption. Eternal life is our inheritance as His children. Once you are made a child of God, you cannot undo what God has performed. Once a child you are always a child. I don't know about you, but my children often act up and do bad things, but that can never stop me from loving them as my children. Likewise, once we are born again, we will inherit eternal life because you can never cease to be a child of God."

This is a powerful argument because it is based upon three Scriptural truths:

1) We are adopted as children of God.
John 1:12-13, "But to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in his name, who were born not by natural generation nor by human choice nor by a man's decision but of God."

Romans 8:14-16, "For those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of adoption, through which we cry, 'Abba, Father!' The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God..."

1 John 3:1-2 - "See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God. Yet so we are."

2) Eternal life is our inheritance as children.

Matthew 19:29, " And everyone who has given up houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for the sake of my name will receive a hundred times more, and will inherit eternal life."

Matthew 25:34, "Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Ephesians 1:13, "In him you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, which is the first installment of our inheritance toward redemption as God's possession, to the praise of His glory."

Col. 1:12, "...giving thanks to the Father, who has made you fit to share in the inheritance of the holy ones in light."

Hebrews 1:14, "Are they [the angels] not all ministering spirits sent to serve, for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?

Hebrews 9:15, "For this reason he is mediator of a new covenant: since a death has taken place for deliverance from transgressions under the first covenant, those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance.

3) Once you are born again (that is baptized and regenerated) you cannot cease to be a child of God nor can you be re-born again or re-regenerated.

Ephesians 4:5, "one Lord, one faith, one baptism..."

Hebrew 6:6, " For it is impossible in the case of those who have once been enlightened and tasted the heavenly gift and shared in the Holy Spirit and tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, to bring them to repentance again, since they are recrucifying the Son of God for themselves and holding him up to contempt."

It is also Catholic teaching that once we are regenerated through the washing of the Word in Baptism, we cannot be rebaptized. We are made children of God and that character can never be

removed. “Once a child and always a child” is a Catholic doctrine.

The key question (like that in the proceeding chapter) is whether there is a necessary connection between our being made children of God and our receiving the inheritance of Eternal Life. Does every “child of God” receive the inheritance of Eternal Life? Can someone be a true “born again” child of God and cannot receive his or her inheritance? This is the question that needs to be answered through Scripture.

After you have set up this question, turn to Hebrews 11:14-17. The text reads:

“Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled; that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal. For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.”

Catechism of the Catholic Church

1272 Incorporated into Christ by Baptism, the person baptized is configured to Christ. Baptism seals the Christian with the indelible spiritual mark (character) of his belonging to Christ. No sin can erase this mark, even if sin prevents Baptism from bearing the fruits of salvation. Given once for all, Baptism cannot be repeated.

Notice first that the writer of Hebrews is commanding all Christians to strive for the holiness (sanctification) without which no one will see the Lord. This proves that sanctification (and not just justification) is necessary to enter into Heaven. Second, it is not what some Protestant theologians call a *positional sanctification* (i.e. a kind of imputed holiness or holy status that is present regardless of what we do), but it is an *actual sanctification* that must be brought about by our actions. It is a holiness that can only be achieved by striving for it by God’s grace. Thirdly, Hebrews commands Christians to be aware that no one be found to have “a bitter root” that defiles others (with sin) or that no one be “immoral or godless” like Esau. How was Esau immoral or godless?

We do well here to review who Esau was and why the writer of Hebrews is warning Christians not to act like him.

Esau is the first born son of the Old Testament patriarch Isaac. His younger twin brother was Jacob (who would later have his name changed by God to Israel).

Because Esau was the first born, he stood to inherit a double portion of his father’s estate. The problem is that Esau didn’t think much of his birthright. One day...

“And when Jacob had cooked stew, Esau came in from the field and he was famished; and Esau said to Jacob, “Please let me have a swallow of that red stuff there, for I am famished.” Therefore his name was called Edom. But Jacob said, “First sell me your birthright.” And Esau said, “Behold, I am about to die; so of what use then is the birthright to me?” And Jacob said, “First swear to me”; so he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew; and he ate and drank, and rose and went on his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.” (Genesis 25:29-34)

Years later when Esau’s father Isaac became old and his eyesight became poor, Esau was called in for a blessing (that is the bestowal of his inheritance). Before his father would give him his blessing (and therefore his inheritance as the first born) Isaac asked Esau to first go hunting and cook him up a good meal so he could really give him a good blessing. While his brother was out, Jacob’s mother dresses Jacob up like Esau and sent him into his father’s room with a pot of meat that tasted like fresh game. Isaac in turn gave Jacob the patriarchal blessing. When Esau returned with the food, he asked his father to give him the blessing, but Isaac could not. He had already given it to his brother Jacob. Esau cried,

“Is he not rightly named Jacob, for he has supplanted me these two times? He took away my birthright, and behold, now he has taken away my blessing.” And he said, “Have you not reserved a blessing for me?” But Isaac answered and said to Esau, “Behold, I have made him your master, and all his relatives I have given to him as servants; and with grain and new wine I have sustained him. Now as for you then, what can I do, my son?” And Esau said to his father, “Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father.” So Esau lifted his voice and wept. Then Isaac his father answered and said to him,

‘Behold, away from the fertility of the earth shall be your dwelling, And away from the dew of heaven from above. And by your sword you shall live, And your brother you shall serve; But it shall come about when you become restless, That you shall break his yoke from your neck.” (Gen. 27:36-40)

We may feel sorry for Esau getting duped by his mother and brother, but the blessing was legally Jacob's since Esau sold it to him for some food.

Let's now return to the text of Hebrew 11:14-17. Hebrews warns Christians not to give up their birthright or inheritance for a meal because when it comes time for the blessing (that is when God will give His reward) you will not get a blessing, but a curse.

Hebrews 11:14-17 proves that sonship not only does not guarantee that you will inherit Eternal Life, but you have to strive for that holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

Taking The Warning About Losing Your Inheritance Seriously

The New Testament warns us in several places not to commit grave sin because those who do such things (that is without repentance) will not inherit the kingdom of God.

If they are presented without first laying down the ground work to show that Christians can lose their eternal inheritance, these warnings will have little effect.

Once you have made some headroom with Hebrews 11:14-17, then bring these verses up again to show that the same warning is echoed especially in the writings of St. Paul.

Read the following passage and try to commit at least two of them to memory. Then answer the questions that follow.

1 Cor. 6:7-11
"Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded? On the contrary, you yourselves wrong and defraud, and that your brethren. Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor

The Prodigal Son - Luke 15:11 - 32

And He said, "A certain man had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.' And he divided his wealth between them. "And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with loose living. "Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to be in need. "And he went and attached himself to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. "And he was longing to fill his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one was giving anything to him. "But when he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger! 'I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; "I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men."' "And he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him, and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him, and kissed him. "And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' "But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.' And they began to be merry. "Now his older son was in the field, and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. "And he summoned one of the servants and began inquiring what these things might be." And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.' "But he became angry, and was not willing to go in; and his father came out and began entreating him. "But he answered and said to his father, 'Look! For so many years I have been serving you, and I have never neglected a command of yours; and yet you have never given me a kid, that I might be merry with my friends; but when this son of yours came, who has devoured your wealth with harlots, you killed the fattened calf for him.' "And he said to him, 'My child, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours.' But we had to be merry and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live, and was lost and has been found.'"

1) How does the parable of the prodigal son parallel that of Esau and the blessing? How does it differ?

2) If the prodigal son returned to his father's estate after the father died, could he have demanded his share of the inheritance from this brother?

3) When the prodigal son left the estate, how did his father view his absence?

homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God."

Question: Is Paul just reminding Christians what they were before they were saved or is he warning Christians not to do these things?

Galatians 5:19-21
"Now the works of the flesh are obvious: immorality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, rivalry, jealousy, outbursts of fury, acts of selfishness, dissensions, factions, occasions of envy, drinking bouts, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."

Ephesians 5:1-5
"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God."

Question: If we did not lay the foundation that a Christian can lose his or her inheritance, how would a Protestant interpret this verse?

Romans 8:14-17
"For those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of adoption, through which we cry, 'Abba, Father!' The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if only we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him."

Question: What is the condition that needs to be followed if we are to be co-heirs with Christ?

Luke 10:25-28
"And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, 'Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' And He said to him, 'What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?' And he answered and said, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.' And He said to him, 'You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.'"

Mark 10:17-31
"And as He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and began asking Him, 'Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' And Jesus said to him... 'You know the commandments, Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.' And he said to Him, 'Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up.' And looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him, and said to him, 'One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasures in heaven; and come, follow Me.' But at these words his face fell, and he went away grieved, for he was one who owned much property."

Question: When Jesus said to keep the commandments was he talking about the preparatory stage of justification or after initial justification?

Is there any indication in Luke and Mark that indicates that it is impossible to keep the commandments?

-In Brief-

a) Protestants are keenly aware of the biblical theme that we inherit eternal life in virtue of our being “born again” as children of God.

b) It is commonly incorrectly inferred that since we cannot cease to be a child of God, we can never lose our inheritance.

c) Hebrew 11:12-14 teaches that we can remain a son, but through immorality lose our inheritance.

d) Luke 15:11-32 teaches the same. If the prodigal son did not repent, he would have no right to any more from his brother since he had already received what was his.

e) The prodigal son was seen as “dead” in the father’s eyes while in sin and alive after repentance.

Keeping The Law

Protestants who argue against the necessity to do good works in justification often employ the "God's perfect righteousness" argument.

The argument runs like this:

"God demands perfect obedience to the moral law. However, we all fall short of keeping God's law perfectly. Therefore, Christ came into the world as one who is like us in all things but sin to keep the law perfectly so that whoever believes in Him will be clothed with Christ's righteous."

Scriptures that are commonly employed to support this contention are:

God commands perfect holiness and obedience:

1 Peter 1:15

For it is written, "Be holy because I (am) holy."

Mark 12:30 (and parallel texts)

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.

Do you love God with ALL *your heart, soul, mind and strength all the time? Then you are guilty before God according to the law.*

James 1:10-11

For whoever keeps the whole law, but falls short in one particular, has become guilty in respect to all of it. For he who said, "You shall not commit adultery," also said, "You shall not kill." Even if you do not commit adultery but kill, you have become a transgressor of the law.

Even the most righteous people sin.

Proverbs 24:16

For the just man falls seven times and rises again, but the wicked stumble to ruin.

Scripture says that everyone who does not do ALL the things written in the Law are under a curse. The only way out is to believe in Jesus who was a curse for us.

Gal 3:10-13

For all who depend on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone **who does not persevere in doing all the things written in the book of the law**." And that no one is justified before God by the law is clear, for "the one who is righteous by faith will live." But the law does not

depend on faith; rather, "the one who does these things will live by them." **Christ ransomed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us**, for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who hangs on a tree," that the blessing of Abraham might be extended to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

God Does Demand Perfection, But Not Absolute Perfection

Let's first address this problem on a theological level and then deal with the individual passages of Scripture. This apology attempts to place the Catholic into a false dilemma. Either Catholics have to claim to keep the law with sinless perfection (which no one claims to be able to do) or Christ had to provide some means by which we could satisfy God's demands for perfection.

The solution to this difficulty is found in making a distinction between absolute holiness (or perfection) and relative holiness (or perfection). Absolute perfection and holiness is a state that is proper only to the infinite God Who alone is the fullness of Being and the Perfection of all perfections. No creature (whether it be a perfect human or the highest angel) can obtain the absolute perfection and holiness that is proper to God alone. There is a second kind of perfection that is proper to finite creatures, which can be called relative perfection or holiness. God grants each individual grace according to our own capacity, disposition and cooperation. As Trent states:

> "…and not only are we reputed but we are truly called and are just, receiving justice within us, each one according to his own measure, which the Holy Ghost distributes to everyone as He wills, and according to each one's disposition and cooperation." (Trent, Session 6, 7)

Since a finite creature varies from creature to creature, so does our capacity to receive God's grace vary. Also, as we receive God's grace our capacity to receive are increased. This can be seen in a number of Scriptures. The parables of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30) and the unfaithful servant (Luke 12:42-48) illustrate this well. Both are aptly summarized by the last line in Luke:

> "Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more" (Luke 12:48).

Each person is given their own custom-made spiritual gifts, his Cross and eventually if one perseveres his or her personalized crown.

While absolute perfection is impossible to obtain by any creature, relative perfection can be obtained by anyone who cooperates with God's grace. A good illustration of relative perfection is to picture three different sized drinking glasses. When we fill each glass to the brim, we can state that each glass is perfectly filled. However, does each glass contain the same amount of water? No. The perfection of each glass is relative to the others, yet all the glasses are perfectly filled. In a similar way, by cooperating with God's grace we do receive a relative perfection. This relative perfection for some may be very great and for others it may be small yet each one can receive perfection. In this way, we all can reflect on God's perfection in so far as a creature can do so in its own finite capacity. Perfection is possible. If one is in the state of grace, they are relatively perfect although my holiness may pale in comparison to some great saint. I am, as it were, a great saint in the making. As the Council of Trent states:

> **"For since Christ Jesus Himself, as the head into the members and the vine into the branches, continually infuses strength into those justified,** which strength always precedes, accompanies and follows their good works, and without which they could not in any manner be pleasing and meritorious before God, **we must believe that nothing further is wanting to those justified to prevent them from being considered to have, by those very works which have been done in God, fully satisfied the divine law according to the state of this life and to have truly merited eternal life, to be obtained in its [due] time, provided they depart [this life] in grace,** since Christ our Savior says: If anyone shall drink of the water that I will give him, he shall not thirst forever; but it shall become in him a fountain of water springing up into life everlasting."

A second underlying problem with the Protestant argument is an insufficient understanding of Confession. Protestants argue that everyone sins. Therefore, Relative Perfection may be possible for a time, but once you commit even the smallest sin, you are no longer perfect. This is, of course, is true. As Trent states:

> "For they who are the sons of God love Christ, but they who love Him, keep His commandments, as He Himself testifies; which, indeed, with the divine help they can do. For though during this mortal life, men, however holy and just, fall at times into at least light and daily sins, which are

also called venial, they do not on that account cease to be just, for that petition of the just, forgive us our trespasses, is both humble and true; for which reason the just ought to feel themselves the more obliged to walk in the way of justice, for being now freed from sin and made servants of God, they are able, living soberly, justly and godly, to proceed onward through Jesus Christ, by whom they have access unto this grace." (Session 6, 11).

What Protestants forget is that once we become unholy through sin (especially Mortal Sin), God's grace prompts us and enables us to repent, confess our sins and be restored to the same level of holiness that we enjoyed before we sinned. This can be seen in the parable of the Prodigal Son. When the son repents before the father, one would expect that the son would have been restored to the family as a hired hand. Instead, the father grants him the same status of sonship that he had when he left his father's estate. So it is true that our relative perfection can be lost, but it is not true that once it is lost it can never be restored.

Catechism of the Catholic Church

With regard to God, there is no strict right to any merit on the part of man. Between God and us there is an immeasurable inequality, for we have received everything from him, our Creator. - CCC 2007

Scripture

Let's turn to Scripture and see whether these passages teach the necessity of Absolute Perfection or Relative Perfection.

Mark 12:30 (and parallel texts)

> "'You shall love the Lord your God with **all** your heart, with **all** your soul, with **all** your mind, and with **all** your strength.'"

God never commands the impossible. By cooperating with God's grace we can love with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. Of course, not everyone's heart, mind, soul and strength have the same capacity. One small act of charity by a person with a small heart for God may be as virtuous an act as a great act of charity made by a great saint with a huge heart for God.

Proverbs 24:16

> "For the just man falls seven times and rises again, but the wicked stumble to ruin."

This passage actually affirms the Catholic position. The righteous man does fall into sin on occasion, but by God's grace he repents and he is restored back to the level of holiness that he once enjoyed. That is why he is righteous. The wicked man sins and does not repent.

1 Peter 1:15

For it is written, **"Be holy because I (am) holy."**

When one reads the preceding context, one finds that Peter is not presenting Christians with an impossible standard or goal. Instead Peter writes:

> "Therefore, gird up the loins of your mind, live soberly, and set your hopes completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Like obedient children, do not act in compliance with the desires of your former ignorance but, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in every aspect of your conduct, for it is written, "Be holy because I (am) holy." Now if you invoke as Father him who judges impartially according to each one's works, conduct yourselves with reverence during the time of your sojourning, realizing that you were ransomed from your futile conduct, handed on by your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold but with the precious blood of Christ as of a spotless unblemished lamb. He was known before the foundation of the world but revealed in the final time for you, who through him believe in God who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. Since you have purified yourselves by obedience to the truth for sincere mutual love, love one another intensely from a (pure) heart." (1 Peter 1:13-22).

Clearly, Peter sees that the command to be holy as God is holy is not an impossibility, but one that every Christian should strive to achieve. Therefore, he must be talking about relative and not absolute perfection.

James 2:10-11

> "For whoever keeps the whole law, **but falls short in one particular, has become guilty in respect to all of it.** For he who said, "You shall not commit adultery," also said, "You shall not kill." Even if you do not commit adultery but kill, you have become a transgressor of the law."

The context of this passage shows that James is not ruling out the possibility of relative perfection because we sometimes sin. Read James 2:8-

13…"However, **if you fulfill the royal law** according to the scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well. But if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law, but falls short in one particular, has become guilty in respect to all of it. For he who said, "You shall not commit adultery," also said, "You shall not kill." Even if you do not commit adultery but kill, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so act as people who will be judged by the law of freedom. For the judgment is merciless to one who has not shown mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

James is saying that we can "fulfill" the royal law of love if we "so speak and so act."

Gal 3:10-13

> "For all who depend on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone **who does not persevere in doing all the things written in the book of the law**." And that no one is justified before God by the law is clear, for "the one who is righteous by faith will live." But the law does not depend on faith; rather, "the one who does these things will live by them." **Christ ransomed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us**, for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who hangs on a tree," that the blessing of Abraham might be extended to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

Paul's arguments in Galatians 3 is particularly condensed and it is difficult not to read this passage without remembering Peter's words that Paul's writings are difficult to understand and that the unlearned twist them to their own destruction. The shortest and simplest explanation of this passage is this: Paul is writing against those who believe that one must become a Jew and follow the Law prior to becoming a Christian. Galatians 3:10-13 represents one stream of argument. The first quote that Paul makes is not taken from those passages in the Old Testament that pertain to the giving of the Ten Commandments, but the ratification of the ceremonial law that contains prescripts on temple sacrifices, dietary regulations, ritual cleansing and so on. The Levites read, "'Cursed be he who fails to fulfill any of the provisions of this law!'" and all the people answered, 'Amen!' thereby placing all of Israel under a curse if they do not follow all the provisions found in the book of Law. But Paul says that these things found in the book of the Law do not make one righteous because in the exile the Jews could not follow these precepts so that God said "one who is righteous by faith shall live." God removed the curse for breaking the ceremonial law by receiving the penalty of the curse by dying a cross. By taking on the curse that was placed on the people of God by the Levites in Duet. 27:26, God opens up the possibility of Gentiles to be justified by faith like Abraham was when he was still uncircumcised.

Fulfilling the Law

There are examples in Scripture of people obeying the Law perfectly. The best example is Elizabeth and Zechariah in Luke 1:5-6.

"In the days of Herod, King of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah of the priestly division of Abijah; his wife was from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Both were righteous in the eyes of God, observing all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly."

Scripture states that both Elizabeth and Zechariah observed "all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly." This is relative perfection (i.e. they were in the state of grace). Therefore, it is possible by God's grace to fulfill the precepts of the moral law and be pleasing in the sight of God.

Some Protestants will argue that this perfect obedience to all the commandments of God was not an actual fact, but only something that was observed by others. In other words, from the perspective of men these individuals kept the law, but in God's sight they did not. But this interpretation contradicts what is said in the passage. Elizabeth and Zechariah were righteous "in the sight of God." Therefore, the outward conformity to the law of God reflected an inward conformity that was pleasing to God.

Another passage to return to is Mark 10:17-20. A man asked Jesus what he needs to do in order to inherit eternal life. Jesus answers, You know the commandments: 'You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; you shall not defraud; honor your father and your mother." The man answered, "Teacher, all of these I have observed from my youth." Jesus, Who knows the heart of all men, did not answer: "No you didn't. When you were five you stole money from your parents." Instead, Jesus "looking at him, loved him…" Jesus knew that what he said was true and he loved him for that.

Protestant apologists will quickly note the Jesus tells the man that he is lacking in one thing (e.g. he needed to sell all he had and follow Jesus). However, right after the man walks away sad, Peter

states that the apostles have done all that Jesus had said, "Amen, I say to you, there is no one who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands for my sake and for the sake of the gospel who will not receive a hundred times more now in this present age: houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and eternal life in the age to come." Jesus did not rebuke Peter or point out their faults. Rather, Jesus says that they stand to inherit eternal life.

-In Brief-

a) Protestants claim that God commands us to absolute holiness and perfect obedience, which is impossible to obey. Therefore, Christ does it for us. (1 Peter 1:15, Mark 12:30, James 2:10-11).

b) "Perfection" is being equivocated. People and things can be "perfect" in different ways. Only God is absolutely perfect since God's nature lacks nothing. Creatures are perfect only in a relative sense in that they do all that they are capable of doing (i.e. cooperating with God's grace).

c) God gives all of us different capacities for love (i.e. grace). Therefore, perfect holiness for one may differ from another and what may be an act of heroic virtue for one may be a habit for another.

d) God never commands the impossible.

e) Mark 12:30 speaks of relative holiness.

f) Proverbs 24:16 – Even the Just sin, but they repent. The unjust stumble to their own ruin (don't repent)

g) 1 Peter 1:15 speaks of striving in relative holiness in order to reflect God's absolute holiness.

h) James 2:10-11 – James sees living out the "royal law" as a possibility. Again, if one sins, he only needs to repent.

i) Galatians 3:10 – This references the curse the Levites put themselves under when they ratified the Old Covenant. Christ's death fulfilled this curse thereby releasing God's people from following all the ceremonial laws attached to this curse.

Romans 2

The Gentiles Being Justified

Protestant Interpretation of this Chapter:

Paul is positing a hypothetical scenario to show that if the Jews could keep the Law of Moses or the gentiles could keep the written law in their hearts, they would be justified. But this is ultimately an impossibility.

In Romans 1, Paul has already stated that the gentiles have turned their backs on God and that God's wrath is upon them. Here in Romans 2 Paul charges the Jews that although they condemn the immorality of the gentiles, they do not keep the Law perfectly either.

Key verses:

Romans 2:1-2 - "Therefore you are without excuse, every man of you who passes judgment, for in that you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things."

Romans 2:12-13 - "For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law; and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law; for not the hearers of the Law are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified."

Romans 2:21-24 - "You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that one should not steal, do you steal? You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God? For "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you," just as it is written."

Catholic interpretation of this Chapter:

Starting in Romans 2:2 Paul begins to argue against an invisible opponent. It is important to first establish what the worldview of this invisible opponent is so that we can understand what he is advocating. See if you can guess who this opponent may be:

Romans 2:3-5 - "[A]nd do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment upon those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God...".

Romans 2:17-23 - "But if you bear the name "Jew," and rely upon the Law, and boast in God, and know His will, and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law, and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth, you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that one should not steal, do you steal? You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God?"

What party of the Jews would this invisible opponent be?

Does this opponent believe he could be condemned by God for what he does?

How would Paul know such an opponent so well?

Catholic interpretation Continued…

In Romans 1, Paul argues something that the Jews would have accepted namely that the pagans in general have turned their backs on God and they will receive the wrath of God for their disobedience. Once this is said, Paul turns the tables. He then argues against his invisible opponent that being a circumcised member of the covenant does not exclude you from the possibility of falling under God's wrath.

Paul argues in Romans 2 that there are gentiles, who have the law written in their hearts, that obey God's dictates and will be justified. On the other hand, there are circumcised Pharisees who have the explicit Law of Moses, who sin and they will be under God's wrath. The concluding verse in chapter 2 summarizes Paul's point:

"For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God."

No one has a lock on salvation, Jew or gentile, because "God shows no partiality." (Romans 2:11)

"See that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone"

(James 2:24)

Within the Protestant hierarchy of Scripture, James is relatively low even though this verse usually tops the list of proof text for classical Catholic apologists.

However, a Catholic apologist does not need to go to James right at the start. The second chapter of Romans provides several examples of Paul essentially teaching the same thing as James namely that good works justify. Try to memorize these verses:

Romans 2:6-8 - "who will render to every man according to his deeds: to those who by **perseverance in doing good** seek for glory and honor and immortality, **eternal life;** but to those who are selfishly ambitious and **do not obey the truth,** but obey unrighteousness, **wrath and indignation."**

Romans 2:9-10 - *"There will be* tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, but glory and honor and peace to every man who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

Romans 2:13 - "...for not the hearers of the Law are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified."

Romans 2:14-16 - "For when Gentiles who do not have the Law **do instinctively the things of the Law,** these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and **their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, on the day when,** according to my gospel, **God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus."**

-In Brief-

Protestant Interpretation:

a) Paul is making a hypothetical proposition: If you can do the moral law perfectly, you can be justified. However, the next chapter of Romans says that no one can do the law and no one is Just.

Catholic Interpretation:

a) Paul is arguing against the Pharisees that claim that by being members of God's covenant people (i.e. being circumcised, following the ceremonial law) they will escape God's judgment.

b) Romans 2 states that it is in keeping the moral law that make someone righteous, not circumcision (or the other ceremonial laws). Therefore, gentiles (who are not circumcised) are part of God's people.

Romans 3

Justification through Faith

Protestant Interpretation of this Chapter:

In chapter 2, Paul held out the possibility that we could be justified by works if we keep the Law of God. In Romans 3, however, Paul shows that this is impossible for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Therefore, no one can do good and be justified in his sight. For example:

Romans 3:10-18

"As it is written, "**There is none righteous, not even one;** There is **none** who understands, There is none who seeks God; **All** have turned aside, together they have become useless; There is **none** who does good, There is **not even one**." "Their throat is an open grave, with their tongues they keep deceiving," "The poison of asps is under their lips" "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness" ; "Their feet are swift to shed blood, Destruction and misery are in their paths, And the path of peace they have not known." "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

Since no one is righteous, God gives us another means by which we may be justified in his sight and that is through justification by faith apart from anything we do.

Romans 3:22-25

"Even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed.

Catholic interpretation of this Chapter:

Paul ended chapter 2 stating that being physically circumcised or uncircumcised does not matter. What counts is being obedient to God from the heart. If this interpretation is correct, the objection that naturally follows from this line of thought is: what advantage is there in being a Jew and being a member of God's covenant? This is exactly what is asked in Romans 3:1. Paul answers that the Jews had a distinct advantage over the gentiles because the gentiles only could follow the dictates of the law written in their hearts while the Jews were custodians of the written word of God [literally the oracles of God].

What about the long string of quotes in Romans 3:10-18? Doesn't this prove that every human being is always and only unrighteous?

First, we ought to recall the previous argument. Paul's invisible arguer believes that by being a circumcised member of God's covenant he will automatically be saved from God's wrath while the gentiles, who do not follow the Law of Moses, will certainly be condemned. In Romans 3:9 Paul explains what he is trying to prove by his quotes:

"What then? **Are we better than they? Not at all**; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin."

The words *none, no one, all, everyone* can be interpreted in one of two senses. The most common use of these words is that whatever is said applies *to every single individual*. This is the sense in which the Protestant interpretation understands it. The other sense is to take whatever is said to be applied to *select members within a group.*

For example, when you walk into a pizza place and say "I want all the items for my pizza." The pizza man can interpret your words in one of two ways. He can either dump all the items that he has in his store on your pizza (so that your pizza is four feet tall and the store does not have any more items to put on any other

Protestant Interpretation Continued

Romans 3:27-28

"Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law."

It is here that Martin Luther inserted the word "alone" so that Romans 3:28 would read, "For we maintain that a
man is justified by faith ALONE apart from works of the Law" because whatever is not from faith is a work. If we are justified by faith "apart from works of the law" then we are justified by faith apart from anything else. Put another way, we are justified by faith alone.

Catholic Interpretation Continued

pizza) or he can take a handful of each item and put them on your pizza.

The question is in what sense is Paul using these words in these quotes.

Since Paul is writing to Jews who knew the Scriptures in infancy, it is extremely doubtful that he would wrench his quotations from their original contexts.

Look up Paul's first quotation (Psalm 14) and read it. What does the context of Paul's quotation suggest? Is the Psalmist speaking of every single individual in the world being always unrighteous or are there some people who are righteous and some who are not? How does Psalm 14:5 clinch the case?

Notice that no where in the letter to the Romans that Paul says we are justified by faith apart from good works. Rather he says that we are justified apart from works of the Law or simply works. What's going on here? In the Old Covenant, there were certain things that marked off the people of God from the pagan gentiles. These works of the Law were circumcision, dietary regulations, temple sacrifices. The works of the Law functioned as boundary markers. Paul has already demonstrated that these old boundary markers did not ensure that God would be any more partial to the Jews than He is to the gentiles. For God will judge every man according to his deeds.

Now that Christ has come, the boundary markers that separated God's covenant people is no longer these works of the Law (so that a gentile would have to first become a Jew before becoming a Christian - see Acts 15:1-22), but faith in Jesus. Therefore, both Jews AND gentiles can be justified members of God's covenant people. This is why Paul states in Romans 3:28-30:

"For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law. Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one."

Paul is not stating the doctrine of Original Sin here in Romans 3. He does this in Romans 5. Paul is instead demonstrating that with the coming of the Christ, the structure of God's people has undergone a change so that gentiles can now enter the covenant and be justified just like the Jews who come to faith in Christ. The boundary markers are no longer the works of the Law, but faith in Christ Jesus.

-In Brief-

Protestant Interpretation:

a) No one is righteous and no one does anything good in God's sight. Since we cannot do the Law perfectly, Jesus came to keep the law.

b) By believing in Jesus, we are credited as being counted as righteous.

Catholic Interpretation:

a) Even within God's covenant people (i.e. those who are children of Abraham, circumcised, followers the ceremonial law), there are some who are just and some who are condemned.

b) The texts cited in Romans 3:10 – 18, when interpreted within their Old Testament contexts, shows that there are righteous people (and we cannot interpret these texts to teach that there is not) and that within Judaism there are the righteous and the sinner. (Psalm 14:5)

c) The "works of the Law" are the boundary markers that separated the People of God from the rest of the world. But these markers were to be used only until the Messiah comes. Now, with Christ, the boundary marker is faith in Jesus not circumcision or genealogies.

Romans 4

Abraham Justified Through Faith

Protestant Interpretation of this Chapter

Paul continues by offering several Old Testament examples of people who were justified before God by faith alone apart from anything that they have done. The first and primary example is Abraham.

Romans 4:1-5 "What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about; but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? "And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." Now to the one who works, his wage is not reckoned as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness..."

If Abraham was justified by doing good works, he would have something that he could boast before God. But God did not justify Abraham for anything that he had done. Rather, "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." Belief alone justified Abraham.

Abraham is then held out by St. Paul as a forerunner of how we will be justified before God.

Putting Together the Pieces

When did Abraham first exhibit saving faith? The assumption behind the Protestant argument in Romans 4:1-5 is that Abraham didn't have saving faith until Genesis 15:6. But Hebrew 11:8 reads:

> "By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going."

This is a reference to Genesis 12:1-4. Three chapters before Genesis 15:6, which reads:

> "Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness."

The faith that is exhibited in Genesis 12 is affirmed in Genesis 15:6, but this is not the end of the story. James 2:21-24:

> "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, 'And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,' and he was called the friend of God. You see that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone."

James tells us that the faith mentioned in Genesis 15:6 was fulfilled when Abraham offered up Isaac in Genesis 22:9ff. Is Abraham's justification a one time event or a process that starts in Genesis 12 and run all the way through Genesis 22?

Catholic Interpretation of this Chapter

Paul now provides a proof case that the works of the Law (e.g. circumcision, dietary regulations et al.) does not justify, but only faith and the proof he adduces is drawn from the man who established the covenant of circumcision, namely Abraham.

If we understand "works" to mean primary circumcision, the genius of Paul's argumentation becomes immediately apparent. Paul quotes from Genesis 15:6, which reads "And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." This statement of declaration of Abraham being righteous before God occurs two chapters before Abraham is given the covenant of circumcision (Genesis 17:1ff). In other words, Abraham was (according to the mindset of Paul's invisible arguer) declared just by God as an uncircumcised gentile. Paul continues: Romans 4:9-12 - "Is this blessing then upon the circumcised or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say, "Faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness." How then was it reckoned? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised; and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all who believe without being

Protestant Interpretation Continued

Romans 4:13-15

"For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified; for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, neither is there violation."

What we do has no bearing on whether we will be justified or not. The only thing that matters is that we have saving faith like Abraham.

Catholic Interpretation Continued

circumcised, that righteousness might be reckoned to them, and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised."

Paul is not concerned with the role of good deeds in justification, but that the Pharisees cannot boast of some exclusive right to God's mercy based upon their place in God's covenant people. Paul has already demonstrated that there are some within God's covenant people who are unrighteous and will suffer the God.

Romans 5

Christ as the New Adam

Protestant Interpretation of this Chapter

:Paul has finished his discussion on justification by faith alone. In chapter 5, he begins to switch gears and talk about sanctification.

Romans 5:8-10

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath *of God* through Him. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."

Catholic interpretation of this Chapter:

In chapter 4, Paul demonstrated that uncircumcised persons could be justified by faith. Therefore, one did not have to become a member of the Abrahamic covenant by circumcision in order to be a person of God's New Covenant people. Both Jews and gentiles are justified by Faith in Christ.

But why is faith in Christ a common remedy for both Jews and gentiles? Because the problem of sin did not start with Abraham, but Adam. It is here that Paul lays out the doctrine of Original Sin and not Romans 3.

Christ came as a New Adam to start a new creation. Romans 5:18-19, "So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous."

-In Brief-

Protestant Interpretation:

a) Abraham is a test case of someone who is pronounced Just by God apart for doing anything good or bad.

b) The Blessedness of David describes Justification: God no longer records Our sins. They are covered by Christ's righteousness.

c) Romans 5 describes how we are Justified: We receive a legal decree pronounced by God that we are Just in virtue of Christ the Second Adam.

Catholic Interpretation:

a) Paul uses Abraham to counter the claim that the covenant of circumcision, given to Abraham, makes us Just. Paul quotes Genesis 15:6 to show that Abraham was considered Just in the sight of God *before* he was circumcised.

b) The Blessedness of David: David was a circumcised Jew after God's own heart. Yet, this did not prevent him for seeing the need to repent when he committed adultery and murder. Paul quotes a Penitential Psalm to show that David longed to have his sins forgiven by God.

c) Romans 5 shows us that the problem was not David, Israel, Isaac or Abraham, but it goes back to the sin of Adam.

d) Romans 5 shows that we are called Just (or acquitted from Adam's condemnation) AND we are made righteous (since Adam's sin changed us).

Romans 6

Baptism & Living the Life of Grace

Protestant Interpretation of this Chapter

In chapter 6, Paul focuses in our sanctification and life in God's grace. First, Baptism is presented as a sign or symbol of what has already occurred in us when we were born again through faith.

"Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life."

This is why baptism by immersion is important since it alone give us the symbolic meaning of baptism as a burial and resurrection. Paul continues by exhorting us to present our bodies as slave to righteousness and not to continue in sin.

Catholic Interpretation of this Chapter

If Paul is teaching about Original Sin in Romans 5, the question that naturally follows is how do I, a child of Adam, became reborn as a child of the New Adam? Paul's answer is not to reintroduce the idea of faith, but baptism:

"Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin.

Baptism unites us to Christ, the New Adam, and justifies us from sin (see the *Gospel According to James McCarthy, Baptism.*)

Romans 7

The Fleshly Man / Concupiscence

Protestant Interpretation of this Chapter

Paul provides us with a picture of one whose justice is imputed to him through faith. Even though he is justified and received baptism as a sign that he has been justified. He is not made holy, rather he is still by nature a sinner. This is similar to the Lutheran doctrine of "simul justice et peccator" (simultaneously a saint and a sinner).

Catholic Interpretation of this Chapter

This is one of the most difficult passages in Scripture to interpret for Catholics or Protestants just because it is so convoluted. Paul is speaking not about unjust nature that remains after justification, but concupiscence. The Catechism defines it as:

1264 Yet certain temporal consequences of sin remain in the baptized, such as suffering, illness, death, and such frailties inherent in life as weaknesses of character, and so on, as well as an

Catholic Interpretation Continued

inclination to sin that Tradition calls concupiscence, or metaphorically, "the tinder for sin" (fomes peccati); since concupiscence "is left for us to wrestle with, it cannot harm those who do not consent but manfully resist it by the grace of Jesus Christ." Indeed, "an athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules." (2 Tim. 2:5)

Concupiscence is an inclination to sin, but it in itself is not sin unless you act upon it. Sin requires us to know that something is wrong and to freely choose to do it. Paul in Romans 7:17 states that this "sin" is not something that we do, "So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which indwells me."

Unfortunately, Luther equated this inclination towards sin to be sin itself. Therefore, he never felt forgiven and he felt frustrated in trying to make progress in the spiritual life. (See Romans 7:14 until end).

Romans 8

The Holy Spirit

Protestant Interpretation of this Chapter:

Paul begins this chapter by saying, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death." We are set free from sin and death through faith in Christ alone and Christ sends us the Spirit to confirm that we are children of God.

Romans 8:14-16, "For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God...you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, 'Abba! Father!' The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ..."

Since there is nothing we can do to establish our relationship with Christ, there is nothing we can do to separate ourselves from Christ. Romans 8:3 5, 37-39 reads, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?".. .But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor

Catholic interpretation

Interpretation of this Chapter:

Christ sends us his Spirit in order to fight against sin and concupiscence and we are assured of our ultimate victory on the condition that we abide in Christ. If we remain in Christ, nothing can separate us from his life. If we do not remain in Christ and share in his sufferings, we will lose this protection.

Answer the following questions

1) In Romans 8, how many times does Paul pose a conditional phrase (e.g. "We are... if we...").

2) In Romans 8:35-39, what are the things that cannot separate us from the love of Christ? Are any of these things sin?

3) Does suffering separate us from the love of Christ? If not, why?

angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

-In Brief-

Protestant Interpretation:

a) Paul stops talking about Justification in Romans 5. Chapters 6, 7 and 8 concern sanctification.

b) Romans 6 shows us that baptism is a symbol of what occurs in Justification.

c) Romans 7 shows us that we have a spiritual nature and a carnal nature (one Just and one prone to sin).

d) Romans 8 teaches that we are no longer under any condemnation from God because we have become children of God and co-heirs with Christ.

Catholic Interpretation:

a) Romans 5 tells us about Original Sin. Romans 6 teaches how we get out of the state of Original Sin – Baptism.

b) In Baptism, we die with Christ so that we will live. (Paul also states that we are Justified from Sin in Baptism).

c) Romans 7 – Even after Baptism, we are still inclined to sin, but this inclination is not in itself sin. It is concupiscence.

d) Romans 8 – God give us His Spirit to battle concupiscence (put to death the deeds of the body).

e) We are "children of God" and co-heirs with Christ "if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may be glorified with Him."

f) The Spirit enables us to suffer and it turns the devil's two greatest weapons (fear of suffering and death) into the means by which we enter Heaven.

Chapter Two

The Catholic Church and the Bible

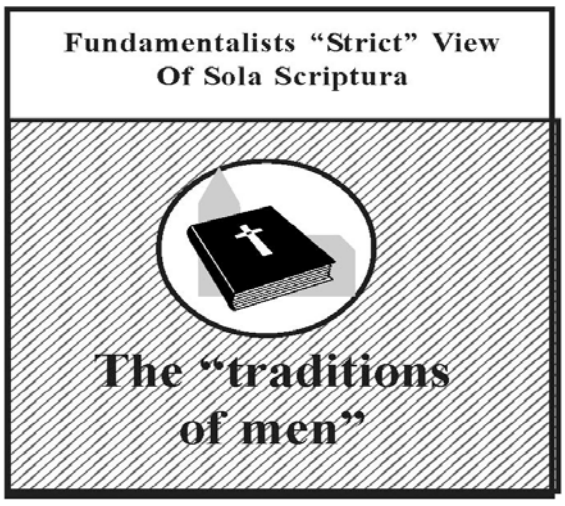
(Do we need the Church and Tradition if we have the Bible?)

What Is Sola Scriptura?

"Sola Scriptura" is Latin for "Bible Alone." With the doctrine of Sola Fide (Justification by Faith Alone), it makes up the two founding principles of Reformation.

As with most Protestant doctrines, there is no one universally accepted definition of "Sola Scriptura." Most Protestants accept this principle in one of two forms, a strict fundamentalist interpretation and a looser evangelical interpretation.

In this section, we will examine both forms of Sola Scriptura and the groups that hold them and give a brief explanation of the authority of Scripture, Sacred Tradition and the Church in Catholicism.



What is Sola Scriptura (the Bible Alone)? There is no one answer to this question. Within Protestantism there are a variety of beliefs and practices that are not uniformed through the whole of the religion. In other words, there is no one definitive definition of Sola Scriptura that is held by all Protestants.

Generally, Protestants fall into one of two camps in regards to this doctrine. One camps is the Fundamentalist understanding and the other is the Evangelical understanding. Before we begin to describe these two different understandings, we ought to first describe the groups that hold them.

Fundamentalism is not a denomination. It is a stream of thought or practice within Protestantism. The same is true for Evangelicals. Some Lutherans can be fundamentalists others can be Evangelicals. The same is true for Baptists, Presbyterians and so on. The traits that characterize fundamentalists are that they tend to be very literalistic in their interpretation of Scripture, they tend to be aggressive and argumentative, they tend be suspicious of the outside world (i.e. non-fundamentalists) and they tend not to participate in changing society as much as "saving" people.

Evangelicals, on the other hand, are much more sophisticated in their interpretation of Scripture. They appreciate Church history and Church councils. Evangelicals are also more concerned about transforming culture.

These different characteristics shape their different understanding of Sola Scriptura and its application.

Fundamentalists and "Solo Scriptura"

Fundamentalists view the Scriptures, and Scriptures alone, as the word of God and they accept it as the only authority for Christian belief and practice. Anything not found on the pages of sacred Scripture are held in suspicion of being the "traditions of

men." There is no authority outside of the Word of God.

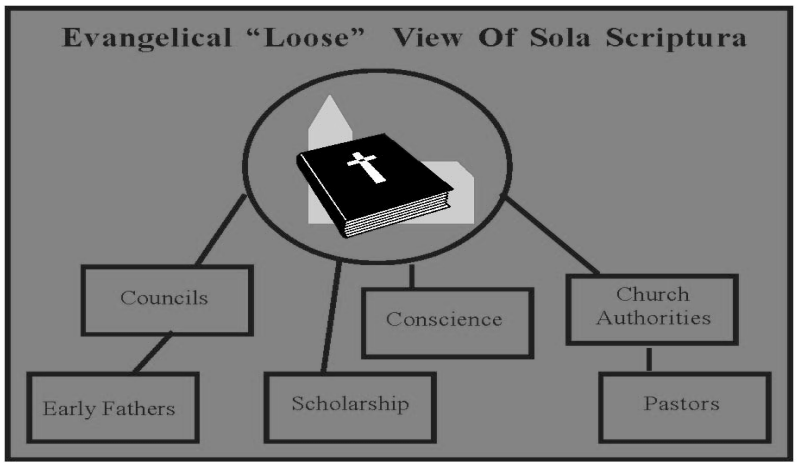
This is why fundamentalists (particularly from the Baptist tradition) shy away from drawing up any confession of faith or creed. They feel that to make such a document or statement would add to the word of God. If an authoritative statement of Faith exists then fundamentalists would have to believe:

Scripture + The Statement of Faith

Fundamentalists usually see such statements as detracting from the value of Scripture by adding the "words of men."

Evangelicals and Sola Scriptura

Evangelical Christians are much more comfortable with the world and the existence of other authorities. For Evangelicals, there is no point in denying the existence and the authority of various creeds and confessions (even creeds and confessions that were drawn up by Christians before the Reformation). Sola Scriptura does not mean, for these Protestants, that Scripture is the only authority, rather Scripture is the only *final* authority for the Christian. A good analogy of this view is the legal system of the United States. There are many authorities (e.g. lower courts) within the U.S., but the single highest authority (the last place of appeals) is the US Supreme Court. The findings of lower courts and city ordinances all are a binding force upon the citizen. However, these lower decisions can only be binding if they agree with the Constitution as understood by the Supreme Court. Similarly, for evangelicals, Church Councils, the early Church Fathers, the findings of modern scholarship and the opinions of church pastors are important and binding upon the Christian *only in so far as* they agree with Sacred Scripture.



Comparing the Two...

In the end, this is really a distinction without a difference. If authorities outside the pages of the Bible are authoritative only in so far as they agree with Scripture then really the only authority that exists is the Bible alone.

This being said, the evangelical view is the more rational of the two views because Sacred Scriptures does speak of God's revelation existing out of the pages of Scripture. For example, St. Paul talks about God revealing Himself in the things He has made. This "natural" revelation of God is binding upon everyone because Paul later states:

> "As a result, they have no excuse; for although they knew God they did not accord him glory as God or give him thanks" (Romans 1:20-21).

The fundamentalist view falls to the ground and the evangelical view at least avoids this obvious error.

-In Brief-

a) Sola Scriptura – The Protestant teaching that Scripture is the highest court of appeals. It is the norm that sets all other norms. Traditions, culture, the writings of the Fathers, Church Councils are authoritative only in so far as they agree with Scripture. (This view is held by Evangelicals).

b) "Solo" Scriptura – The Bible is the only authority for the Christian. All doctrine not found explicitly in Scripture is to doubted or rejected as the "traditions of men." (This view is held by Fundamentalists).

c) Romans 1:20-21 shows that God reveals himself not only in the Bible but also in nature.

d) Catholicism teaches that the word of God is "handed on" ("traditioned") to men by Christ and his inspired disciples either in Sacred Writing (Scripture) or Sacred Tradition (the teachings handed on to the Church). Therefore, all Sacred Tradition (in writings or non-written) is equally authoritative. This Tradition is given by God to the Apostles and to the Church that they set up.

Taking the Right First Step

In the last chapter on *Sola Fide* (Justification by Faith Alone), we stressed the need to be able to discuss justification and salvation within the intellectual confines of a Protestant Biblical view. This chapter will do no less.

To be an effective Catholic apologist, you ought to be able to demonstrate to a Sola Scripturist, from the Sola Scripturist perspective and not the Roman Catholic perspective, why Sola Scriptura is untenable and how the Catholic position is the only consistent and viable alternative.

If the dialogue does not take place from within the Sola Scripturist's Biblical view, it will ultimately prove to be more or less fruitless. On the other hand, if you are able to debunk Sola Scriptura without establishing the viability of Catholicism, the Sola Scripturist may become an atheist.
In this section, we will discuss how one ought to position one's arguments so as to accomplish both of these objectives.

Differences in Evangelism: Catholic and Protestant.

If you have been doing apologetics for a while, you probably have already noticed that the things that you would like to discuss first as a Catholic apologist is often different from what a Protestant apologist likes to discuss. This is due to two very different ways of approaching our understanding of religion.

Catholics generally use the inductive method of study that is that they move from a general principle or authority to the particulars. In Catholic Apologetics, Catholics will often begin their studies by establishing an authority namely the infallible Catholic Church united with the chair of St. Peter and then most go from this authority to consider particular doctrines such as: What is baptism? Is Christ really Present in the Eucharist? How are we saved? The pecking order of topics for Catholic apologists then usually start with authority (e.g. Was Peter the first Pope) down to topics like Mary, the Communion of the Saints, sacramentals and so on. This is the way standard classic apologetic manuals are ordered.

The exact opposite is true for Protestants. Protestants tend to approach things deductively that is they tend to go to Scriptures to determine the particulars and then turn from the particulars to the general: What is the Church? Did Jesus Establish a Papacy? As we have already mentioned in the first chapter, the first and foremost topic that Protestants wish to discuss is salvation. What topic is more immediate and more important than how do you get to Heaven? Anti-Catholic evangelists will first establish that salvation (according to how they read the Bible) contradicts Catholicism. Once the Church's authority has been dismissed, the field is open to attack other doctrines usually in the order that seem to be the most obviously unbiblical (e.g. Mary, Purgatory, Communion of the

Saints) and then finally the authority of the Catholic Church is attacked directly.

Sola Scriptura is probably the last topic any non-professional Protestant apologist would address. Why? Sola Scriptura is rarely seen by Protestants as a doctrine by itself, rather it is an *unstated presumption that lies behind all of their theology*. It just seems so obvious. The Bible is God's word and if the Bible teaches X and the Catholic Church (or any other church) teaches non-X, then the Bible must be right and whoever teaches to the contrary is wrong. The Bible alone is the sole rule of faith. (Read the portion of the transcript of Scott Hahn's Conversion Story titled "A Presbyterian Minister Becomes Catholic")

Not only does this assumption go unnoticed by most Protestants, but it also is unsuspectedly accepted by those who are "evangelized" by Protestants. By entertaining the idea that the Bible is the sole and final authority for all Christians, the unsuspecting person unwittingly accepts a list of unstated presuppositions that are usually left unsubstantiated or verified from that point on. The presumptions will be treated later in this chapter. For now, it is important to remember that the subject of Sola Scriptura will most likely not be volunteered by non-Catholics (unless they are professionally trained) and that their apologies that you will receive on this subject will likely not be very well ordered or articulated.

Achieving Both Goals

Earlier, we stated that a good apologist ought to be able to refute Sola Scriptura based from within the confines of the Protestant biblical view and be able to present the Catholic position as a plausible alternative. But how is this accomplished?

Several years ago, a Catholic theologian named Louis Bouyer published a book titled *The Spirit and Forms of Protestantism*. Fr. Bouyer had grown up as a Dutch Reformed Protestant in Europe and his book was his apology for the Catholic Church.

The funny thing about Fr. Bouyer's book is the reaction it receives from it readers. For Catholics, Bouyer's book seems to lack any apologetic teeth. It seems long and dry and Father Bouyer seems to be far too complimentary of Protestantism than most Catholics are comfortable with. On the other hand, when Protestants read it (especially well-read Protestants), their world was shaken. In fact, not a few prominent Catholic converts attribute Bouyer's books as being to some degree instrumental in their conversion to the Catholic Faith.

Apologetic Topics For Protestants and Catholics
(From most favorite to least favorite)

Catholic	Protestant
Authority / Papacy	Salvation
Infalliblity of the Church	Mary
The Sacraments	Purgatory
Purgatory / Communion of the Saints	The Sacraments / Commuion of the Saints
Mary	(Anything Else That Sticks Out At Them As Unbiblical)
Salvation	Authority

Why is Bouyer's book effective? I believe it is because Bouyer's apologetic structure and content.

Bouyer begins his book by pointing out that Protestantism has in a sense lost its true identity. It has been co-opted by a theology of negation and it has begun to deny or even contradict its most fundamental principles. In the first part of the book, Bouyer outlines all the essential true and valid goads that the early Protestant Reformers wished to accomplish with the Reformation. All or many of these things, by the way, are authentically Catholic aspirations. Bouyer then goes on in the second part of his book to show that many of the things that Protestants have accepted ultimately undermined these founding principles and then the book ends by showing that the very spirit of Protestantism can ultimately be realized in the Catholic Church!

Bouyer's apologetic paradigm is authentically ecumenical and apologetic. To be sure, it is a bit more difficult to bring into practice than learning a series of proof texts and canned arguments.

If you can demonstrate that Sola Scriptura does not only detract from the Scripture but ultimately undermines it, Sola Scripturist (out of their love for the Scriptures) will flee from this doctrine to higher ground like refugees escaping a flood.

Our apology against Sola Scriptura in the next couple sections will be to prove two things: 1) Sola Scriptura fails to provide a logically consistent argument as to why the Scriptures *alone* is the ultimate authority for the Christian. 2) Sola Scriptura cannot provide a logically consistent and recognizable means of establishing *what is* the Scripture that functions as the final authority for the Christian. In other words, the problem with Sola Scriptura is that it can't establish neither the *Sola* nor the *Scriptura* of its argument. In fact, the *Sola* ultimately undermines the *Scriptura*.

-In Brief-

a) Sola (or Solo) Scriptura is an assumption within Protestantism. Most Protestants have a defense for this belief.

b) Catholics generally argue from Authority down to the particulars. Protestants argue from the particulars to Authority. They prefer to disprove Catholicism and then accept the Bible's authority by default.

c) Sola Scripture fails in three areas:. (1) It cannot establish this principle in Scripture. (2) It cannot tell us what the Scripture is that is to be our norm and (3) Did does not provide an authority to interpret.

Avoid the Red Herring

One pitfall that you are likely to encounter during a dialogue on Sola Scriptura is the use of the "Red Herring." The "Red Herring" is a fallacy that attempts to avoid proving one point by shifting the audience's attention to some other point. This fallacy's strange name comes from the sport of fox hunting. Hunters would sometimes tie a fish (i.e. a red herring) to the tail of a fox in order to throw the dogs off its scent. The Red Herring fallacy does much the same thing. Instead of providing the evidence for Sola Scriptura, the objector will instead provide a proof of another related topic.

In this section, we will examine a few of the most common Red Herrings that you are likely to encounter and demonstrate why they really don't provide a demonstration of Sola Scriptura. Read the following dialogues and see if you can explain why these arguments do not prove Sola Scriptura.

The supremacy of the word of God

Cathy Catholic: "Where does Scripture teach the doctrine of Sola Scriptura?"

Peter Protestant: "The Bible teaches that the word of God is higher than any other authority. For example, Our Lord says in Matthew 4:4 -
"One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.'"

Since the Bible is the word of God, it alone is the Christian's highest authority. We do not judge, but the Word of God judges us and convicts us of sin:

Hebrews 4:12 - " Indeed, the word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart."

The oral traditions of the Apostles ceased after their deaths, but the word of God remains forever:

1 Peter 1.23-25 "You have been born anew, not from perishable but from imperishable seed, through the living and abiding word of God, for: "'All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of the field; the grass withers, and the flower wilts; but the word of the Lord remains forever.'"

It is by our fidelity to the word of God that enables us to be perfected in God's love, not our fidelity to human traditions.

1 John 2:5 - "But whoever keeps his word, the love of God is truly perfected in him."

Answer: The Red Herring committed here is the exaltation of the "word of God." Catholics can say "amen" to the fact that the word of God is supreme to any human doctrine or precept. But the supremacy of the word of God is not the question in point. The point that needs to be proved is that the word of God is consigned wholly to writing (i.e. the Scriptures) and therefore the Scriptures alone are the sole and supreme authority.

As for the passages quoted, let's look to see whether they equate the "word of God" with the Scriptures alone as Peter Protestant believes.

Matthew 4:4 - "One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.'"

This is Jesus' response to the temptation of the devil. There is no indication in this context that Jesus believed that the "word of God" was restricted solely to inspired writings. After all, Jesus says elsewhere in John 4.34, " Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish his work"

Hebrews 4:12 - " Indeed, the word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart."

The "word of God" spoken here is the gospel and Jesus, the Word of God, who judges. The context of this passage begins in Hebrews 3.12 - "Take care, brothers, that none of you may have an evil and unfaithful heart, so as to forsake the living God." It continues by showing examples of those who received God's word, did not remain faithful and were judged (cf. Heb. 3:15-19; 4:1-2, 6, 8, 11).

Verse 13 is key. " No creature is concealed from **him**, but everything is naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must render an account." Notice that it doesn't say "It" as referring to an object (namely the Scriptures), but "him." Confirmation that "him" refers to God is found in Protestant translations of this verse where they capitalize the pronoun "Him" since it is a reference to God. For example:

And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. *The New American Standard Bible*, (La Habra, California: The Lockman Foundation) 1977.

And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things *are* naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must give* account *The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

The New International Version explicitly interprets "Him" as God.

"Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. *The New International Version*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984.

1 Peter 1.23-25 "You have been born anew, not from perishable but from imperishable seed, through the living and abiding word of God, for: "All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of the field; the grass withers, and the flower wilts; but the Word of the Lord remains forever."

First Peter does speak of the "Word of God" as the gospel, but it does not equate it with Scripture. Rather, First Peter appears to be speaking of oral tradition or the oral proclamation of the Gospel. This is made clear in verse 25, which was not quoted:

"…but the word of the Lord remains forever." This is the word that has been **proclaimed to you.**"

Notice Peter does not say "written to you," but rather "proclaimed" (i.e. orally handed on to you). This is a great proof text for sacred tradition abiding forever, not Scripture alone. 1 John 2:5 also applies to sacred tradition as well.

1 John 2:5 - "But whoever keeps his word, the love of God is truly perfected in him."

A more complete quotation ought to include the following:

1 John 2:5-6 "But whoever keeps his word, the love of God is truly perfected in him. This is the way we may know that we are in union with him: whoever claims to abide in him ought to live (just) as he lived."

How do we know how Jesus lived? The Scripture certainly provides us with information, but so does sacred tradition. Paul says, " Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1). Paul didn't say, "Be imitators of me as I have written to you." Rather, the Corinthians learned how to imitate Jesus by *observing* Paul, not merely reading Paul's letters.

Red Herring 2 - The Glory of the Scriptures.

Frequently, a list of Scriptural passages are strung together which speak about the glory of God's word or its usefulness. Here are only a few examples:

Psalm 119:36, "The law of Thy mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver *pieces*.

Psalm 12:6, "The words of the LORD are pure words; As silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times."

Psalm 119:105-106, "Thy word is a lamp to my feet, And a light to my path. I have sworn, and I will confirm it, That I will keep Thy righteous ordinances."

As with the other Red Herring, simply numbering the true wonderful aspects of God's word does not prove that Scripture alone is the Christians sole rule of Faith. If anything, it merely proves that Scripture is a rule of Faith.

-In Brief-

a) Make sure that you let the person you are dialoging with knows that you are attacking the "Sola" and not the "Scriptura." Indeed, it is because you love the word of God that you reject Sola Scriptura – because it undermines the Scriptures.

b) Proving that the written word of God is awesome does not prove Sola Scriptura. It only proves that the word of God is great.

c) Most passages that exhort the word of God refer to the word given orally, not in writing. Therefore, if they prove anything, they show the importance of the word of God written and unwritten.

d) 1 Peter 3:23-25 – Speaks of the "word of God" that was preached orally, not Scripture per se.

e) 1 John 2:5 and Matthew 4:4 refer to the "word of God" in general, which applies to the word of God in writing and in Sacred Tradition alike.

f) Hebrews 4:12 refers to Jesus "the Word of God" not Scripture and some Protestant Bibles follow this meaning.

g) The various quotes from the Psalms simply expound the word of God. They do not teach that it alone is the final court of appeal.

Sola Scriptura Not in the Scriptures

If all that is needed to be believed by a Christian has been consigned to Sacred Scriptures and this is to be believed by Christians, then the Scriptures ought to teach *Sola Scriptura.* Otherwise, it is a self-contradictory doctrine.

To the Laws and to the Testimony

I still remember the night my friend Doug and I were on live computer religion forum. We were talking to a couple of Jehovah's Witnesses about the Trinity when my friend had struck a nerve with one of them and the J.W. invited Doug to temporarily get off the computer and call him up long distance to discuss the subject in person. "No problem," I said, "I'll be waiting for you in the empty 'Catholic / Orthodox' area."

In case you are not familiar with this kind of computer activity, the computer service to which I subscribe has areas, called forums, where people can get together on-line and type messages to each other back and forth in real time. Each forum is divided into sections where a particular topic will be discussed (i.e. Cars, Music, Religion and so on) and within each group is a subgroup for more specific areas of discussion (for example under religion there is: Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Catholic/ Orthodox and so on).

So, there I was the lone person in the Catholic/Orthodox forum awaiting the return of Doug when a couple of anti-Catholics saw me there and decided to engage in some discussion. Before I knew it, I was in the forum alone with three well-educated hard core Calvinists (five-point Calvinists to be exact)!

We started with some small talk, but I knew that it would be only a matter of minutes before they start ribbing me about one doctrine or another. So I decided to bet them to the punch and come up with a subject that I knew I could keep them on the ropes until Doug came back and evened up the number. But what? I got it! Sola Scriptura, the Protestant doctrine that the Bible alone is the Christian's sole and exclusive source of authority.

Just as I was about to bait these guys into discussing this topic, one of them (a Presbyterian pastor) asked me what I thought of the Bible. "Thank you God," I exclaimed and typed down my response which was that the Bible was inspired, inerrant and life changing and asked what they believe (knowing full well what they would respond).

Pastor John (we will call him) replied that he held to the Westminster Confession's definition of Scripture and that it alone (apart from Tradition) is our sole rule of faith. I did what any self-respecting apologist would do; I challenged him to demonstrate for me from the Bible where the Bible teaches that it alone is our sole and exclusive source of authority. Pastor John then proceeded to feverishly type out his reply.

"To the laws and to the testimony! If they do not speak according this word, it is because there is not light in them."

Isaiah 8:20 KJV

I was expecting him to cite some of the most common passages, like 2 Timothy 3:16, to which I had a ready response. But to my surprise, he brought up a passage from the Old Testament that I wasn't expecting Isaiah 8:20- "To the law and to the testimony. If they do not speak in accord with this word there is no life in them.' "How more clear does the Holy Spirit have to be?" Pastor John asked. "Scripture alone is our only touchstone for orthodoxy!" Luckily just then my friend Doug hopped into the forum and we began to examine this verse and pick it apart along with other verses pastor John brought up.

But to tell you the truth, I wasn't very happy with my reply to Isaiah 8:20. This verse caught me off guard since it isn't normally used as a proof text for Sola Scriptura. I sent Pastor John a private message and asked him if I could do a little research and continue our discussion through private E-mail. He agreed and I began looking into the matter.

My first stop was to E-mail my friend Dave Palm and ask him if he had any ideas on this passage. I remembered that sometime ago someone had proposed this verse to him and that he came up with some devastating responses. Dave replied with a copy of his response to this gentleman and I was right- he made some really good points. I added a few points of my own and sent it off with a feeling of satisfaction. Pastor John's reply was considerably disappointing. He had no response to this passage or any other we discussed.

The tricky thing about Isaiah 8:20 is that on the surface it is an excellent proof text for Sola Scriptura. It seems to say that all supposed revelations or doctrines must be first found explicitly in Scripture, otherwise it is darkness (i.e. not of God). Only after a little research and digging into this verse does one find that it not only completely falls apart, but it can actually substantiate the Catholic understanding of authority being; Tradition, Scripture and a divinely authorized teacher.

At the outset, I must admit this passage does have the potential to be a clear, perspicuous command for Sola Scriptura. If only a New Testament passage was as clear as this one the case for Sola Scriptura would be a 'slam dunk'. Unfortunately, it isn't in the New Testament nor is it a "slam dunk" for Sola Scriptura. I believe it has some very substantial problems These fall into 5 areas...

What is the meaning of the words "law" and the word "testimony"? Does "law" (torah in Hebrew) refer only to the first books of the Bible called the "torah" which is in fact the word used in our passage?

Well yes, the word law or "torah" does not necessarily specifically mean the Pentateuch; it often means more generically "instruction, direction, custom, manner." The case is even worse for the word "testimony". You see it is referring to whatever Scriptures the Israelites had in their possession at this time. If there is anything we can glean from the use of this word is that all of Scripture is NOT in view here. The word translated "testimony" (te'uwday) is never used in the Hebrew Scriptures to designate written Scripture. If Isaiah is not coining a new usage here, he may be talking about his own works, which he is passing on to his disciples for preservation. This seems to me to be a good example of a kind of primitive official teaching office of the Church.

"[B]ind up the testimony, Seal the law among my disciples." Isaiah doesn't say that his prophecies will be written down for his disciples' reference; rather, it is to be sealed in his disciples! This is not a Catholic bias. The evangelical Protestant scholar E.J. Young says, "Isaiah is to bind up God's revelation in the sense that he is to close it spiritually in the hearts of his disciples and to leave it there" (E.J. Young, Isaiah, vol 1. 313). This sounds pretty Catholic to me; revelation passed on orally to successors for preservation.

Still, we have the possibility of three interpretations; 1) Both the "Law" and the "Testimony" refer to Isaiah's uninscripturated prophetic instruction- which would explicitly deny Sola Scriptura; 2) The "Law" refers to the written Scripture (up until this time) and the "Testimony" refers to Isaiah's oral instruction- which mirrors the Catholic position or 3) That both the "Law" and "Testimony" refer to written Scripture- which would make this passage comport to the Sola Scriptura but would be the first time in the Hebrew Scriptures that "testimony" is used such a manner.

Even if this passage refers to Isaiah's oral instruction and the books of Moses, it would effectively narrow the Sola Scripturist's field of reference from the Bible alone to all Scripture written prior to the time of Isaiah. In other words, Isaiah would be saying, "If anything doesn't speak according to this word (i.e. Genesis 1:1 to Isaiah 8:20) they have no light in them. But what Protestant demonstration today holds to this point of view? Indeed, how could they?

This brings up a question. What happens when the New Covenant arrives and the old is passed away? If we are to understand the injunction in Isaiah 8:20 what would be made of Jesus when he says "you have heard" (quotes the Law) but I say to you" (cf. Matt 5:21 (Ex 20:13; Duet 5:17) => Matt 5:22; Matt 5:27 (Ex 20:14; Duet 5:18) => Matt 5:28; Matt 5:31(Deut 24:1,3) => Matt 5:32; Matt 5:33 (Lev 19:12; Num 30:32; Deut 20:21, 23)=> Matt 5:34; Matt 5:38 (Ex 21:24; Lev 24:20; Deut 19:21)=> Matt 5:39; Matt 5:43 (Lev 19:18; Deut 23:3-6)=> Matt 5:44). Would the person holding to your understanding of Isaiah 8 see his words as having light? Or what would happen to Peter's vision to slaughter and eat animals which the Law forbade eating (cf. Act 10:13 (Lev 11:20-25; Deut 14:4-20))? Had Peter said what he did in Act 10:28 would a Christian obeying Isaiah 8:20 see Peter's claimed revelation as having light?

Other Modern Translations

"To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn." (New American Standard Bible)

"'…for teaching and for instruction?' surely, those who speak like this will have no dawn!"
(New Revised Standard)

"You are to answer them, 'Listen to what the Lord is teaching you! Don't listen to mediums—what they tell you cannot keep trouble away.'"
(Good News Translation)

"'...for teaching and instruction?' For they will indeed give you this unenlightened suggestion."
(The Complete Jewish Bible)

This point is the most important. Verse 20 is the most important verse of the passage, and we can squabble about its interpretation, but there is a very serious problem on how it is supposed to be read (let alone interpreted). This is not a trick. Evangelical scholar John Oswalt says, "The Hebrew of this sentence presents numerous problems" (Oswalt, NICOT, vol 1. 230). Hebrew text is not clear just who is speaking in v.20!

So let's consult a neutral third party for a translation of this verse, the Tanakh translation done exclusively by Jewish scholars: "Bind up the message, seal the instruction with my disciples. . . . Now, should people say to you, 'Inquire of the ghosts and familiar spirits that chirp and moan; for a people may inquire of its divine beings—of the dead on behalf of the living—for instruction and message,' surely, for one who speaks thus there shall be no dawn." As you see, the "instruction and message" they were looking for in v.20 came

from necromancy, not from Scripture or even Isaiah's message (see also the New English Bible, Revised English Bible, Revised Standard Verse, New Revised Standard Version, Jerusalem Bible, New Jerusalem Bible, Goodspeed-Smith).

Given the difficulties this passage presents (not only in its interpretation, but even its correct reading) to an unlearned person (like myself) and to scholars (Jewish, Catholic and Protestant alike), I'd say that this passage fails to meet the criterion of Westminster Confession of Faith 1:7. It reads, "All things in Scripture . . . which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation, are so clearly propounded, and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them." Sola Scriptura may be proved else where, but not here.

"All Scripture is inspired..."

Protestant Argument:

Protestants argue that 2 Timothy 3:16-17 teaches Sola Scripture. The passage reads, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Protestants draw three things from this passage that they say teaches Sola Scriptura.

First, the Scripture is said to be inspired (literally "God-breathed"). This means that Scripture is not ordinary human writing, but it is divine.

Second, "All Scripture" is said to be capable for "teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness." In other words, Scripture gives the believer everything that he or she needs for doctrine. What more does a Christian need? Scripture says, "nothing."

Third, 2 Timothy 3:17 says that Scripture makes the man of God "adequate" and perfectly "equipped" for every good work. What more does the man of God need other than Scripture? Nothing

Catholic Response:

In answer to the first objection, it is true that God inspires Scripture and this sets it apart from all human works. As we have read in Dei Verbum, the Catholic Church holds Sacred Scripture in the highest regard. But it does not follow that simply because Scripture is inspired that it can be used as a sole and sufficient rule of Faith.

Protestants sometimes accuse Catholic apologists of lowering the Scripture because we deny that it can be used as a sole rule of Faith. This is not true. We do not take anything away from the Scriptures by denying what it had never been intended to be. Likewise, Protestants do not raise the Scriptures by making it do something that it was not meant to do. This is something to always keep in mind when discussing Sola Scriptura. Catholics hold the Scripture in the highest regard and we do not deny that reading Scripture can be life changing.

Second, the objector overlooked a very important word - profitable. Scripture is **profitable** for teaching, reproof and training in righteousness. It doesn't say "sufficient" or that it "alone is sufficient" to teach, to reproof and to train in righteousness. It only says it is profitable. Profitable is not sufficient. For example, drinking water is profitable to lead a healthy life. Indeed, drinking water is important. In fact, if you don't drink water you will die. But it doesn't follow that drinking water is alone sufficient to lead a healthy life. We need food, clothing, exercise and a whole host of other things as well.

The third objection focuses on the words "adequate" and "equipped." It is argued that since Scripture can adequately equip the man of God, nothing else is necessary. This argument can be answered in a number of ways. One could point out that the Scriptures are only profitable to equip the man of God, not that it alone equips the man of God. Another tact is to point out that the Greek words for adequate and equipped mean "having all things in their proper order." In other words, the Scriptures supply what is needed (along with other things) so as to render the man of God adequately equipped. But what are those other things that are needed.

The Catholic Interpretation

The context is deadly to the Protestant position. When we read the preceding verses, we find that there are three things highlighted by Paul that the man of God must have:

2 Timothy 14-15 "You, however, **continue in the things you have learned** and become convinced of, **knowing from whom you have learned them**, and that **from childhood you have known the sacred writings** which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

Paul tells Timothy that he should "continue in the things you have learned," which means oral instruction or tradition. Timothy should be assured of what he has learned, not because it corresponds to how Timothy interprets Sacred Scripture, because he knows from whom he had learned them. In other words, a recognized teaching authority taught Timothy (i.e. a magisterium).

Newman's Argument

Paul also tells Timothy to follow the Scriptures that he had known since infancy. This is another problem for the Sola Scripturist. In context, the Scripture that Timothy knew in his infancy could only be the Old Testament. The New Testament had not been written and collected together into a canon. So if 2 Timothy 3:16-17 teaches that "Scripture" alone is sufficient for teaching then it would make Paul say that the "Old Testament" is alone sufficient for teachings, which is ludicrous.

Newman's argument is even stronger when one reads this passage in Greek. The word translated as 'all' in "all Scripture is inspired by God" means "every." 2 Timothy really should read, "Every Scripture is inspired by God and it is profitable…" Now, if the Scriptures here refer to the Old Testament then Paul is teaching that every individual book of the Old Testament is capable of being a Christian's sole rule of Faith. This, of course, cannot be true. No one would accept that the Book of Esther can teach all that a Christian needs to know for faith and morals. Therefore, the Protestant interpretation cannot be correct.

2 Timothy 3:14ff teaches that oral tradition that is taught by a recognized authority and Scriptures are able to complete the man of God for every good work. It does not teach Sola Scriptura.

Imitation of Christ

The third argument often made to support Sola Scriptura comes from how Christ used the Scriptures.

Protestants argue that whenever Our Lord was going to correct the Jews, he quoted Scripture. When Christ was tempted in the desert, he rebuked the devil with Scripture and he often uses the solemn formula "it is written."

The most prominent text cited comes from Acts 17:11. Paul had preached the gospel to the Jews in Thessalonica, but they would not listen to his preaching. But when he traveled to the Jews in Berea, things were different.

"Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

Protestants argue that Scripture here commends those who lookup all that is taught and compare it to Scripture. Therefore, Christians likewise should hold all teachings to the standards of the Scriptures.

Catholic Answer For The Third Argument

The Catholic Church teaches that both Scripture and Tradition are sources of God's revelation. Therefore, it is perfectly acceptable to cite Scripture as an authority. The difference is that Scripture cannot stand as the sole authority. In fact, it is impossible for Sola Scripture to have been practiced by Jesus and Paul because the New Testament hadn't been written and there are things in Christian teachings that could not be known by an examination of the Old Testament alone.

We already discussed Jesus' sermon on the mount (cf. Matt 5:21 (Ex 20:13; Duet 5:17) => Matt 5:22; Matt 5:27 (Ex 20:14; Duet 5:18) => Matt 5:28; Matt 5:31(Deut 24:1,3) => Matt 5:32; Matt 5:33 (Lev 19:12; Num 30:32; Deut 20:21, 23)=> Matt 5:34; Matt 5:38 (Ex 21:24; Lev 24:20; Deut 19:21)=> Matt 5:39; Matt 5:43 (Lev 19:18; Deut 23:3-6)=> Matt 5:44). If Paul preached in Berea that anyone who marries a divorced

woman commits adultery, what would the Berean's have concluded after consulting the Old Testament?

Likewise, when Peter had received a vision in Acts 10:28 that God has declare all food clean, what passage in the Old Testament would the Jews had turned to for confirmation in the Old Testament? Nowhere. The problem with this argument is that Paul is speaking of Jews and not Christians. He was using the Old Testament to prove that Jesus is the promised Messiah. Once they become Christian, then they must accept whatever the Messiah taught, regardless of whether it is in the Old Testament or not. Therefore, this passage (and the others employed by Protestants) do not demonstrate Sola Scriptura in action.

-In Brief-

a) If Sola Scriptura is true, then we ought to appeal to the Scriptures to establish that it is true. Since we cannot, it is an inconsistent position . (The Scriptures are the highest and last court of appeals except for the doctrine that the Scripture is the highest and last court of appeals).

b) Isaiah 8:20 KJV is a not an authentic passage in Scripture and the words used in this passage can be interpreted to be affirming oral tradition (not Scripture).

c) Protestants draw three propositions from 2 Timothy 3:16-17: (1) Scripture alone is "God-breathed" therefore it alone is the final authority; (2) Scripture is used for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness," what else is needed? (3) Scripture makes one "perfect" and "complete" lacking in nothing. Therefore, nothing else is needed.

d) Although Scripture is inspired, it does not follow that it alone is the word of God, only that its transmission is unique and wonderful.

e) 2 Timothy 3:16 states that Scripture is "profitable" or "useful" for teaching, for reproof and so on. It does not teach that it alone can do this or that it is all-sufficient.

f) 2 Timothy 3:17 talks about making the man of God "perfectly fitted out" for good works. The two words sometimes translated "perfect" and "complete" are rare, but their cognates show that they mean that all the parts are present and in the right order (e.g. an ice cream sundae is made "perfect" and "complete" when one adds the cherry on top).

g) 2 Timothy 3:14-15 shows that Paul already had in mind Timothy accepting oral instructions by a publicly acknowledged authority (i.e. Sacred Tradition and the Church). The Scripture is that which completes these three for the man of God.

h) Newman argued that if 2 Timothy 3:16-17 taught that Scripture is all a Christian needs, then it teaches too much since the "Scripture" referenced here could only be the Old Testament. It would, therefore, teach, that the Old Testament alone is sufficient for the Christian (which is not possible).

i) Acts 17:11 cannot establish Sola Scripture because these were *Jews* trying to see if Christ fulfilled all the messianic prophecies of the Old Testament, not Christians searching the Old and New Testament to see if Baptism was "biblical."

j) Sola Scriptura cannot be used in the New Testament because some Christian teachings go beyond the Old Testament. For example, Christ's Sermon on the Mount. Peter's revelation that all foods are clean. How could these things be established on the authority of the Old Testament alone apart from the authority of Christ's Sacred Tradition?

Sola Scriptura Can Not Tell Us What Is The Scriptura

Perhaps the most devastating problem with Sola Scriptura is that it cannot tell us with certainty which books belong in the Bible. The Sola Scripturist assumes that the Bible he is holding in his hands contains nothing but inspired books, but when pressed to answer how they know this to be true. They cannot answer. In this section, we will be investigating the problem of canon.

There are three basic approaches that Protestants use to explain what is the canon of Scripture, namely the historical investigative method, the "canon within a canon" method and the "self-authentication / witness of the Holy Spirit" method. For this section we will look at the Old Testament canon since the same problems are present with the New Testament as well. Let's examine these each in turn.

The Historical Investigative Method

Many Protestants believe that one can identify the canon of Scripture by investigating history. Proponents of this method claim that the Old Testament canon was closed (i.e. a fit set of books to which none can be removed or added) existed prior to the time of Christ. The following are typical texts that they appeal to:

One book they may appeal to is the deuterocanonical book of Sirach. Of course, they do not appeal to it as Scripture, but rather as evidence that the canon had been closed. Protestants sometimes argue that in the introduction to Sirach, the translator speaks of Scripture as "the Law, the Prophets and the Writings." Since, it is claimed, that the later Jewish canon (which has the shorter Old canon) is often spoken of by the same divisions, this teaches that the Bible of Sirach's day must have been identical to Protestantism.

There are two problems with this argument. First, the earliest known reference to "the Law, the Prophets and the Writings" in Jewish literature comes from the second Christian century, hundreds of years after Sirach. The assumption that the canon designated at this late point in time must be identical to that hundreds of years earlier is purely gratuitous.

A second problem lies in the text of Sirach itself. The introduction never says "the Law, the Prophets and the Writings." Rather, it speaks of Scripture as "the law, the prophets, and the later authors," "the law, the prophets, and the rest of the books of our ancestors," and "of the law itself, the prophets and the rest of the books." Notice that Sirach's translator never uses a title for the third category later known as the "writings." This strongly suggests that the third division of the Hebrew Scriptures has not been set into a fixed collection.

Moreover, Sirach himself seems to claim that he is writing inspired Scripture.

"… [That] Ben-Sira reckoned his book as Scripture is clear from his words: 'And I, last of all, came as one that gleaneth after the grape-gatherers. By the blessing of the Lord I made progress, and, as a grape-gatherer, filled my winepress. Consider that I laboured not for myself alone, but for all who seek instruction. Hearken unto me, ye great ones of the people; and ye rulers of the congregation, give ear to me'" (Sirach 33:16-18)

If Scripture has been closed during the time of Sirach, then Sirach could not have thought his work should be included in Scripture.

Scrolls Laid Up In The Temple

Protestant apologists sometimes argue that only the books of the Protestant Old Testament Scripture was "laid up" in the Temple in Jerusalem. Therefore, the Temple itself witnesses that the deuterocanon was not to be included in Scripture.

To support this claim, they rely on two separate sources of material, the writings of the Jewish historian Josephus (ca. 100 AD) and later rabbinical writings (after 150 AD). Again, there are problems with the sources. First, Josephus is the only one that we have extant writings who may have known which scrolls were "laid up" in the Temple. Josephus mentions those books that were "laid up" in the Temple in three passage in Jewish Antiquities.

Book 3, 1 – "They were also in admiration how Moses was honored by God; and they made grateful returns of sacrifices to God for his providence towards them. Now that Scripture, which is laid up in the temple, informs us, how God foretold to Moses, that water timid in this manner be derived out of the rock.'"

Book 5,1,17 "Now, that the day was lengthened at this thee, and was longer than ordinary, is expressed in the books laid up in the temple."

Book 10,4,2 – "But as the high priest was bringing out the gold, he lighted upon the holy books of Moses that were laid up in the temple."

These passages do not speak of the whole Protestant Old Testament, but only the first five books of the Bible and Joshua. Reference to the other books of the canon come much later and it is found in Jewish religious literature well after Christianity and Judaism had split.

Against Apion

Another passage comely appeals is another work of Josephus called Against Apion. The passage reads:

"For we have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from and contradicting one another, [as the Greeks have,] but only twenty-two books, which contain the records of all the past times; which are justly believed to be divine; and of them five belong to Moses, which contain his laws and the traditions of the origin of mankind till his death. This interval of time was little short of three thousand years; but as to the time from the death of Moses till the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, who reigned after Xerxes, the prophets, who were after Moses, wrote down what was done in their times in thirteen books. The remaining four books contain hymns to God, and precepts for the conduct of human life. It is true, our history hath been written since Artaxerxes very particularly, but hath not been esteemed of the like authority with the former by our forefathers, because there hath not been an exact succession of prophets." (Against Apion, 1.8)

Protestants claim that Josephus is saying that inspired Prophets composed only twenty-two books (i.e. the Protestant OT). Therefore, the deuterocanon, which was written after the time of Artexerxes, are not prophetic books.

First, this passage from Josephus is taken from a polemical work that Josephus wrote against the Greeks. Earlier, Josephus had penned the work Jewish Antiquities which chronicled the history of the Jews from Creation all the way to Nero. In it, he claimed to use only the sacred texts of the Jews (BTW- In it, he used the deuterocanonical sections of Esther and First Maccabees). The Greeks said that the Jews were not the most ancient race because they do not appear until late in the pagan histories. Josephus, in Against Apion, must vindicate the truthfulness of Antiquities. Therefore, Josephus takes the time of Artaxerxes as his main point because the earliest pagan histories begin writing around this time. He states that there are only twenty-two books that chronicle the history between creation and Artaxerxes and that this corpus of work enjoys a "succession of prophets" namely an unbroken historical narrative. After Artaxerxes, Jewish history is written only in fragments. He does not say that there were no more prophets after Artaxerxes, only that there isn't an "exact succession" of prophets.

Second, Josephus' witness to the canon is suspect because he follows his statements about the twenty-two books with some demonstrably erroneous claims:

"[H]ow firmly we have given credit to these books of our own nation is evident by what we do; for during so many ages as have already passed, no one has been so bold as either to add any thing to them, to take any thing from them, or to make any change in them; but it is become natural to all Jews immediately, and from their very birth, to esteem these books to contain Divine doctrines, and to persist in them, and, if occasion be willingly to die for them. For it is no new thing for our captives, many of them in number, and frequently in time, to be seen to endure racks and deaths of all kinds upon the theatres, that they may not be obliged to say one word against our laws and the records that contain them; whereas there are none at all among the Greeks who would undergo the least harm on that account, no, nor in case all the writings that are among them were to be destroyed; for they take them to be such discourses as are framed agreeably to the inclinations of those that write them; and they have justly the same opinion of the ancient writers, since they see some of the present generation bold enough to write about such affairs, wherein they were not present, nor had concern enough to inform themselves about them from those that knew them; examples of which may be had in this late war of ours, where some persons have written histories, and published them, without having been in the places concerned, or having been near them when the actions were done; but these men put a few things together by hearsay, and insolently abuse the world, and call these writings by the name of Histories."

The Dead Sea Scrolls have demonstrated that there were many different versions of several of the Old Testament books and the Jews freely changed words and letters within this text. We do not find the type of fixed text Josephus talks about until the beginning of the Second Christian century. Therefore, Josephus is not to be fully trusted in this matter.

The New Testament's Old Testament Bible

Did Jesus and his apostles inherit a well-defined closed canon from the Jews? Yes and no. There existed a collection of sacred writings that contained many books universally recognized as divine and authoritative, but the evidence indicates that the exact limits of this collection were not altogether clear. Like a soft-focus photograph, the oldest and most central books (e.g., the five books of Moses and the Prophets) appear to be clearly defined. The outer edges of this collection, which constitutes the third category of Scripture, are a bit blurred. Some books that are accepted by both Catholics and Protestants such as Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs and others are not quoted or even alluded to in the New Testament. On the other hand, the New Testament does quote and allude to books that are today considered non-canonical. For this reason, one ought to be cautious not to overstate the importance or significance of a quote or the absence of a quote in the New Testament.

Did the New Testament quote from the disputed books? If one is speaking of a formal quote, the answer is no. But a formal quote is only one way a text can be used by an author. An author could make reference to a book or a particular character in a book. He or she could allude to a text by borrowing its thoughts and sometimes its language as well. A text can also provide a principle that is utilized by another author to demonstrate a point. In all of these ways, the disputed books are referenced in the New Testament. This is not the product of Catholic bias. On the contrary, early in Protestant history New Testament usage of the disputed books was an accepted fact. So much so, that early Protestant Bibles often cross-referenced the disputed books to both the Old and the New Testaments! The Protestant Reformers often downplayed the importance of these references and when hundreds of years later the disputed books were eventually removed from Protestant Bibles the cross-references to the disputed books were removed as well. A myth began to take hold within certain circles that the New Testament is utterly devoid of any reference or allusion or quotation from the disputed books. But such is not the case, as the Protestant G. Wildeboer concedes:

> "The fact that the N.T. writers quote from apocryphal books can only be denied by dogmatic prejudice… the facts speak too plainly, and it is a hopeless undertaking to try to invalidate them."

Indeed. The twenty-seventh edition of the Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament lists well over one hundred points of contact between the New Testament and the disputed books in its index. The strength of these contacts runs the gamut from an undeniable reference to a mere correspondence of thought. For this reason, we will restrict our analysis to those references noted by both the Nestle-Aland and the 1611 edition of the Protestant King James Bible. It will be the editors of the original King James Bible that will be our guides. Once these revered Protestant editors have had their cross-references presented, additional texts will be provided as well. These latter references, while not found in the original King James Bible, are recognized by many Protestant scholars such as Bruce M. Metzger, W. H. Daubney, J. B. Lightfoot and others.

Matthew 27:43 & Wisdom 2:17, 18

Matthew 27:30-43
30 They spat upon him and took the reed and kept striking him on the head. 31 And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the cloak, dressed him in his own clothes, and led him off to crucify him.32 As they were going out, they met a Cyrenian named Simon; this man they pressed into service to carry his cross.33 And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of the Skull), 34 they gave Jesus wine to drink mixed with gall. But when he had tasted it, he refused to drink. 35 After they had crucified him, they divided his garments by casting lots; 36 then they sat down and kept watch over him there.37 And they placed over his head the written charge against him: This is Jesus, the King of the Jews. 38 Two revolutionaries were crucified with him, one on his right and the other on his left. 39 Those passing by reviled him, shaking their heads 40 and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself, if you are the Son of God, (and) come down from the cross!" 41 Likewise the chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked him and said, 42 "He saved others; he cannot save himself. So he is the king of Israel! Let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. 43 "He saved others; he cannot save himself. So he is the king of Israel! Let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now if he wants him. For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'"

Wisdom 2:17-21
17 Let us see whether his words be true; let us find out
what will happen to him.
18 For if the just one be the son of God, he will defend
him and deliver him from the hand of his foes.
19 With revilement and torture let us put him to the test
that we may have proof of his gentleness and try his
patience.
20 Let us condemn him to a shameful death; for
according to his own words, God will take care of
him."
21 These were their thoughts, but they erred; for their
wickedness blinded them,
22 And they knew not the hidden counsels of God;
neither did they count on a recompense of holiness nor
discern the innocent souls' reward.
23 For God formed man to be imperishable; the image
of his own nature he made him.
24 But by the envy of the devil, death entered the world,
and they who are in his possession experience it.

The larger context of Matthew 27:42-43 is given here for the reader's benefit. Most modern Bibles will direct the reader to the Suffering Servant passage in Psalm 22:8-9, which reads:

> "All who see me mock me; they curl their lips and jeer; they shake their heads at me: 'You relied on the LORD—let him deliver you; if he loves you, let him rescue you.'"

If your Bible includes the disputed books, it will likely provide a second cross-reference to Wisdom 2:17-18. Both Psalm 22:8-9 and Wisdom 2:17-18 speak about God rescuing the just man who places his trust in Him. But the words of the elders in Matthew 27:43 suggests something more specific. They appear to base their taunt for God to rescue Jesus, not on the basis that Jesus is loved by God (as Psalm 22:8-9 suggests), but that God ought to rescue Jesus because he claimed to be the Son of God, as seen in the last line of Matthew 27:43, which reads:

> "He trusted in God; let him deliver him now if he wants him. For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'"

But where in the Old Testament could the chief priests, scribes and elders have found such a promise of deliverance for the true Son of God? Psalm 22:8-9 mentions nothing of such a claim nor is there any other passage in the Old Testament that does so except for Wisdom 2:17-18, which states:

> "For if the just one be the son of God, he will defend him and deliver him from the hand of his foes."

Several conclusions follow from this connection.

First, the elders must have understood the Book of Wisdom to be an authoritative sacred text. The use of a recognized apocryphal text here would render this taunt meaningless and perhaps even blasphemous. Second, the chief priests, scribes and elders must have expected their hearers to be familiar with Wisdom 2:17-18 otherwise their words would have been lost on their audience. Third, Matthew must have seen in this jeer something of religious significance since it is included in his Gospel. Matthew must have seen in these words that Jesus' ultimate rescue in the Resurrection a vindication and divine demonstration that Jesus is truly the Son of God. Fourth, Matthew expected his readers to also know this text and apparently accept it as a genuine prophecy. The early Christians frequently cited Wisdom 2:17-18 as a genuine prophecy of Christ's passion.

Hebrews 11:35 & Second Maccabees 7:7

Hebrews 11:35
"Women received back their dead through resurrection. Some were tortured and would not accept deliverance, in order to obtain a better resurrection."

2 Maccabees 7:1, 13-14
It also happened that seven brothers with their mother were arrested and tortured with whips and scourges by the king, to force them to eat pork in violation of God's law…. Now when this man was dead also, they tormented and mangled the fourth in like manner. So when he was ready to die he said thus, It is good, being put to death by men, to look for hope from God to be raised up again by him: as for thee, thou shalt have no resurrection to life.

The writer of the Book of Hebrews provides a long list of figures from sacred history whose faithfulness "gained approval." The author arranges a series of illustrations from Biblical figures in near chronological order: Abel (Genesis 4:4), Enoch (Genesis 5:21-24), Noah (Genesis 6:13-22) Abraham (Genesis 12:1-4,8, 13:3, 18, 18:1-9 et al.), Sarah (Genesis 17:19, 18:11-14, 21:1), Isaac (Genesis 22:1-10, 21:12, 27:27-29), Jacob and Esau (Genesis 27:27-29, 48:1, 5, 16, 20), Joseph (Genesis 50), Moses (Exodus 2:2, 10-11, 15), Joshua (Joshua 6:20), Gideon (Judges 6-7), Barak (Judges 4-5), Samson (Judges 13-16), Jephthah (Judges 13-16), of David (1 Samuel 16:1-13) and Samuel (1 Samuel 1:20) and the prophets." The writer of Hebrews continues his list of these great biblical figures by recounting their exploits rather than listing their names.

In Hebrews 11:35, the writer makes reference to Maccabean martyrs depicted in 2 Maccabees 7:1-42.

This can be stated with some degree of certainty since there are no other figures presented in the Greek Old Testament of persons undergoing torture and not accepting deliverance for the sake of the obtaining a "better resurrection." Twice in the episode of the Maccabean martyrs there was an acceptance of torture and death for the sake of resurrection and eternal life. For example, the second son in 2 Maccabees 7:9 states: "…'Thou indeed, O most wicked man, destroyest us out of this present life: but the King of the world will raise us up, who die for his laws, in the resurrection of eternal life.'" Likewise, the fourth son in 2 Maccabees 7:14 says, "… 'It is better, being put to death by men, to look for hope from God, to be raised up again by him: for, as to thee thou shalt have no resurrection unto life.'" These statements fit perfectly the description given in Hebrew 11:35.

Daubney notes that these Hebrews 11:35 and Second Maccabees is also linguistically linked as well:

> "The word in Heb. xi. 35, rendered 'tormented,' is a peculiar one (τυμπανιϖζω)…is used here in reference to the τυϖμπανον, in the account of Eleazar's martyrdom in Maccabees, which the Dean does not hesitate to assert is the case especially intended. Also the word for 'cruel mockings' in verse 36 is peculiar to this verse and 2 Macc. vii. 7. Other of the deeds and suffering enumerated are also based upon the Maccabean history."

Apart from dogmatic prejudice, this reference to Second Maccabees is pretty much undeniable and Catholic and Protestants rightly acknowledge this point of contact between Hebrews and the disputed Book of Maccabees.

In terms of the canon, the context in which this reference to Maccabees is given is important. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews provides a panoramic view of sacred history beginning with Abel in the Book of Genesis and continuing on (more or less chronologically) through to the Book of Maccabees. The writer of Hebrews, although restricting himself to biblical figures, did not restrict his examples to the confines of the shorter canon (e.g. Genesis – to the time of Ezra). If the reference to Second Maccabees in Hebrews 11:35 is certain, as it appears to be, then the writer of Hebrews saw sacred history (i.e. biblical history) continuing up until New Testament times.

Others can be given, but this is enough to show that the New Testament writers did not know and use the dueterocanon in their writings. The books of the Old Testament during the time of Jesus was not closed. There were a core group of books that were recognized by all Jews and some whose inspired status is unclear.

Bar Cochba

The Old Testament canon would not be closed until about 150 AD when the Christians refused to join with the Jews in a revolt against Rome.

An uneasy tension existed between the Romans and the Jews in Palestine existed in Palestine since the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 AD. In 118 A.D., Hadrian I was elected emperor. Hadrian, unlike his predecessors was sympathetic to the plight of the Jews and proposed to rebuild the Jerusalem Temple. This gesture by the emperor raised expections among many Jews that the messiah would appear and restore the Israel to its former glory. Hadrian, however, had second thoughts and decided to move the location of the new Temple from its original sacred spot to a different location. Hadrian's actions set the stage for open rebellion.

Moore notes, "This rebellion was not merely a national uprising, but a messianic movement." The chief rabbi at Jamnis, Rabbi Akiba ben Joseph, declared the leader of the revolt, Simon Bar Cochba, to be the Messiah that would deliver the people of God. Simon was the "star out of Jacob" (Bar Cochba is Hebrew for "son of the start") that was predicted by Balaam in Number 24:17. The rebel force consisted not only of the Jews from Palestine, but also Samartians and even pagans who shared the same distaste for Roman rule. Bar Cochba and his followers pressured the Christians to denounce Christ and join in on the rebellion. By refusing to join in the rebellion, Christians were now treated as heretics and traitors.

It is during this unsteady time that Judaism, under the leadership of Rabbi Akiba, rejected all things Christian. Moore concludes his study:

> "Not the least interesting result of an examination of these sources is the fact that the attempt authoritatively to define the Jewish canon of the Hagiographa begins with the exclusion by name of Christian Scriptures."

Moore notes:

> "Older than any catalogue of the canonical books which has been preserved are specific decisions that certain books are not inspired scripture, and among these repudiated books the Gospels stand in the front rank."

The earliest text that repudiates the disputed books *en bloc* is Tosefta Yahayim 2:13, which reads:

> "The Gospels and heretical books do not defile the hands. The books of Ben Sira and all other books written from then on, do not defile the hands."

Elsewhere, the topic of what can be saved from a burning building on the Sabbath, Tosefta Shabbath, 13:5 answers:

> "The Gospels and the books of the heretics may not be saved from the fire, but are burned in their place, they and the divine names occurring in them."

Since these books were not sacred Scriptures, they could not be saved on the Sabbath.

It is roughly at this time when Judaism definitively rejected the Greek translation of the Old Testament known as the Septuagint. Until this time, the Septuagint served as a common medium of discourse between the Jews and Christians. The early Christians, who inherited the usage of the Septuagint from the apostles, referred it to the Hebrew text since it contains many renderings that were no doubt seen as Christian friendly.

> "This very heavy usage of the LXX [Septuagint] by the Christian community no doubt was a major factor in the Jewish reaction against the LXX at the end of the first century CE and their rejection of it altogether in the second century CE."

A Jewish proselyte and disciple of Rabbi Akiba named Aquila produced a hyper-literal Greek translation of the Hebrew Masoretic text to serve as a replacement for Greek-speaking Jews who had formerly relied on the Septuagint. Aquila's text, following Rabbi Akiba's dictates, did not include the disputed books. Aquila's translation was "very favorably received by the Jews, to whom it proved all the more serviceable with the early Christians, because under its appearance of strict literalism, it seems to have been at times biased in its renderings by dogmatic prejudice."

The middle of the second Christian century also marked the wholesale adoption of the Hebrew Messoretic Text (MT) as the standard text for Judaism. It was once thought that the Old Testament circulated under only two forms - the Hebrew Masoretic Text and the Greek Septuagint, which was thought to be a loose translation of the MT. The Dead Sea Scrolls has radically changed this understanding. Solid evidence now exists that at least some books of the Old Testament circulated in different forms and versions prior to the Christian era and that it was not until the second Christian century that the Masoretic Text supplanted all other versions as *the* standard text for the Jews.

Consider this remarkable string of events:

1) Rabbi Akiba, the head of the school at Jamnia, identifies of Simon Bar Cochba as the messiah.
2) Talmudic passages (dating roughly at this time) categorically reject the Christian Gospels and the disputed books *en bloc*.
3) The wholesale rejection of the long held Septuagint text
4) The advent of an alternative hyper-literal Greek replacement for the LXX by Aquila, a disciple of rabbi Akiba.
5) The adoption of a single standardized Old Testament text, which was roughly equivalent to the modern day Messoretic Text (MT).
6) Justin's accusation that the Jews "deleted" certain books and passages from Scripture.
7) The cessation of prophecy theory appears in Jewish literature.
8) Origen, with full knowledge of the contents of the Hebrew MT, echoes Justin's accusation.
9) The appearance of Christian Old Testament lists attempting to ascertain which books were accepted by the Jews.

Good circumstantial evidence exists that *some* radical redefinition of the Old Testament canon had occurred between the founding of the school in Jamnia (70 AD) and culminating in the Second Jewish Revolt (132 – 135 AD). The Jews adopted a more constricted canon while the Christians continued with a larger collection of Scriptures that they inherited from the pre-70 AD era.

The Christian Old Testament Scripture slowly becomes more focused after the time of Justin. The extracanonical books that once lingered on the edges of the "soft-focus" era (e.g. The Book of Enoch, Fourth

Ezra et al.) fall into disuse and the few Fathers who wished to still use them did so with a conscience need to defend their usage.

After the Second Jewish Revolt, two distinct canons emerge. The adoption of a shorter canon and the rejection of the Septuagint posed a new obstacle for Christians / Jewish apologetics and evangelism. What had been standard apologies for the Christian Faith were no longer admissible (or effective) for a growing number of the Jewish population. A concerted effort was needed on the part of Christian apologists to determine exactly what texts the Jews did and did not accept. The Father known to attempt to construct such a list is Melito of Sardis.

-In Brief-

1) Later Judaism (ca 200 AD) adopted the three fold division of Scripture (e.g. The Law, the Prophets and the Writings) after they rejected the Dueterocanon.

2) There is no evidence of the Jewish three-fold division being used before Christ.

3) The Jewish historian Josephus (ca. 100 AD) wrote a diatribe against the pagan Apion who claimed Josephus' Antiquities of the Jews was a fraud because the Jews were not mentioned until late among the Greek historians. Josephus answers that the most complete history of the Jews are recorded among twenty-two books (i.e. the books of the Protestant canon) that were composed before the King Artexerxes (i.e. before the earliest Greek historians began writing). Against Apion does not limit the canon to the Protocanonical books.

4) The omission of some of the deuterocanonical books in the New Testament does not "prove" they were rejected. Otherwise, the books of Esther, Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs should be rejected also since they too were omitted.

5) Matthew 27:43 has the chief priests and elders using Wisdom 2:15-16 in their mock against Christ. They, therefore, must have considered this book prophetic.

6) Hebrews 11:35 mentions the Maccabean martyrs in its panorama of Old Testament saints. Therefore, the writer of Hebrews must have considered it Scripture.

7) The earliest rejection of the Deuterocanon (and the closing of a canon) come from Rabbi Akiba around 135 AD. This same decree reject the Christian Gospels as inspired (defile the hands). Akiba was also the head rabbi who identified Bar Cochba as the promised messiah and had persecuted Christians. It is this canon that Protestants, unknowingly, appeal to when they appeal to St. Jerome.

8) St. Jerome (ca. End of the fourth century AD) was the first Christian to explicitly reject the Deuterocanon as Apocrypha. He based this belief on the fact that there was only one version of the Hebrew text of Scripture (the Masoretic Text) and concluded that it must be identical to the original. The Dead Sea Scrolls have proved Jerome's assertion to be false.

9) Trent merely reaffirmed the canons of Hippo, Carthage and Florence

Perspicuity and Authority

Clarity of Scripture

Perhaps the best explanation of the Protestant position on the clarity (or perspicuity) of Scripture is given in the Reformed **Westminster Confession, Chapter 1, Paragraph 7**

> VII. **All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves**, nor alike clear unto all: yet those things which are **necessary** to be known, believed, and observed for salvation are **so clearly propounded, and opened** in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them.

In paragraph 7 we are told that not all things in Scripture are equally clear. However, those things that are "necessary to be known, believed and observed for salvation" are "so clearly propounded" that both the learned and the unlearned can obtain knowledge of them.

But who or what determines whether a given passage is clear or unclear? This difficulty operates on two levels:

1) Do we know with certainty that a given text is identical to the original inspired autograph and the meaning of the words that we are interpreting are true to their original meaning?

2) The interpretation of the passage is clear.

In the first case, we can know with a high degree of certainty what the original text read for about 98% of the Bible. However, the meaning of the words is much trickier for the following reasons:

1) The original Hebrew of the OT was a consonantal language. In other words, it didn't have vowels. For example, it would write the word "bird" as "brd" The vowels were memorized. But if one does not know which vowels belong between these consonants, it is possible to make out several different words.

2) Both the earliest Hebrew (OT) and Greek (NT) manuscripts didn't have any punctuation. Especially for the NT, it is educated guesswork as to where a sentences begins and ends as well as whether clauses should be set apart by commas. How one punctuates a sentences does have an impact on its meaning.

The second difficulty deals with the clarity of the interpretation of a text. Some texts are by nature difficult to make out what is being said.

James 4:5
"Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"? NASB

"Or think ye that the scripture speaketh in vain? Doth the spirit which he made to dwell in us long unto envying?" ASV

"Or do you think that the scripture saith in vain: To envy doth the spirit covet which dwelleth in you?" Douye-Rheims

"Do ye think that emptily the Writing saith, 'To envy earnestly desireth the spirit that did dwell in us,'"
Young Literal Trans.

Other examples can be produced. But even when there is no doubt as to the words that are being said but its meaning is said to be "not clear." Take for example 1 Peter 3:21. Peter wrote briefly about eight souls who were saved by water. He writes in verse 21:

"Corresponding to that, **baptism now saves you**—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ"

The anti-Catholic James McCarthy in his book *The Gospel According to Rome* states that this is one of the most difficult passages in Scripture to interpret. Why? Because it plainly states that baptism saves, in contradiction to McCarthy's Baptist belief that baptism is only a symbol.

How do Protestants get around "unclear" passages? They employ what the Westminster Confession states, they go to "clearer" passages (for example Ephesians 5:26 where water is combined with "word" therefore "baptism" must refer to believing in the gospel... don't worry if you don't understand this). This brings us back to the idea of "trump verses."

An important text that you should be aware of is in 2 Peter 3:14-17

> Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction. You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness

The word translated "unstable" is literally "undiscipled." Those who are not trained by the apostles (or the apostolic Church) twist the Scriptures to their own destruction. Again, we have an authentic Sacred Tradition and a teaching office at work here.

As the liberal Protestant exegete Earnst Kasmann notes:

> "For even exegesis, which now takes the place of prophecy, is exposed to the threat of error, as the example of the exegesis of Paul's letters shows (3.15f). It must therefore be regulated; this is done by tying it to the Church's teaching office. Feine's statement of the position is therefore accurate: 'Thus the Church is here the possessor of the correct interpretation of the Scripture, just because she is the possessor of the correct teaching.' In the same breath with which the Church is called to hear and obey the Scripture, it must be impressed upon her that personal exegesis, undertaken by the individual, not authorized or prescribed by the official teaching ministry, is not permitted. Now we can see the full implications of v. 21. The Scripture are wholly and totally inspired. But Spirit can only be understood and interpreted by Spirit. The exegete must therefore have the Spirit if he is to comprehend the Scriptures. But it cannot now be guaranteed that every Christian *ipso facto*, possesses the Spirit, although Paul could still say in Rom. 8.9: 'Whoever has not the Spirit of Christ is none of his.' In early Catholicism the Spirit is bound with the official ministry. The community is seen, not only organizationally but theologically, as the generality of the laity. Exegesis cannot be given over into their hands. Its proper activity consists in hearing and obeying what the teaching ministry says to it. And so faith is transformed unmistakably into *fides implicita:* I believe what the Church believes." (Essays on New Testament Themes, 190-191).

Authority

An important distinction to drive home must be made between something being authoritative and something being an authority.

The Scripture is an authoritative source. It is part of the original *deposit of faith* that has been handed on by Christ and his apostles to the Church. However, Scripture cannot be an authority. An authority is an active participant who instructs, corrects and guides someone. While Scripture is indeed a guide, it is a guide as an authoritative source.

If I interpret a passage of Scripture incorrectly, the Bible does not stand up on its spine and rebuke me. It does not say "Gary, your wrong. This is what this passage really

means." Rather, it simply gives me the text. I need an instructor to tell me that I'm in error.

Protestants often retort that the "Bible interprets the Bible" and you will learn that you have interpreted a part of Scripture incorrectly by reading a clearer passage elsewhere. But the point remains; the inspired text of Scripture does not contain cross-references. It is someone (or something) else that directs me to consult other passages.

A good analogy of this problem is the classroom. Let's say the teachers give the students a textbook and asks them to interpret its meaning. The textbook would be an authoritative source, but the students would not know with certainty whether they were interpreting the textbook correctly unless they had an authority – a teacher – to correct them.

Protestants have attempted to counter this analogy of mine with the following argument: Your authority is no better than our *Sola Scriptura* because how do you know if you are understanding your authority correctly? You'd need another authority to tell you that your understanding is correct. Then, how do you know if you understand the second authority without a third, and a fourth and so on. Therefore, in the end, Catholics are no better off than Protestants when it comes to authority.

The problem with this argument is that it turns the authority into an authoritative source. The teacher is kind of a tape player that simply speaks without any interaction and the only way you know if you understand the first tape player correctly is to listen to a second tape player and so on. But the solution is quite simple: you just ask the teacher if your understanding is correct.

-In Brief-

1) Westminster Confession states: “All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all: yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation are so clearly propounded, and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them.”

2) The Greek and Hebrew texts we have are virtual in that it is the result of teams of scholars comparing manuscripts, adding punctuation and even vowels.

3) 2 Peter 3:14-17 teaches that the Scriptures can be twisted to ones destruction by the “undiscipled.” It also speaks of a need for an authoritative interpreter, which possess the true tradition of the apostles.

4) The clarity of Scripture is determined by the degree to which a passage agrees with Protestant doctrine. For example, 1 Peter 3:21 is said to be one of the most difficult passages in Scripture even though its meaning is clear to Catholics.

5) It is important to make the distinction between an *authoritative source* and an *authority that teaches.*

Chapter Three

Sacred Tradition

(Tradition vs. traditions of men)

Sacred Tradition

What is Sacred Tradition? Tradition means "to hand on" or "pass down." When Catholics speak of tradition they mean one of two things. Either a custom, discipline or way of doing something. In this sense, eating turkey at Thanksgiving is a tradition. There is another tradition that has a very precise technical meaning to it. That is Sacred Tradition. Sacred Tradition is what God has revealed through Christ and the Holy Spirit that has been "handed down" to the Church. Unlike the first kind of tradition, Sacred Tradition remains the same although it may be expressed differently in different times and cultures.

One of the most well known parts of Sacred Tradition is Scripture itself. It contains God's revelation and it has been handed on to the Church as St. Paul says,

"Therefore, brothers, stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught, either by an oral statement or by a letter of ours." (2 Thes. 2:15).

In this passage, Paul says that he has "handed on" or "traditioned" his letters (Scripture) to us and that we should hold on to it. As you can see, one should not say (and Fundamentalist Protestants sometimes argue) that the Bible condemns tradition. In support they will cite number texts that seem to condemn tradition (e.g. Matt. 15:3, Mk 7:8, Gal. 1:14, Col. 2:8). If this objection were true, the Bible would be condemning itself since it too was handed on by the inspired Apostles. Moreover, a closer look reveals that the "traditions" that were condemned were not Sacred Tradition (things revealed by God), but only manners and customs.

Evangelicals commonly argue that Sacred Tradition is allowable only in so far as it agrees with the Word of God in Scripture. We have already addressed this objection in our Sola Scriptura section. Before the composition and compilation of the New Testament, it would be impossible to test Christian doctrine by Scripture alone since Christian revelation goes beyond what is found in the Old Testament. Moreover, the Evangelical position would be pitting the word of God (in Scripture) against the word of God (which was taught by the apostles). Since God's word cannot contradict itself, both must "merge towards the same end" and not the one abrogating the other.

Putting these objections aside how does a Catholic Apologist, who wishes to go beyond the standard proof texts, explain what Tradition is so that Protestant Christians can understand it? The best place to start is where Catholics and Protestants both agree – the reliability of Scripture and the historic fact of Christianity.

Integrity and Veracity of the Gospels

Catholics and Protestants both use the same apologies or arguments to establish the truthfulness or the veracity of the four Gospels as well the integrity of the copies of Scripture that we have in that they are identical (or nearly identical) to the inspired originals. We will use these two common apologies to build the case for sacred tradition.

What makes Christianity distinct from the other great monotheistic religions of the world Judaism and Islam? All of them claim that God has spoken through the prophet(s)? Christ and Christianity is different in that it claims that God has become man and has fulfilled the prophesies of the Old Testament and the desires of the hearts of all people in the "person of Christ, as Protestants put it. It is the historic reality of Christ who came to earth, lived, suffered, died, rose again and ascended into Heaven that becomes the sum and summit of all revelation (natural and divine). Because of this, the writings of the earliest Christians are not merely a collection of revelations and prophesies, but they record how Christ has fulfilled the Old Testament and how he is the "light that enlightens all men"

John 1:4 – "…through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race."

Therefore, at the very core of Christianity is the witness of those who knew Christ, or knew the Apostles of Christ. It is they who testify to what they have seen and heard.

What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we looked upon and touched with our hands concerns the Word of life— for the life was made visible; we have seen it and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was made visible to us— what we have seen and heard we proclaim now to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; for our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. (1 John 1:1-3)

The Gospels, therefore, are the epicenter of the Christian gospel because they attest to the historic actions of the Son of God. Unlike Jews and Moslems, the Gospels are not Midrash (looking at revelation and applying it to historic events), but reverse-Midrash (looking at a historical event and applying it to the fulfillment of revelation). The truthfulness or veracity of the Gospels are of paramount importance for if they were fabricated, lied or confused about who Christ is and what He did, Christianity falls apart. Therefore, all Christians ought to give a solid defense as to why we believe the Gospels to be truthful.

One does not need to fear this defense of the veracity of the Gospels since it is quite solid. One could point to the fact that no one lies or fabricates without a motive. If the writers of the Gospels purposely lied, they would have only persecution to gain in this life (since what they wrote was "a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles" (1 Cor. 1:23) and they would have only Hell to gain in the next life since they are guilty of a horrible blaspheme. Even so, the Apostles were happy to accept martyrdom for what they have testified to. As Pascal once said, "I willing believe someone who is willing to have their throat-slit." One could also point to cohobating evidence such as that the details the Gospels provide are those of an eyewitness. They are not in perfect agreement (which would point to collusion), but they are harmonious that suggests that they are witnessing to the same event. There are other arguments that could be presented, but by far the strongest and most uncontestable argument is based on the fact that the life of Christ (and the subsequent miraculous character of the apostolic Church) was a public event witnessed by followers and critics alike.

This point needs to be affirmed.

Acts 25:22 - The king knows about these matters and to him I speak boldly, for I cannot believe that (any) of this has escaped his notice; this was not done in a corner

Luke 24:18 – 20:- [18] One of them, named Cleopas, said to him in reply, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?" [19] And he replied to them, "What sort of things?" They said to him, "The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people,
[20] how our chief priests and rulers both handed him over to a sentence of death and crucified him.

Acts 1:22 – "[B]eginning from the baptism of John until the day which he was taken up from us, become with us a witness to his resurrection." God raised this Jesus; of this we are all witnesses."

Acts 3:15 – "The author of life you put to death, but God raised him from the dead; of this we are witnesses."

Although Jesus occasionally taught the apostles privately, Christ's life, death and resurrection was a matter of public knowledge. Moreover, the Apostles preaching and teaching was very much public. This fact guarantees for us the truthfulness or the veracity of the Gospels. The Gospels were written within the first Christian century. They circulated and were well known. If they taught something contrary to the public teaching of the apostles, they would not have been accepted. On the contrary, they would have been publicly repudiated since, as we said early, Christianity is based on historic fact. Embellishments, distortions and alterations would undermine the credibility of the early Church. The pagans and Jews knew what Jesus did and what he preached.

The content of the Faith is therefore a sacred deposit entrusted to the Church by Jesus and the inspired Apostles. The early Church accepted the New Testament because it truthfully reflected what they witnessed and received from the Apostles. This witness of the Church to the deposit of Faith is called Sacred Tradition.

If one denies the existence or the reliability of Sacred Tradition, that person has cut themselves off from the one method that assures us of the veracity of the Gospels and the teachings of the New Testament.

The teaching of the apostles shows us that they considered their non-written instructions to be a sacred normal along with their written instructions.

1 Thes. 2:13 – "And for this reason we too give thanks to God unceasingly, that, in receiving the word of God from hearing us, you received not a human word but, as it truly is, the word of God, which is now at work in you who believe.

The oral teachings of the Apostles are "the word of God."

2 Timothy 1:13-14, "Take as your norm the sound words that you heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Guard this rich trust with the help of the holy Spirit that dwells within us."

Paul's oral teachings that Timothy received are

Timothy's "norm" that makes up a rich deposit, which is to be guarded and passed on.

2 Thes. 2:15 – "Therefore, brothers, stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught, either by an oral statement or by a letter of ours."

Paul ordered the Thessaolonians to "stand firm and hold fast" to everything he has given them both in word and in writing.

2 Peter 1:19 – " Moreover, we possess the prophetic message that is altogether reliable. You will do well to be attentive to it, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts."

The Apostle's message (both oral and written) is the norm of the Christian that we ought to be attentive to it.

Many anti-Catholics never considered this point in light of the veracity of the Gospels. Often, they will concede that Sacred Tradition did exist and was the norm of the early Church, but this norm eventually became corrupted and therefore Scripture became the sole reliable norm to judge the veracity of Sacred Tradition.

We have already demonstrated in the Sola Scriptura section that the idea of Scripture being a norm that judges Sacred Tradition goes against Scripture and reason. But it is important to build a positive case for the integrity of Sacred Tradition and the best way to do this is to barrow the accepted methodology that is used to establish the integrity of the New Testament text itself.

The Integrity of the New Testament

The original Greek manuscripts of the New Testament are no longer extant that is to say they no longer exist. Yet, Protestant and Catholic scholars agree that the Greek New Testament that we have today is incredibly faithful to these lost manuscripts (98%+ accurate in fact). How do they know? They know through the science of textual criticism.

The method of textual criticism is too complex to reproduce here. But it's principle is easy to understand. Identical texts must share a common source. By studying the thousands of manuscripts, codices and fragments of the New Testament, scientists are able to postulate, with a high degree of certainty, what the original must have read. Moreover, when a corruption is introduced that corruption can also be identified through the same methodology.

Look at the chart below. Let's say that "X" represents a verse in Scripture. It begins at the top in the original inspired manuscript, called an autograph and it is copied accurately by two copyists, which is represented in the line below by two separate "X"'s . They, in turn, are accurately copied by two more copyists. If the first "X" disappeared, we could know its correct reading by comparing the all six "X". Since they are in agreement, they must be accurately reproducing the original. Let's say that these last four "X" manuscripts are copied by eight scribes, but one makes a mistake. Let's say he misread the text and put in a wrong word. This mistaken manuscript will be marked with an "O". All the manuscripts are then copied. Notice what happens to our chart. Now we have a new family of manuscripts marked "O".

			X			
		X		X		
	X	X		X	O	
X	X	X	X	X	O	O

Let's pretend the original manuscript "X" has disappeared. How can you tell whether the "X" family or the "O" family is identical to the original and which is the corruption? You know that the "X" family is the accurate family because not only does it reflect the majority and it goes back closest to the original. We know that the "O" family must be the corruption because it starts late and is represented only within the manuscript family that comes from the "O."

Essentially, this is how we know that the theoretical Greek New Testament texts that pastors and theologians use today are accurate. If you deny the methodology of textual criticism, you really have no basis to know what was the original inspired text since no one manuscript completely agrees with our theoretical text.

What does this have to do with Tradition? I believe the early Church used an analogous form of this method to establish the integrity of orthodox Sacred Tradition. Look again at the chart above. Let's pretend that the letters represent, not manuscripts, but local churches. The first letter represents a local church that was established by an inspired Apostles. The symbol "X" stands for the original preaching and teaching of that apostle that was given to that congregation. In a few years, this original church sends out missionaries and establishes two more churches. It teaches these churches the same doctrine that it received from the apostles. In fact, the apostles may have supervised the establishment of these two missionary churches. A generation passes and the two missionary churches

establish two more using the same doctrine that they received. However, one of the churches falls into heresy and corrupts the original deposit. Next, the same church form more missionary churches. How does one know which church holds to the original deposit of Faith and which one has corrupted it? As you can see, the same methodology applies. This is essentially what Vincent of Lerins proposed in chapter 4 of his Commonitory (AD 434). Vincent speaks about heretics who hold on to an innovative and heretical interpretation of Scripture. Vincent writes:

> "Here, it may be, someone will ask, Since the canon of Scripture is complete, and is in itself abundantly sufficient, what need is there to join to it the interpretation of the Church? The answer is that because of the very depth of Scripture all men do not place one identical interpretation upon it. The statements of the same writer are explained by different men in different ways, so much so that it seems almost possible to extract from it as many opinions as there are men. Novatian expounds in one way, Sabellius in another, Donatus in another, Arius, Eunomius and Macedonius in another, Photinus, Apollinaris and Priscillian in another, Jovinian, Pelagius and Caelestius in another, and latterly Nestorius in another. Therefore, because of the intricacies of error, which is so multiform, there is great need for the laying down of a rule for the exposition of Prophets and Apostles in accordance with the standard of the interpretation of the Church Catholic.
>
> Now in the Catholic Church itself we take the greatest care to hold that which has been believed everywhere, always and by all. That is truly and properly 'Catholic,' as is shown by the very force and meaning of the word, which comprehends everything almost universally. We shall hold to this rule if we follow universality [i.e. oecumenicity], antiquity, and consent. We shall follow universality if we acknowledge that one Faith to be true which the whole Church throughout the world confesses; antiquity if we in no wise depart from those interpretations which it is clear that our ancestors and fathers proclaimed; consent, if in antiquity itself we keep following the definitions and opinions of all, or certainly nearly all, bishops and doctors alike."

If you look back at our chart and replace the "X" with the orthodox Faith and the "O" with Sabellius or Donatus or any other name Vincent gives, you see his point. The integrity of Tradition is guaranteed by universality, antiquity and consent.

Universality and antiquity enables us to establish what authentic Tradition is and what a corruption is. Consent guarantees for us the veracity of Tradition. As we have seen earlier, the Church is a witness to the truth that it has received. If innovations or corruptions were to be introduced, people would know and protest. Consent of a universal and ancient doctrine by the churches guarantees for us its veracity. To deny either method to establish Tradition is to deny the methods used to establish the bona fides of Scripture. One, who wishes to be logically consistent, needs to either accept both or neither.

Chapter Four

The Papacy

(On this Rock…)

Peter and the Papacy

What is the Papacy and how is it connected to Jesus and the apostles? To get a biblical perspective on this, we ought to see how God has governed his chosen people.

In the Old Testament, God cared for his covenant people in three different ways, each of them overlapping the other. First, God set up a covenant family whose visible head was a father figure. The first of the patriarchs (meaning: father-leaders) was Abraham. God changed Abrams name to Abraham which means "Father of a vast multitude." God's covenant did not die with Abraham nor did the covenant people go without a visible leader. Abraham's son, Isaac became the next patriarch (Gen. 17.19) and later God's covenant people was lead by Jacob (who is later called Israel).

With each passing generation God's covenant family grew beginning with a small family/tribe with Abraham to nations. Jacob has twelve sons each of these sons raised up their own tribe. These tribes eventually became the twelve tribes of Israel. By the time God's covenant family entered the promised land, they had become a nation.

After the patriarchs, Israel became a monarchy. Although God was displeased with Israel's call for a monarchy (because it would eventually sow division and destruction), he allowed his covenant family to take this form. (cf. 1 Sam 8:1ff). Under the monarchy, Israel ruled in the following manner. First, there was the King who was in charge of the macro-management of the kingdom. Under him was the prime minister or major domo and under him were the various ministers of state. The prime minister was in charge of the micromanagement of the Kingdom. He would be the overseer of the other ministers on a day to day bases.

As God predicted, the monarchy caused divisions and northern tribes split from the southern tribes. The monarchy was eventually destroyed by the Babylonians. Upon their return from captivity, Judaism took on a new form. God's people function under the Sanhedrin. The Jews were led by various teachers or rabbis. These rabbis would gather together in a synagogue or Sanhedrin to make important rulings on religious practices and government. The structure of the rabbinical system is similar to the monarchy. Each local synagogue would have a gathering of rabbis to meet in council who was headed by a rabbi. When a pressing need arose, these leaders would travel to Jerusalem to meet in a great Sanhedrin known as the Great Beth Din. Among the gathered rabbi, there would be one leader known as the Prince or Nasi. He, like the prime minister could bind and loose the decisions of the other rabbis. It was covenant form of government that function during the time of Jesus.

Jesus institutes the New Covenant and sets in place the new form of God's covenant family. First, he called the Twelve Apostles (Matt. 10:2; Mark 3:14; Luke 6:13). This mirrors the twelve patriarchs of the Old Testament. From among the Twelve, Jesus gave Peter a special headship over the other apostles. Later, we will see how these three forms of covenant government is reflected in the New Covenant family.

It was to these Apostles that Christ commissioned to make disciples of all nations, to baptize and to teach all that he had taught them (Matthew 28:18-20).

Just as the various offices of the old covenant didn't cease when the administrator passed away, the offices of the Twelve (and those that they set up) didn't cease when they passed away. Others were elected to their office, not as Apostles who receive revelation from God, but as overseers or bishops who pass on what the apostles taught. The bishops carry on the role teaching, sanctifying and governing.

Peter died in Rome and the bishop of Rome is his Episcopal successor. Since St. Peter was given a special place of primacy among the apostles, the bishops of Rome likewise enjoy a special place of primacy among the other bishops of the world. Put another way, all the bishops of the world make up a group or a

college, yet one bishop (the successor of St. Peter) is the visible head of this college.

The papacy is a source of unity for all Catholics. Strangely enough, it is also a source of unity for all Protestants, Orthodox and pseudo-Christian sects because it is the one belief that is common among all.

Therefore, there are three points upon which the doctrine of Papacy rests:

1) Jesus gave Peter a primacy over the apostles.

2) Peter died in Rome.

3) The Apostles held an office in that when they died, others took their place as bishops. This is called Apostolic Succession.

We will focus in this section only on points one and three. Few anti-Catholics today argue point two. The evidence for Peter dying in Rome is overwhelming and most anti-Catholic apologists will concede the point while attacking points one and three.

In addition to the primacy of Rome, there is another aspect of the Papacy that is misunderstood and attacked by anti-Catholics that is the doctrine of Infallibility.

CCC 880 **"**When Christ instituted the Twelve, "he constituted [them] in the form of a college or permanent assembly, at the head of which he placed Peter, chosen from among them." Just as "by the Lord's institution, St. Peter and the rest of the apostles constitute a single apostolic college, so in like fashion the Roman Pontiff, Peter's successor, and the bishops, the successors of the apostles, are related with and united to one another."

Catholics believe that the Church that Christ established will never falter. The gates of Hades will never prevail against the Church since it is the pillar and foundation of truth. It is under God's special care. Since the Church is constituted in this fashion, it follows that the office of Pope has a special charism that will prevent a Pope, under very specific circumstances, from teaching error. We will discuss the doctrine of Papal Infallibility at the end of this section.

One of the most important passages in the Bible to establish the primacy of Peter and the presence of Apostolic offices is Matthew 16:13-19.It is not the only passage that Catholics can appeal to in Scripture to support the papacy, but it is one of the most revealing.

Please read this passage. Pay close attention to the ebb and flow of the conversation between Peter and Jesus. What does Jesus do with Peter's name? What does Christ promise to give him? Is there anything in the Old Testament that mirrors what Christ has done for Peter? How does this passage differ from Matthew 18:18?

In Brief-

1) God's covenant people can be outlined in Scripture as: Adam and Eve (marriage covenant), Abraham (family covenant), Moses (national covenant), David and Solomon (kingdom covenant) and Jesus (worldwide covenant).

2) Jacob had twelve sons that became twelve tribes. Each tribe was head by a family whose head was the prince of the tribe. Jesus called twelve apostles to be the twelve foundations of the new covenant people.

3) The claim of the Papacy requires three things to be established: (1) Jesus appointed Peter to be the head of the apostles and leader of His future Church; (2) Peter died in Rome. Therefore, the bishop of Rome is the successor of Peter; (3) That the apostles left offices (bishops) who upon their death needed to be filled by a successor to carry on in ministry.

The *Petros / Petra* Argument

Matthew 16:15-19 reads: "He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter said in reply, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.' Jesus said to him in reply, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father.
And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.'"

Jesus says three things to Simon Peter in this passage. First, Jesus changes Simon's name to Peter, which means "rock" and he states that it is upon this rock that he will build his Church. Second, Jesus says that he will give Simon Peter the "keys of the kingdom of heaven." Third, he gives Peter the bind and loose with heavenly authority.

Let's begin our examination with Simon's name change. Catholics and others argue that our Lord in changing Simon's name to "Rock" (i.e., to Aramaic "Kepha", Greek "*Petros*," which gives English "Peter") meant that he would be the Rock on which He would build His Church. Anti-Catholics, however, often claim that Our Lord was not equating the rock with Peter, but only with Peter's faith. This interpretation, they claim, would be the natural conclusion the original readers of the Gospel would have understood by Jesus' words. Will Jesus' Church be built upon Simon Peter and his successors or upon a faith like Peter's? Our author proposes several arguments to prove the latter.

The *Petros/Petra* Argument

Anti-Catholics often note that there are two different Greek words used in Matthew 16:18 for "rock" – *Petros* and *Petra*. Jesus says to Simon Peter, "You are Peter (Greek *petros*) and upon this rock (Greek *petra*) I will build My Church." It is asserted that the Greek words each has a very specific meaning. *Petros* means a movable or detachable stone or pebble. *Petra*, on the other hand, refers to a foundation stone or a massive rock." Since the original readers would not have understood Christ to say that He would build His Church upon a small stone, they would have seen "this rock" as referring to another "rock," namely, either to Simon's faith or to Christ Himself.

This argument held sway within non-Catholic biblical scholarship until this century. In this century, however, Protestants have gradually abandoned this interpretation, since it simply goes beyond the linguistic evidence. In 1952 Oscar Cullman, a liberal Protestant scholar, published his work *Petrus, Jünger – Apostel – Märtyrer*. In it he demonstrated that the meanings of these two words are not mutually opposed and exclusive, but that they often overlap one another. There are instances in Greek poetry where they are used interchangeably, as if they meant the same thing. Cullmann's article *Petros* in the standard Protestant work *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* summarizes his conclusions nicely:

<u>*Petros* / *Petra* Argument</u>

***Petros* (masc.) = Stone**

***Petra* (fem.) = Large Rock**

Petros* = *Petra

Aramaic = Kepa

(Greek: Kephas)

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 parallelisms of "thou art Rock" and "on this rock I will build" show 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… To this extent Roman Catholic exegesis is right and all Protestant attempts to evade this interpretation are to be rejected."

Protestant biblical scholars, both liberal and conservative, have begun to abandon the

classic "*Petros/Petra*" apologetic in favor of the "Catholic" understanding. Peter is indeed the Rock on which Jesus said he would build His Church. Today few Protestants of note embrace the outdated "*Petros/Petra*" argument.

The Argument from Context

What about the context? Does it not prove that the "rock" of Matthew 16:18 is Peter's faith? After all, Peter had just confessed that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of the Living God. Also, Jesus had warned the Apostles not to tell anyone what Peter had revealed. Some argue that if this passage begins with faith, and if it ends with a warning not to spread their faith, then everything that is in between must be about faith. Therefore, Jesus is calling Simon's faith "the rock" upon which He will build His Church.

This argument ignores an important turn the narrative makes in verse 17. Simon had just declared, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," and Jesus responded to Simon saying "You are blessed, Simon son of Jonah." After Simon Peter, moved by God's grace, had revealed Jesus' mission in salvation history Jesus, in response, had revealed Simon Peter's role in the building of Jesus' Church. The rest of the context supports this interpretation and, to my knowledge, no one denies that Jesus here then confers the keys of the kingdom, the authority to bind and loose conferred on Simon Peter (Matthew 16:19). Jesus then commands His Disciples not to tell anyone that He is the Messiah. It is clear, then, that there is nothing in the preceding or succeeding context that demands the reader consider anyone or anything other than Simon himself as the "rock" upon which Jesus would build His Church.

Aramaisms in Matthew 16:13-19

13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" *14* And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." *15* He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" *16* Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." *17* And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, **Simon Barjona**, because **flesh and blood** did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. *18* *"I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church [WORD PLAY IN THE ARAMAIC];* and the **gates of Hades** will not overpower it. *19* "I will give you the **keys of the kingdom** of heaven; and whatever you **bind** on earth shall have been **bound in heaven**, and whatever you **loose on earth** shall have been **loosed in heaven**."

The Argument from Culture

Another somewhat outdated argument is best summed up by G. Campbell Morgan, a Protestant scholar, who asserts that the word "rock" refers only to God and that it is never applied to a man in the Old Testament. Although it is true that the "rock" metaphor is commonly applied to God, it is not true that it is "never" applied to a man. Isaiah 51:1-2 flatly contradicts Morgan. God says in the book of Isaiah:

"Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness, Who seek the LORD: *Look to the rock from which you were hewn*, And to the quarry from which you were dug. '*Look to Abraham your father*, And to Sarah who gave birth to you in pain; When he was one I called him, Then I blessed him and multiplied him." (Isaiah 51.1-4)

Isaiah's application of the rock metaphor to Abraham was well known in rabbinical circles even if Morgan have never heard of it. It is clear then that the original / first (Jewish) hearers of Matthew 16:18 understood that Jesus here made Simon Peter a "new Abraham," a new father to God's people. After all, "Pope" means "father."

The Argument from the New Testament Usage of *Petra*

Anti-Catholics also argue that the New Testament confirms that Jesus must be the "Rock" of Matthew 16:18. This argument is not an appeal to context, but is a mixing or blurring of contexts and metaphors. To be sure, Christ is indeed metaphorically called a "Rock" in different ways and in different contexts, but none of these references parallels

Matthew 16:18. Christ is the "Foundation" of the Church. Catholics believe that Christ is indeed the Foundation. He is the Cornerstone (1 Peter 2:6-8), the Spiritual Rock (1 Corinthians 10:4), the Foundation of our Faith (1 Corinthians 3:11). But Jesus never calls Himself the Foundation upon which He would build His Church. After all, does this really need to be said? Upon whom else would Christianity be built, Buddha? Of course not. It would have been redundant for Jesus to say that He would build His Church upon Himself.

The New Testament frequently refers to others as well in different contexts as foundations of the Church. For example, Ephesians 2:20 says that the Apostles and Prophets are the foundation of the Church with Christ Jesus as the Capstone or Cornerstone.

"You are Kepa and upon this Kepa I will Build My Church"

If *Petra* always means bedrock and *Petros* is a detachable stone, as anti-Catholics argue, notice what happens to Ephesians 2:20: the Apostles and Prophets become the immovable "*Petra*-like" rock and Jesus now a movable "*Petros*-like" pebble! A similar foundation metaphor can be seen in Revelation 21:14, where it is the Apostles who are the foundation of the "New Jerusalem," the Church in glory.

More Than One Rock

What is often missed by anti-Catholics is the principle of sufficient causality. This is a fancy term for: You can give what you don't have. The Bible often applies titles and metaphors for God to leaders and rules to show that the exercise of their authority is ultimately derived from the authority of God himself.

For example, Scripture sometimes speaks of God as the sole shepherd of his people (Genesis 48.15; 49.24; Ps. 2.8, 23.1, 80.2, Isa. 63.11, Jerm. 23.2-3; Ez. 34.12, esp. 34.24. and 37:24; Mic. 5.2; Zech. 13.7; Matt. 2.6, John 10.11,16; Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 2.25).
Yet, the title of Shepherd is shared by leaders as well (2 Sam 5.2; 24.17; 1 Chr. 11.2, Ps. 2.8; 78.71-72; Is. 44.28, Jerm. 3.15, 23.2-3; Ez. 34.5ff; Zech. 11.6-7). This subordination is most clearly seen in 1 Peter 5.4: "And when the **chief Shepherd** is revealed, you will receive the unfading crown of glory." God is the one, single, "chief" Shepherd and pastor. Those that share and are subordinate to this authority are also called "shepherds."

The same is true for other titles as well. How is the King of Israel? God is King. But he is the King of Kings. Saul, David, Solomon and others were also Kings. Again, these Kings had authority because they participated in God's Kingship.

The same is true with the title Father. In the Old Testament God is called Father (Isa. 64.7, Jerm. 31.9, Matthew). But leaders are also called "father" as when Sts. Steven and Paul addressed the religious leaders of the Jews as "my brothers and fathers" (Act. 7:1, 22:1). This is because all fathers are derived from the Fatherhood of God. Eph. 3:14-15 - " For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named."

Judges are even called "gods" in Scripture because they have their authority bestowed upon them from God (Psalm 82:6, John 10:33). You do not get a more exclusive title for God than God.

Therefore, when Jesus names Peter "rock" He does so in order to show that Peter's place as the foundation upon which Christ's Church is built is derived from Christ's power and authority.

The Catholic interpretation, which is quickly becoming the Protestant interpretation as well, has other grounds on which to rest. But what would the original hearers have understood?" The answer is that they would clearly would have understood Jesus' words to mean that Peter is the rock upon which He would build His Church. How do we know this? All we need to do is look at the original language Jesus spoke.

The Jews of Jesus' day normally spoke not Greek, but Aramaic. In Aramaic, there is no *Petros* vs. *Petra* problem. Unlike Greek, Aramaic has only one word for "rock" – *Kepa*. In the Aramaic Jesus could have only said, "You are *Kepa* and upon this *Kepa* I will build My Church." In Aramaic the play on words would have been unmistakable. This use of

Kepa for Peter's name is confirmed in the Gospel of John (1:42) where Jesus says to Simon Peter, "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called *Cephas* (which is translated Peter)." The word *Cephas* here is a Greek transliteration of the Aramaic *Kepa* - *the only Aramaic word for Rock*. Therefore, Jesus must have said, "You are Rock and upon this Rock I will build my Church." This term was used in other places in the New Testament (see also 1 Cor 1:12, 3:22, 9:5, 15:5; Gal. 1:18; 2:9, 11 and 14).

Only the Greek is Inspired!

Could it not be argued that it is the Greek text that is inspired? Is not an appeal to the Aramaic a ploy to evade close scrutiny of the Catholic interpretation in light of the Greek? Not at all. As I mentioned earlier, Catholic exegesis of Matthew 16:18 has won favor even among Protestant biblical scholars. The truth is that it is those who scoff at the Aramaic background of Matthew 16:18 that seek to evade scrutiny of the Greek text.

The Holy Spirit inspired this passage in a peculiar way. It contains turns of phrases that are Aramaic and not of Greek origin. Phrases like "flesh and blood," "keys of the kingdom," and "bind and loose" are not Greek, but Aramaic idioms. Moreover, sandwiched between these "Aramaisms" is a word play that is only possible in Aramaic. One could say that Matthew is writing in Greek like one who is thinking in Aramaic. Ironically, to ignore all this is in fact to ignore the inspired Greek.

The presence of Aramaisms, the word play that is possible in the language that Jesus spoke and use of the transliterated Kepha or Cephas all point to the fact that Jesus named Peter the rock upon which he will build his Church and not Peter's faith or himself.

How Does Faith Fit In?

Anti-Catholics are right in that this passage does have something to do with Peter's faith in Christ. It is Peter's prophetic declaration that "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" that triggers Jesus' response. Just as Abram's faith and obedience in God provoked God to change his name to Abraham and constitute him as the father of the Old Testament covenant family, Simon's faith is rewarded with Jesus constituting Peter as the father figure of God's new covenant family.

-In Brief-

1) Matthew 16:17-20 is a key (but not the only) text that establishes the papacy.

2) Jesus renamed Simon to "Peter" (which means Rock). Therefore, Matthew 16:17-20 states "You are Peter (rock) and upon this rock I will build my Church."

3) Anti-Catholics point to the fact that two different Greek words are used: "You are Peter (*Petros*) and upon this rock (Petra) I will build my Church" and that these two words have distinct meanings. *Petros* (Peter's name) means a "small moveable stone" while *Petra* (upon which Jesus will build His Church) means "a large immovable foundation stone." Therefore, Jesus is contrasting Peter with the rock upon which he will build His Church.

4) Protestant scholarship has now determined that these two words can be used interchangeably. For example, 1 Cor. 10:4 speaks of a "*petra*" that moved.

5) Catholics appeal to the Aramaic. Only one word could have been used in Jesus' original speech (kepa). He would have said, "You are "kepa" and upon this "kepa" I will build my Church."

6) John 1:42 tells us that Peter received this Aramaic name (also 1 Cor 1:12, 3:22, 9:5, 15:5; Gal. 1:18; 2:9, 11 and 14).

7) Protestants counter that only the Greek text is inspired (not the supposed Aramaic).

8) Matthew 16 contains more Aramaisms than any other text in the New Testament. It is as if Matthew wrote in Aramaic and then it was translated into Greek. Therefore, to ignore the Aramaic is to ignore the Greek.

9) A secondary argument always used is that Scripture only calls God "rock." Therefore, Matthew's metaphor must refer to Jesus not Peter.

10) Isaiah 51:1-4 applies the metaphor to Abraham (not God). Therefore, men can be called "rock."

11) God is indeed the rock, but he bestows his authority upon people who share this same metaphor. For example, God is the King of Israel, yet humans are also called king. The same is true for judges. People are even called 'gods" by God (John 10:34-35) without committing blasphemy.

Keys of the Kingdom

More ink has been spilled over the name change in Matthew 16:18 than any other passage in the Bible. Today, Protestant scholars (both conservative and liberal) are condemning the point.

However, the name change only goes so far. It tells us that Jesus intended his future Church to be in someway founded on Peter. That's it. If this were the only passage we had to establish the Papacy, we would be standing on a very slim branch. But it is the next verse that is most illuminating.

> ***"I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."***
>
> Matthew 16:19

Curiously, the most revealing verse comes right after the name change. For some reason, it is often skipped over with no regard. Matthew 16:19 says, "I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven...." Perhaps it is skipped over so often because it makes little sense to us today. The keys of the kingdom? What does He mean? Is it true that St. Peter will be waiting at the gates of Heaven to let us in?

Protestants believe that Scripture interprets Scripture and that ambiguous text is illumined by other texts. In this case, we have the principle of "Scripture interprets Scripture" in spades because Jesus is taking this imagery directly from the Old Testament.

Although the image of the "keys of the kingdom" may be lost on us, it had a specific meaning for the first century Jews and everyone else in the ancient middle-east. The keys were the symbol of authority for the prime minister or major domo of the kingdom.

Everyone's bible that has cross-references lists Isaiah 22:22 for Matthew 16:19. It is the only text that Jesus could have had in mind when he said these words. Let's look at Isaiah 22.

At the beginning of this chapter in Isaiah, God prophesies that the prime minister of the kingdom, named Shebna, will be thrown out of his office. God's righteous servant Eliakim will replace him. God says in Isaiah 22:19-22, "I will thrust you [Shebna] from your office and pull you down from your station. On that day I will summon my servant Eliakim, son of Hilkiah; I will clothe him with your robe, and gird him with your sash, and give over to him your authority. He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. **I will place the key of the house of David on his shoulder; when he opens, no one shall shut, when he shuts, no one shall open."**

What is the office of prime minister or major domo? We today are not familiar with monarchies, but in the ancient middle-east every monarchy was structured the same way.

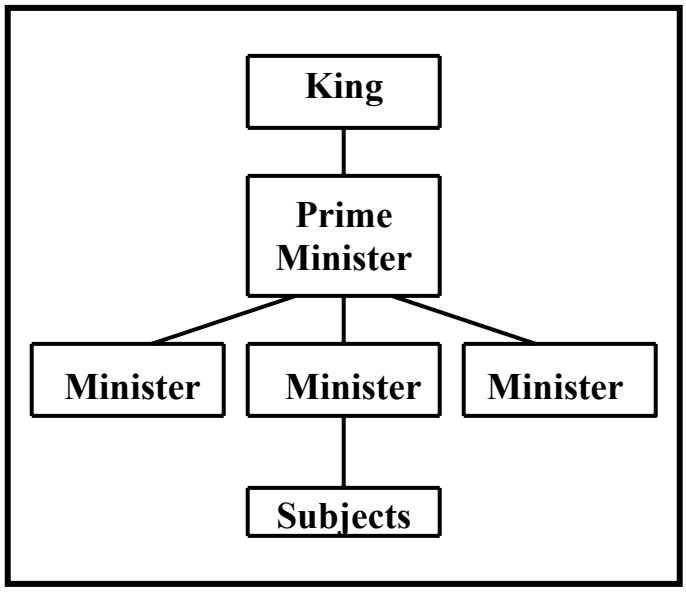
The King is the ruler of the kingdom. He is concerned with the macro-management of the kingdom (.e.g making treatises, waging war, public building projects, et al.). As for micromanagement, this task fell to several ministers who each governed various areas (e.g. trade, commerce, tax collecting, running the treasury, et al). There would be one minister who over saw the work of all the other ministers. This was the prime minister. He is second in authority under the King and he could perform various tasks in the King's name and the King's authority.

There were several symbols or signs of the prime minister's authority. We see several here in Isaiah 22. For example, there is a robe, a sash and most importantly a key that was placed on his shoulder.

In the ancient Middle East, the prime minister or major domo would wear the key that opened the main gate of a city on his shoulder. Each day, trade would not take place until the prime minister or major domo would unlock the main gate. In Isaiah 22, Shebna and Eliakim are the prime ministers of the kingdom of David. In Matthew 16:19, Peter is given the prime

minister's key to the "kingdom of God" namely the Church.

There is also a parallel in the last part of Isaiah 22:22. "when he opens, no one shall shut and when he shuts, no one shall open." This is similar to Jesus' statement concerning binding and loosing. Whatever Peter binds or looses cannot be undone by man since it has heavenly authority.



What does the "keys of the kingdom" mean in Matthew 16:19? Jesus is the true King of Israel, the one greater than Solomon and the true Son of David. Like Solmon who built the Temple, Jesus is building His Church. And as King, he is appointing Peter to be his prime minister or major dormo or the vicar of Christ.

Matthew 18:18

Anti-Catholics usually try to counter this by pointing out that in Matthew 18:18, Jesus gave all the Apostles the power to "bind and loose." Therefore, they argue, Peter has no special authority.

Matthew 18:15-18 reads, "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won over your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, so that 'every fact may be established on the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If he refuses to listen to them, tell the church. If he refuses to listen even to the church, then treat him as you would a Gentile or a tax collector. Amen, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Jesus is indeed giving the apostles the authority to "bind and loose" because they are to be ministers in his kingdom. However, the context of these two passage dictate as to the scope of what can be bound and loosed. Matthew 18:15-18 is concerned with excommunication of a sinner. If he will not listen to the Church (i.e. apostolic authority) he is to be treated as someone outside the covenant family. The authority to "bind and loose" that is given to the Apostles in general regards the governance of the local Church or jurisdiction. The context of Jesus' words to Peter in Matthew 16 is quite different. It is not limited in jurisdiction, but it extends to the whole of Christ's Church. Peter is given plenary authority. This means that he can "bind and loose" those things that are "bound and loosed" by the other apostles.

Moreover, under the model we just discussed for the monarchy, all the ministers of the kingdom have authority, but only one minister has authority over the other ministers and this single authority is symbolized by the "keys." It is significant, therefore, that only in Matthew 16:19 is Peter alone given the keys to the kingdom. While the apostles in Matthew 18:18 are not given the keys. This demonstrates that Peter had a special primacy that was not shared by the rest of the apostles.

Not only does Isaiah 22 demonstrate the primacy of Peter, but it also speaks to the issue of Apostolic Succession. The keys symbolized an office that when it becomes vacant, it must be filled. In Isaiah 22, Shebna is thrown out of office and he is replaced by Eliakim. He received the same authority as Shebna and Isaiah says, "He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah" The prime minister is a father figure for those in the kingdom. Again, Pope means "father."

If this is true for the Old Testament Davidic monarchy, than how much more true is it for

the true Son of David and the true King of Israel's kingdom? When Peter died, another took his office. Therefore, the office that Peter occupies must be filled when Peter dies.

The terms "bind' and "loose" are rabbinical terms. It is claimed that what one group of rabbis bound the other loosed. Yet, within the synagogue there was one rabbi who bound and loosed the decisions of the other rabbis. This was the prince. Again, Matthew 16:19 and 18:18 show that Peter is the prince of Jesus' apostles and that he occupied a seat or office.

-In Brief-

1) Jesus undoubtedly gave Peter the "keys of the Kingdom."

2) The "keys of the Kingdom" were a well-known symbol of a specific office in the kingdom – that of Chief Steward (or Major Domo or Grand Visor or Prime Minister). All ancient Middle Eastern monarchies had Chief Stewards who wore the "key" of the Kingdom.

3) The only Old Testament text that Jesus could have in mind Matthew 16:19 is Isaiah 22:22ff.

4) Isaiah shows that the "key to the house of David" is given to the Chief Steward in the Kingdom of Israel.

5) Isaiah also shows that the Chief Steward was an office that after one leaves (Shebna) another replaces him (Eliakim).

6) All ancient monarchies had a King who was in charge of the "macro-management" of the Kingdom and Stewards who were inn charge of different duties. Among these Stewards was a Chief Steward who was in charge of the micro-management of the Kingdom. He is given charge over the other Stewards and was second in the Kingdom only after the King. Peter is the Chief Steward of Jesus' future Church.

7) Matthew 16:20 gives the power to "bind and loose" to Peter alone. Later in Matthew 18:18, the other apostles are given this authority as a group. This follows the prime minister/ministers pattern since all ministers have authority over their flocks. But the prime minister has authority over the Church as a whole.

Peter's Primacy

Matthew 16:18-19 is not the only passage that illustrates Papal authority. Peter's unique headship can be seen in other passages of the New Testament as well.

The second most important proof text for Petrine primacy is in John 21:14-17 which reads:

"This was now the third time Jesus was revealed to his disciples after being raised from the dead. When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.' He said to him, 'Feed [Greek: *boske*] my lambs.' He then said to him a second time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.' He said to him, 'Tend [Greek: *poimaine*] my sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me?' Peter was distressed that he had said to him a third time, 'Do you love me?' and he said to him, 'Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.' (Jesus) said to him, 'Feed [Greek: *boske*] my sheep.'"

It is here that Christ' promise for Peter to be the foundation of His Church is given. Jesus charges Peter alone to feed and tend his Sheep.

Anti-Catholic Objections

Most anti-Catholics attempt to devalue the meaning of this passage by stating that Peter had denied Christ three times (John 18:25ff). In John 21, it is argued, Jesus is forgiving him three times... that is all.

Catholic response accepts what is true with this objection. It is true that Jesus is forgiving Peter by getting a three-fold affirmation of Peter's love to cancel out his three-fold denial. However, there is more to this passage than that.

It probably would be more accurate to say that John 21 is Peter's reinstallment than Peter being forgiven. There is no reference to sin or forgiveness in this passage or its context. Rather, it speaks about Peter being charged to feed and tend Christ's sheep.

Moreover, Peter's reinstallment to shepherd Christ's flock is a fulfillment of a prophecy that Christ made during Peter's life time. Before Christ was handed over, he spoke to the apostles about conferring on them a kingdom and then he spoke directly to Simon Peter:

Luke 22:28-34
"' It is you who have stood by me in my trials; and I confer a kingdom on you, just as my Father has conferred one on me, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom; and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Simon, Simon, behold Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, but I have prayed that your own faith may not fail; and once you have turned back, you must strengthen your brothers.' He said to him, 'Lord, I am prepared to go to prison and to die with you.' But he replied, 'I tell you, Peter, before the cock crows this day, you will deny three times that you know me.'"

Here is Christ's prediction that Simon would deny Him three times, but in along with this prophecy is the promise of how Peter will then function among the other apostles.

"Simon, Simon, behold Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, but I have prayed that your own faith may not fail; and o**nce you have turned back, you must strengthen your brothers.**"

In Greek the second person singular and plural have distinct forms, which are lacking in English. In English, we can say "you" and this pronoun can refer to either a single person or several people. Greek is more specific. The passage in Greek reads,

""Simon, Simon, behold Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, but I have prayed that your own faith [singular] may not fail;

and once you [singular] have turned back, you [singular] must strengthen your brothers."

This is the only place in Scripture where Christ prays for an individual. Since Christ can neither deceive nor be deceived, we know that His prayer will be answered. Once Peter is converted back to Christ (note the mention in the context of his denials), it is he (singular) who will confirm his brothers (i.e. the apostles) in the Faith. This is Papal Primacy by definition. The Pope is a bishop like the other bishops of the world, but it is he only that is the lynch-pin of unity and truth.

John 21 is the place where Peter is "converted" or "turned back." So how does Christ's words tell us about the manner in which Peter will confirm his brethren? He is to be the shepherd who feeds and guides.

We noted that there are two different Greek words used for "feed" and "shepherd." The word for "feed" (Greek *boske*) simply means feed or put out to pasture. Of course, in the case of sheep, feeding sheep means to lead them out to green pastures. The second word translated "tend" means to do everything that a shepherd will do, namely lead the flock, care for it, protect it.

Anti-Catholics, like, James McCarthy, dismiss Jesus' language saying that the same words are also used for pig farmers - hardly a lofty profession. Therefore, he concludes, there is no primacy found in the use of these words. I say, "tell that to the pigs." The charge to feed and shepherd does denote authority. The context determines over whom the authority is to be exercised. In the case with pig farmers, the authority is set over the pigs. In John 21, the authority is set over the people of God - Christ's sheep. It is quite a lofty office indeed!

Peter is to feed and shepherd Christ's flock. Who is Christ's flock? It includes all Christians AND it also includes the apostles. He speaks of them as sheep in his flock (See Matthew 26:31ff and Luke 12:32ff). Therefore, Christ's charge to Peter is over all the people of God including fellow bishops.

There are numerous other examples that can be seen in the New Testament that denote that Peter has a primacy or headship. For example, Peter is featured prominently in the New Testament being mentioned more often than any other apostle. Also, if one compares the synoptic Gospel accounts the words of Peter is often substituted for the words or questions of the apostles as a whole. One of the most important secondary indication of Peter's primacy is seen in the lists of the Twelve. These lists appear in Matthew, Mark, Luke and Acts.

Although the order differs from one list to

Matthew 10:2-4	**Luke 6:13-16**	**Mark 3:16-17**	**Acts 1:13**
The names of the twelve apostles are these: **first, Simon called Peter,** and his brother Andrew; James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James, the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddeus; Simon the Cananean, **and Judas Iscariot who betrayed Him.**	When day came, he called His disciples to Himself, and from them He chose twelve, whom he also named apostles: **Simon, whom He named Peter,** and His brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called a Zealot, and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.	(He appointed the twelve:) **Simon, whom He named Peter;** James, son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James, whom He named Boanerges, that is, sons of thunder; Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus; Thaddeus, Simon the Cananean, and Judas Iscariot who betrayed Him.	When they entered the city they went to the upper room where they were staying, **Peter** and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. [Judas has already hung himself].

another, there are some striking similarities. Peter heads all the lists of the apostles. It has been argued by anti-Catholics that the reason for Peter's name to be named first was because he was the oldest and the oldest had a special place in Jewish society.

The problem is that no where in Scripture are the ages of the apostles given. It is purely an assumption (without Scriptural backing) on the part of anti-Catholics. Moreover, it is clear that the order of all the lists reflect to some degree the honor of the apostles since Judas is at the bottom of all the lists (except for Acts because Judas was no longer alive and another needed to take his office (See Acts 1:20 - another great proof text for apostolic succession).

There are other indications as well. The name or title "Peter" is also mentioned in all lists. Also, Matthew's list heads the list by saying "First, Peter." It is not followed, however, by any mention of a second or third suggesting that the word "first" means "preeminently" such as when we say "first in the class."

-In Brief-

1) Matthew 16:17-20 contains Jesus' promise of Peter's primacy. That power is conferred in John 21:14-17 where Jesus asks Peter three times if he loves Him. After Peter's response Jesus charges him to "tend" and "feed" his flock.

2) The Greek words for "feed' and "tend" mean that he is to "do everything that a shepherd does." In other words, it is given plenary authority.

3) Anti-Catholics state that John 21:14-17 is merely forgiving Peter for denying Jesus three times. Peter denied Jesus three times. Jesus three times asks him if he loves Him. That's all.

4) John 21:14-17 is the fulfillment of the prophecy given by Jesus before he was handed over. In Luke 22:28-34, Jesus prays for Peter that after he has denied him that it is Peter who is to "confirm his brothers." Peter is converted in John 21 to be the shepherd over Jesus' flock, which includes the other Apostles.

5) Peter is the first name in every list of the Twelve. Judas is always last.

Apostolic Succession

Apostolic Succession means that when an apostle dies (or when the bishops that they appointed over churches die), others would take their office as bishop.

Note that this does not mean that when the Apostle died another person would become an Apostle. This is a special prerogative given only to the Twelve and Judas' replacement. Bishops are no inspired by the Holy Spirit like the Apostles. Rather, bishops are given the authority to continue the mission of the apostles namely to teach, sanctify and govern the flock of Christ.

The doctrine of Apostolic Succession is present in many of the texts that we have studied for the papacy (especially the Old Testament background of Mathew 16:19 found in Isaiah 22:22ff). The momentum of these texts alone is sufficient to establish Apostolic Succession.

Texts In Review

As we have already seen, every covenant structure that God has made prior to the coming of Christ has an element of succession. The Patriarchs were succeeded by their chosen sons. The twelve sons of Israel became twelve tribes and each tribe having a head. When the head of a tribe died, it was continued on by its family members. The monarchy also had succession. The King would be succeeded by another King. This is also true for those ministers under the King. We have seen in Isaiah 22 the succession of the Prime Minister or Major Domo. *Shebna* is replaced by *Eliakim*. After *Eliakim*, others took his office. The same is true with the other minister. In the period of the Synagogue, the rabbis were succeed by their disciples. This is true, also, for the head of the Synagogue, the Prince, who was also replaced when needed.

Since Christ's Church did not terminate after the Ascension, or after the death of the last apostle, it is more than reasonable to assume that their office would continue. Jesus said "Go therefore and make disciples of **all the nations,** baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, **I am with you always, even to the end of the age** (Matthew 28:19-20). Since this could not be accomplished during the life time of the apostles, it must mean that Christ's Church continues on until the end of time.

When we come to the New Testament, Succession is mentioned only in passing. Paul and the Apostles were aware that they occupied, not a personal ministry, but an office. This can be seen in several texts. Perhaps the best texts to establish this knowledge (again, outside of Matthew 16:18) is Acts 1:20 and Colossians 1:25:

Acts 1:20

We can see succession with the apostolic office of Judas. Even though he betrayed Jesus, his office as apostle nevertheless had to be filled. Peter says in Acts 1:20, quoting Psalms, " For it is written in the Book of Psalms: 'Let his encampment become desolate, and may no one dwell in it.' And: '**May another take his office**.'" The word used for office is "*episcopen*," from which we get the word "*episcopal*."

Colossians 1:24-25

St. Paul in Colossians saw it as an office when he suffers…

"…on behalf of his [Christ's] body, which is the Church, of which I [Paul] am a **minister** in accordance with **God's stewardship** [administration] given to me to bring to completion for you the word of God,"

Paul calls his place in ministry an "office." The Greek is "*oikonomia*" which literally means "household law." It is an office that looks after the affairs of a household. The same Greek word is used in Luke 16:2 concerning the parable of the Unfaithful Servant.

The Office of Apostles could be passed on.

2 Timothy 2:2
"And what you heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will have the ability to teach others as well."

Paul commands Timothy to find others who will be faithful to teach what he gives them.

Titus 1:5
"For this reason I left you in Crete so that you might set right what remains to be done and appoint presbyters in every town, as I directed you..."

Paul commands Titus, a bishop, to appoint presbyters (priests) in every town.

The Early Church

Did the Apostles really mean for people to succeed them in their apostolic office?

The earliest Christians would have known. They occupied the very churches that the Apostles set up. Some of them may have known the Apostles personally and had heard their preaching. One of these Christians was Clement of Rome.

Clement was the third Bishop of Rome, which means that he was the third Pope after Peter. He most likely knew Peter (and perhaps Paul and John). He was elected to be bishop sometime around the year 80 AD (twenty years before the last book of the New Testament was written). Some priests in Corinth were unlawfully removed from their office. Clement wrote a forceful letter to the Church in Corinth telling them to allow those that were removed to return to their offices. It is this very early Christian letter that gives one of the most explicit statements on Apostolic Succession. Every Catholic apologist ought to memorize this passage.

1 Clement reads:
"Through countryside and city [the apostles] preached, and they appointed their earliest converts, **testing them by the Spirit, to be the bishops and deacons of future believers.** Nor was this a novelty, for bishops and deacons had been written about a long time earlier. . . . **Our apostles knew through our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be strife for the office of bishop. For this reason, therefore, having received perfect foreknowledge, they appointed those who have already been mentioned and afterwards added the further provision that, if they should die, other approved men should succeed to their ministry"** (*Letter to the Corinthians* 42:4–5, 44:1–3)

Clement's witness to Apostolic Succession is inviolable. He is not making up anything new, but is appealing to something that must have been common knowledge in Rome and in Corinth, namely, that the Apostles wished that others would take their office in ministry after they died.

Clement goes further. He describes how the apostles had "perfect foreknowledge" that there would be strife over who holds these offices. They, in a sense, laid down a rule that others would succeed them.

There are other passages from the early Church that echo this as well. Indeed, by the end of the second century we have early fathers who traced the lines of apostolic succession of the various offices of bishops. The first and most important line of succession was that of Rome (where Peter and Paul died). The following two quotes are worth being aware of.

Hegesippus (180 AD)

"When I had come to Rome, I [visited] Anicetus, whose deacon was Eleutherus. And after Anicetus [died], Soter succeeded, and after him Eleutherus. In each succession and in each city there is a continuance of that which is proclaimed by the law, the prophets, and the Lord" (*Memoirs*, cited in Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 4:22).

Irenaeus of Lyon(about 180 AD)

"It is possible, then, **for everyone in every church, who may wish to know the truth**, to contemplate the tradition of the apostles which has been made known to us throughout the whole world. **And we are in a position to enumerate those who were instituted bishops by the apostles and their successors down to our own times, men who neither knew nor taught anything like what these**

heretics rave about" (*Against Heresies* 3:3:1).

Ireneaus continues:

"But since it would be too long to enumerate in such a volume as this the successions of all the churches, we shall confound all those who, in whatever manner, whether through self-satisfaction or vainglory, or through blindness and wicked opinion, assemble other than where it is proper, by pointing out here the successions of the bishops of the greatest and most ancient Church known to all, founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul—that Church which has the tradition and the faith with which comes down to us after having been announced to men by the apostles. For with this Church, because of its superior origin, all churches must agree, that is, all the faithful in the whole world. And it is in her that the faithful everywhere have maintained the apostolic tradition" (ibid., 3:3:2).

-In Brief-

1) The key case for apostolic succession is made with the "keys of the Kingdom" / Isaiah 22 argument.

2) If you can demonstrate that the apostles held an office, then succession naturally follows since Christ's mission extends until the end of time (Matthew 28).

3) Acts 1:20 – Judas' office (*episkopen*) is filled after his death.

4) Col. 1:25 – Paul refers to his mission as an office (household manager). The same word describes the "office" of the "master of the house" in Christ's parable of the unmerciful servant (Luke 16:2).

5) Clement of Rome, a man who was taught by the apostles and was the third bishop of Rome, states that the apostles set down a rule for the Church that when those people that they appointed die others are to take their place. Clement's letter was sent to Corinth and Corinth agreed with Clement's request.

6) Irenaeus of Lyon (around 180 AD) was the disciple of Polycarp who was a disciple of St. John. He was able to produce a line of succession for every Apostolic Church, but since it would take too long to write, he produces the line of bishops in Rome being the Church to which everyone must agree in doctrine.

Papal Infallibility

Understanding the Definition of Papal Infallibility

All the fathers of the First Vatican Council believed in papal infallibility. However, not every father was completely clear as to how and when this special charism is exercised. There were two opposing minority views on papal infallibility: The Ultra-Montane position and the Counciliarist position.

The Ultra-montane position held that the Pope was infallible whenever he wrote or taught.

The Conciliarist position held that the Pope was infallible only when he taught in conjunction with a Church council.

The definition of the First Vatican Council corrects both of these positions. It affirms with the ultra-montane camp that the Pope can teach infallibly independent of a Church Council, but it also stated that the charism of infallibility is *found in the exercise of the office*, not the person of the Pope. Therefore, the Pope is said to proclaim something infallibly only when it is in conjunction with the free exercise of his Papal office.

CCC 891
"The Roman Pontiff, head of the college of bishops, enjoys this infallibility in virtue of his office, when, as supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful – who confirms his brethren their faith – he proclaims by a definitive act a doctrine pertaining to faith or morals… The infallibility promised to the Church is also present in the body of bishops when, together with Peter's successor, they exercise the supreme Magisterium," above all in an Ecumenical Council. When the Church through its supreme Magisterium proposes a doctrine "for belief as being divinely revealed,' and as the teaching of Christ, the definitions 'must be adhered to with the obedience of faith.' This infallibility extends as far as the deposit of divine Revelation itself."

CCC 892
"Divine assistance is also given to the successors of the apostles, teaching in communion with the successor of Peter, and, in a particular way, to the bishop of Rome, pastor of the whole Church when, without arriving at an infallible definition and without pronouncing in a 'definitive manner,' they propose in the exercise of the ordinary Magisterium a teaching that leads to better understanding of Revelation in matters of faith and morals. To this ordinary teaching the faithful 'are to adhere to it with religious assent,' which, though distinct from the assent of faith, is nonetheless an extension of it."

The Pope is said to be infallible when:

1) He speaks as the pontiff and pastor of the Church
2) When he makes a definitive ruling that is binding on the whole Church (not certain localities)
3) When he speaks on faith and morals (i.e. on the deposit of Faith).

Objection: According to this definition, why would the following objections not be valid?

1) The Pope wrote a personal letter to someone espousing heresy.
2) The Pope ruled that basketball is the greatest of all sports.
3) The Pope made a doctrinal error in his book "Crossing the Threshold of Hope."
4) Pope Alexander I committed adultery and Christians were misled from his example.
5) The Pope ruled that someone would hold an ambiguous position on a matter of faith without being declared a heretic.

Biblical Backing for Infallibility

Matthew 16:18-19 – "And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and **the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it.** I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. **Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven**."

1) Peter is the rock. Christ's Church is built upon Peter. The "gates of hades" will not prevail against Christ's Church. Therefore, the "gates of hades" will not prevail against Peter.
2) In verse 19, we have a theological axiom. Whatever Peter ratifies on Earth will have heavenly authority. Since heaven cannot bind an error or loose someone from following the will of God, Peter's declarations must be infallible.

Luke 22:29-32 – "and I confer a kingdom on you, just as my Father has conferred one on me, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom; and you will sit

on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. "Simon, Simon, behold Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, **but I have prayed that your own faith may not fail; and once you have turned back, you must strengthen your brothers**."

1) Note that Jesus' words to Peter is in the context of bestowing a kingdom and the apostles judging the twelve tribes of Israel.
2) Jesus' prayer cannot fail (Jesus is all knowing and all-powerful). Therefore, Simon Peter's faith did not fail and he did convert and strengthen his brothers in the faith. Since Peter is to "strengthen" his brothers as pastor over the apostles.

John 21:17 – "He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me?' Peter was distressed that he had said to him a third time, 'Do you love me?' and he said to him, 'Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.' (Jesus) said to him, 'Feed my sheep.'"

1) Jesus charged Peter to lead his sheep. He would not have had him shepherd and tend his flock if Peter would lead his flock to wolves.

1 Timothy 3:15, "But if I should be delayed, you should know how to behave in the household of God, which is **the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of truth**."

1) The Church is the "pillar and foundation of truth." If the Church could officially teach error, than it could not be said to be the "pillar and foundation of truth." Since Peter (and his successors) are the head of Church, they cannot err.

Verses Commonly Cited against Papal Infallibility

Galatians 2:11-16
11 And when Kephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to
his face because he clearly was wrong. 12 For, until
some people came from James, he used to eat with the
Gentiles; but when they came, he began to draw back
and separated himself, because he was afraid of the
circumcised. 13 And the rest of the Jews (also) acted
hypocritically along with him, with the result that even
Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy. 14 But
when I saw that they were not on the right road in line
with the truth of the gospel, I said to Kephas in front of
all, "If you, though a Jew, are living like a Gentile and
not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live
like Jews?" 15 We, who are Jews by nature and not
sinners from among the Gentiles, 16 (yet) who know
that a person is not justified by works of the law but
through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in
Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ
and not by works of the law, because by works of the
law no one will be justified. 17 But if, in seeking to be
justified in Christ, we ourselves are found to be sinners,
is Christ then a minister of sin? Of course not!

Anti-Catholic points:

1) Paul is upbraiding Peter in Antioch. If Peter were the head of the Church, Paul would never be so bold.
2) Peter was teaching error. Scripture states as much in verse 11, "I opposed him to his face because he clearly was wrong." Therefore, Peter was not infallible and how much less those who are his supposed followers.
3) This error of Peter was an infallible act. It dealt with justification, which is a matter of faith. Peter's actions led others to follow (and Peter didn't correct them) so he must have meant it to be practiced by all Christians.

Catholic Response:

1) We must make a distinction between *teaching* and *doing*. Christ promised that the Church (and therefore the visible head of his Church) will *teach* correctly. He did not promise that they would always *follow* their own teaching.
2) Paul makes it clear that Peter's teachings and beliefs are perfectly orthodox. Paul holds on to them himself (see verses 15-16). But Peter didn't act in line with those teachings. In other words, he was a hypocrite. Paul explicitly states this:
   > "And the rest of the Jews (also) *acted hypocritically* along with him, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their *hypocrisy*. (Greek: ὑπόκρισις)"
3) Jesus teaches that the teaching of Church officials are still binding even if they do not act in line with those teachings.
4) Paul does not act like Peter's superior when he spoke up against Peter. It is the Christian duty of subordinates to correct their superiors for not living in line with the Gospel. But it is not the place of subordinate to correct their superior's teaching. Moreover, the very fact that Paul brings this issue with Peter in his letter to the Galatians indicates that Peter must have held a role as a leader. Paul correcting Barnabas or some other lesser-known figure would have been of little interest to the Galatians.

Matthew 23:2-3
"'The scribes and the Pharisees **have taken their seat on the chair of Moses**. **Therefore, do and observe all things** whatsoever they tell you, **but do not follow**

their example. For they preach but they do not practice.'"

Because the scribes and Pharisees hold the seat of Moses, the disciples were bound to follow their teachings, but not their hypocrisy. If this is true for the Pharisees with the seat of Moses, how much more true is it for Christian leaders who sit on the chair of Peter?

-In Brief-

1) Three conditions must be met in order to consider a papal document to be Infallible. It must be issued be a definitive teaching. It must be part of the exercise of the Papal office as Supreme Pontiff. It can only concern matters of faith and morals. If any one of these conditions is not met, it is not considered to be protected by the Holy Spirit against error.

2) Papal Infallibility rests on Christ's promise to the Church. Christ promised that the "gates of Hades" will not prevail against the Church. If the Church could corporately teach heresy, then the Hades did prevail over the Church. Therefore, the Church must be infallible in its actions. Since the Pope is the Chief Steward of the Church of Christ, he cannot err when directing the Church.

3) Luke 22:29-32 – Christ prayed for Peter that his faith would not fail and that he would confirm his brethren. The office of Peter, therefore, holds the faith inviolate.

4) John 21:17 – Christ makes Peter shepherd of his Church. Therefore, his teachings (and those of his office) cannot err because Christ's Church cannot err.

5) 1 Timothy 3:15 – The Church is the pillar and foundation of truth.

6) Anti-Catholics use Galatians 2:11-16 as proof that Peter erred. They claim that Paul upbraids Peter and says that he was clearly wrong. Since Peter was the first Pope, they argue, this is a case of the first Pope erring.

7) Galatians 2:11-16 – Paul scolds Peter for acting hypocritically and not for teaching something that is false. Indeed, a hypocrite believes one thing and does another. The implication is that Peter believed that both Jews and Gentiles are justified by Faith, but he acted like they weren't. Peter taught correctly. He just didn't live up to his teaching.

8) Galatians 2:11-16 also fails to meet all three criteria for Papal Infallibility.

9) Hypocrisy does not invalidate the teachings of religious leaders. Christ, in Matthew 23:2-3, teaches that we should "do and observe whatever they tell you," (they being Scribes and Pharisees) but do not follow their examples.

Chapter Three

The Eucharist

(Real Presence or Symbol?)

Transubstantiation

For the purpose of clarity, the Church has adopted some technical philosophical language to describe what the Eucharist is.

While these terms may seem odd at first, they are really ways to express rather simple ideas in short hand.

Let's go over each of these terms and we will try to relate them to everyday observations.

The first term on the list is Transubstantiation. This is a term that might sound super technical, but it is not. It is Latin to mean "changing substance." We will discuss later what exactly it means, but for now we will just focus in on why it is used.

Transubstantiation is a term that describes what happens when the bread and wine of the Eucharist become the Body and Blood of the Most Blessed Sacrament. There is a change, but in what way do these elements change? Transubstantiation answers this question. The bread and wine are transubstantiated.

Technically, Transubstantiation means that the accidents of bread and wine remain unchanged while the substance of both elements are transformed into Jesus - body, blood, soul and divinity or as the great Catholic theologian, Fr. John Hardon, once described it as "everything that makes the Christ Christ is there in the substance of the Eucharist.

This is only of limited value since we have not discussed what is meant by "accidents" and "substance." Let's look closer at each of these terms and then revisit the term Transubstantiation.

Our second term is "accidents." What is an accident? Well, it has nothing to do with crashing cars, trains, airplanes or spilling food. The term "accident" really means observable qualities of something.

We know things through their accidents since only these are perceptible to our senses.

Whenever doing philosophy, it is best to use examples. Examples always make more sense than words on a page.

Let's look at a sheet of paper. What types of qualities can we observe about the paper? We can say that the paper is: white, square, it sounds a certain way when you shake it, it tastes a certain way when you taste it and it has a special chemical composition so if we were to analyze it with special instrumentation, it would have a specific chemical formula. These are the accidents of the paper.

Notice that accidents can change. For example, if we tore the paper in half, it would no longer have the same accident of shape as it did before. Also, if we left it out in the sun, it may change the accident of color and maybe even its chemical composition.

The third term we need to tackle is "substance." What is a substance? The best way to describe a substance is to take a closer look at accidents.

Read the qualities or accidents that we listed above. Notice how different one accident is from another. The color of the paper has nothing to do with its chemical composition. The shape of the paper has nothing to do with the taste. The sound of a paper has nothing to do with its color. All of these accidents are radically different and they are not really dependent upon one another. However, they all adhere together in a certain way in order to make this paper what it is - THIS piece of paper. Philosophers reason that there must be a cause for this unity. They call this cause a "substance" because it "stands under" the accidents and prevent something from becoming something else (e.g. paper becoming gold, or a piece of wood becoming a fish).

In nature, we have all sorts of changes. We have accidental change without a substantial change. For example, when the paper was torn it had an accidental change (its shape changed), but the substance remained the same

(it was still THIS paper). There can be both an accidental and substantive change. For example, when iron becomes rusty. It changes its accidents (e.g. color, texture, chemical composition, et al.) and its substance. It is no longer Iron but Ferris Oxide. However, there is one change that is not known to occur in nature - Transubstantiation.

Since we can only know of a thing's substance is through its accidents, it is impossible (outside of an act of God) to know whether a substance changes if its accidents remain. This is what occurs in the Eucharist. The accidents of bread and wine remain (i.e. the Eucharist still looks, tastes, smells, feels and has the same chemical composition as bread and wine). But the substance of bread becomes Christ.

We know Transubstantiation occurs, not through scientific investigation, but because God has revealed that what was bread and wine is Christ's body and blood.

In the following sections, we will look at where God has revealed this to us. For now, it is important to become familiar with this terminology. Discuss accidents, substances, and Transubstantiation until you become familiar with it.

There is a fourth term that also is important in discussing the Eucharist. It is "species." We are used to this word. It is often used to describe different types of animals. They each belong to their own species. The technical term is a bit broader. A "species" is the modalities in which a thing exists.

After Christ becomes present in the Eucharist, we refer to the two elements as "species." For example, Christ comes to us under the species of bread and wine. This describes under what mode Christ is present in the Eucharist. He is not present to us under the species of His Body and Blood. If that were so, to eat the Eucharist would be cannibalism since we would be eating His Flesh and Blood as Flesh and Blood. However, Christ's Flesh and Blood comes to us under the sacramental species (i.e. as bread and wine).

Perhaps the best way to understand this is with a very odd example. Occasionally, God performs a Eucharistic miracle and one of these miracles is that he allows the accidents to change as well as the substance - the Eucharist really becomes Christ's body and blood! Now, is it permissible to consume this host? The answer would be no because Christ is no longer present as a sacrament because He is no longer under the "species" of bread and wine.

Understanding these terms is important to explain the many difficulties non-believers have with the Eucharist. It has been my experience that everyone has their own personal (and most often unusual) difficulty with the Eucharist. Some of them are so strange that it would be impossible to include of all them here. However, if you have a firm grip on these terms, you'll be able to dissect these difficulties, break them down into accidents, substance and species, and be able to answer them.

Below are two objections that are fairly common. See if you can answer them!

Anti-Catholic Objections:

Some anti-Catholics misunderstand Transubstantiation and raise objections based on this misunderstand. The following are two such misunderstandings. Based upon what you've learned, explain why these objects are false.

Objection #1 - "I'm a chemist and I proved that nothing changes in the Eucharist. I analyzed the bread before consecration and found that it contained the chemical elements of bread. After consecration, I performed the same test and found the exact same chemical composition as before. Therefore, Transubstantiation is false."

Objection #2 - "I heard a story that proved that even Catholic priests do not believe in Transubstantiation. A Protestant invited a priest into their home to celebrate Mass for them. After consecration, the Protestant told the priest that he had poisoned the bread and wine. The priest fled from the home proving that he did not believe that the Eucharist was no longer bread and wine."

-In Brief-

1) Accidents are all the different qualities of an object including color, texture, sound, taste, actions, chemistry, et al. All accidents differ from one another in kind and they do not rely on one another for their existence (for example, a paper can be white regardless if it square or rectangle).

2) Substance is that which holds all the accidents in an object together and makes them act in a way distinct from other objects.

3) Species is the modality in which a thing exists. Bread and wine exist under the modality or species of food. Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist exist under a sacramental species.

4) Accidental change occurs when the quality (accident) of an object changes, but not it's substance. For example, a paper is cut in two. The accident of shape changes, but not the substance.

5) Accidental and substantial changes occur in nature. For example, iron turns to rust. Nearly all the accidents change, as does the substance. Iron is no longer iron. It is something else.

6) Transubstantiation may occur in nature, but it is impossible to know since we know a substance by its accidents. We know that the bread and wine are transubstantiated because of divine revelation alone.

Protestant Denial of the Eucharist

Historically, Christians always believed that Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist and from the writings of the earliest Christians it is clear that this was a substantial presence. We will discuss this belief later, but it was this believe that Martin Luther was educated to believe.

However, Luther's denial of Purgatory and Indulgences logically unraveled a whole string of Christian beliefs that were interconnected with them. The Mass was the first for Luther to radically change. Luther's denial of suffrages for the dead, Masses for the dead and indulgences also led Luther to deny a sacramental priesthood. For Luther, the Mass was not a participation in the sacrifice of Christ, but only a remembrance. His changes in the Mass fell short of denying Christ's Real Presence. In fact, Lutherans today believe that Christ is really and truly present in the Eucharist.

Even though Luther retained an orthodox belief in the Real Presence, he denied the doctrine of Transubstantiation. Because of his desire to undermine the authority of the Catholic priesthood and his reaction against Catholic theology, Luther proposed that the substances of the bread and wine remain and along with the substance of Christ.

Luther stated:

"I agree with Wycliffe, that the bread remains; and with the Sophists (Catholics) I believe the body is there."

It was only after Catholics had insisted that Transubstantiation was an article of Faith that Luther denied it. Luther wrote:

I had taught it was a matter of no importance whether, in the sacrament, bread remained or not; but now I transubstantiate my opinion; I say it is an impiety and a blasphemy to hold that the bread is transubstantiated."

In his letter to Vaudios, Luther wrote:

"True it is, I believe it an error to say the bread does not remain, although this error hath hitherto appeared to me of light importance; but now that we are too much pressed to admit this error without the authority of Scripture, to spite the Papists, I am determined to believe that the bread and wine remain."
[Quotes taken from History of the Protestant Church, J. B. Bossuet, p. 41]

Luther believed in consubstantiation. The Latin prefix "con-" means "with." Therefore, Luther denied that the substance was transformed "transubstantiated," but remained with the bread and wine "consubstantiated." This, however, is Catholic terminology. Lutherans do not use this language. Rather, they prefer to speak of Christ being present "In, with and under" the elements of bread and wine.

There arose another element within Protestantism (and even outside of Protestantism). Zwingli had denied that Christ is really present in the Eucharist at all. He (along with another group known as the Anabaptists) believed that the Eucharist is only a symbol of Christ's body and blood, not the actual thing.

This denial of the Real Presence led to a very heated dispute between Luther and his followers and Zwingli with the Anabaptists. Luther viewed this heresy to be so horrible that German Lutheran princes would put to death any Anabaptists that they found on their land. This first great heresy among Protestants threatened to tare the Protestant revolt apart.

In an effort to strike a middle-ground between Luther's view and Zwingli's view, Calvin offered a different solution. Calvin stated that he believed that there is no change in the bread and wine (like the Zwinglists), but that

the Christian believer does truly and really meet Christ in the Eucharist through faith (similar to Luther). Calvin even at times spoke of Christ being substantially present, but this language eventually disappeared from Calvin's vocabulary. Calvin's middle-ground solution didn't heal the Protestant schism, but only added to it by proposing another heresy.

Today, the following positions are held:

Catholics & Orthodox - The substance of the bread and the wine cease to exist and remain only in appearances. Christ is substantially present in the Eucharist. Christ, through the priest, brings about Transubstantiation. When the accidents of bread and wine disappear, then Christ's substance is no longer present.

Lutherans - believe in consubstantiation where the bread and wine remain with Christ's real presence. The minister does not confect the Eucharist, but the faith of the congregation. When the congregation disbands, the Real Presence of Christ leaves.

Calvin's position is taken by Presbyterians. They believe that in a very real way the believer does receive Christ, but this is only in the realm of faith. It is the bread and wine that excites the believer and lifts him or her up in order to truly receive Christ. The bread and the wine do not become Christ's body and blood.

The Zwinglian position has been taken over by Baptists and most non-denominational Protestants. They believe that the bread and wine is merely a symbol and that the celebration of the Lord's Supper is simply a "calling-to-mind" of what Christ did for us. Jesus is never present in the Lord's Supper. It is done simply because we are commanded by Christ to do it. Strangely enough, the celebration of the Lord Supper is a very reverent celebration for the Baptists and yet elements of the celebration is deliberately changed. Many churches do not use wine, but only grape juice and the bread is likewise substituted for crackers or some other bread-like substance.

It is important to remember our first lesson. Just because someone belongs to a Protestant denomination, it does not mean they follow their teachings. Find out first what your friend believes before you start discussing the Real Presence.

Lutheran - Christ "in, with and under" the Bread and Wine

Calvinist (Presbyterians) - Christ is truly present "in faith", but Eucharist is mere bread and wine

Baptist - Bread and Wine only. Eucharist is only a memorial or a remembering of Christ

-In Brief-

1) Catholics, Orthodox, some high-church Anglicans (Anglo-Catholics) and a few others believe in Transubstantiation.

2) Lutherans believe in what Catholics call "Consubstantiation." This means that Christ is present "in, which and under" the appearances of bread and wine. In other words, Christ's substance and the substances of bread and wine coexist.

3) Calvinists believe that the accidents and substances of bread and wine remain, but that the believer really and truly meets Christ in the Eucharist "in faith."

4) Zwingli, Baptists and others believe only in a symbolic presence. The accidents and substance of bread and wine remain unchanged. The Eucharist is just a memorial.

5) Typical Protestant objections against Transubstantiation usually attempt to deny a substantial change by appealing to the absence of an accidental change.

Institution Narratives

Jesus established the Eucharist in the Last Supper. The text that records this is commonly called the institution narratives. There are four accounts recorded in the New Testament:

Matthew 26:26-28
"While they were eating, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and giving it to his disciples said, 'Take and eat; this is my body.' Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins.'"

Mark 14:22-26
While they were eating, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, and said, "Take it; this is my body." Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it. He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many. Amen, I say to you, I shall not drink again the fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." Then, after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives."

Luke 22:19-20
Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me." And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you."

1 Cor. 11:23-26
For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes."

Matthew, Mark, Luke and Paul all record the institution of the Eucharist. Only John excludes it, but as we will see in John 6, he offers his own contribution to the evidence for the real presence.

Two main arguments can be drawn from: Our Lord's use of language and the context of the Passover (an apology commonly known as the fourth cup).

Creative Language

The first and most obvious argument for Christ's Real Presence in the Eucharist is the word of our Lord Himself. In all of the institution narratives Jesus says "This is my body."

He does not say: "This bread is my body" which would be the Lutheran position since Christ would be affirming the existence of bread with his body.

He does not say: "By this, you will receive my body" which would be Calvinist position since it would indicate that the bread and wine are the means by which we truly meet Christ.

He does not say: "This bread stands for or symbolizes my body," which would be the Baptist (Zwingli) position that the bread and wine are merely symbols and it is meant for us to remember Christ.

However, Christ does not affirm the existence of bread in his words. Instead, he uses a demonstrative pronoun "this" and calls it his body.

If one were to take Christ at his word, one would conclude that what he holds in his hands is His Body, which would be the Catholic position.

Anti-Catholic Objections:

Anti-Catholics will object to this use of the plain sense of Jesus' words. They would say

that one ought to take the plain sense unless there are sufficient reasons not to understand the words literally. And in the institution narratives, they claim that they do.
First they would argue that the plain sense contradicts what we known through observation (it doesn't look like His body).

Jesus was either telling the truth, lying or telling the truth in a confusing manner. If Jesus means what he says, then the Catholic teaching is true. The second option is not possible. The third option is unlikely since the Son of God would not likely say something to his closest disciples on such an important manner in a sloppy way.

Secondly, anti-Catholics would argue that Jesus often uses symbolic language elsewhere in the New Testament. In this they claim that there are "linguistic parallels" that show that Jesus must be using symbolic language when he said, "This is My body."

This = My body
(Uses third person indicative)

I am [like] the true vine.
(Uses first person indicative)

For example:
"I am the Bread of Life" (John 6:48)
"I am the Light of the World" (John 8:12)
"I am the Door" (John 10:19)
"I am the Good Shepherd" (John 10:11)
"I am the Resurrection and the Life" (John 11:25)
"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (John 14:6)
"I am the True Vine" (John 15:1)

They claim that in all these cases Jesus is using figurative language *about Himself*. They even use the same "to be" verb as in the institution narrative.

What this objection misses is that Jesus' words in the Last Supper are not made *about Himself*, but *about what He is holding* in His hand (i.e., Eucharistic bread and cup). Unlike the statements He made about Himself ("I am the Door, I am the Good Shepherd"), Jesus is here identifying an object as His body. The verbs may be the same, but their forms are not. "I am the Bread of Life" means one thing. To say "This is My body" means something quite different. Was Jesus able to do what He said?

He is the Word of God, Who spoke the universe into existence (John 1:1-3). God's Word accomplishes what It says. "So shall My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it," (Isaiah 55:11). God's Word, "...calls into being that which does not exist," (Romans 4:17). We see this take place when Jesus says to the paralytic, "Get up and walk:" the paralytic got up and walked (Matthew 9:1). When He said to the man with the withered hand, "Stretch out your hand," he stretched out his hand (Matthew 12:13). When Jesus rebuked the winds and the stormy sea, the winds and the storm obeyed (Matthew 8:26,27). Jesus even called out to the dead to come out of their tomb, and they came back to life (John 11:43,44)! There are many more examples of Christ's creative word, but I think you have the idea. When Christ called the bread His Body, upon what basis can we say that it is not His Body?

A third objection claims that Jesus' words could not be taken at their face value because it would mean that Jesus violated Scripture.

Anti-Catholics claim that if the Eucharist is truly eating Christ's flesh and blood that this would violate the prohibition against drinking blood:

Leviticus 1:17
"This shall be a perpetual ordinance for your descendants wherever they may dwell. You shall not partake of any fat or any blood."

Leviticus 7:26, 27
"Wherever you dwell, you shall not partake of any blood, be it of bird or of animal.
Every person who partakes of any blood shall be cut off from his people."

Leviticus 17:10 - 14
10 "And if anyone, whether of the house of Israel or of the aliens residing among them, partakes of any blood, I will set myself against that one who partakes of blood and will cut him off from among his people.

11 Since the life of a living body is in its
blood, I have made you put it on the altar, so
that atonement may thereby be made for your
own lives, because it is the blood, as the seat
of life, that makes atonement.
12 That is why I have told the Israelites: No
one among you, not even a resident alien, may
partake of blood.
13 "Anyone hunting, whether of the
Israelites or of the aliens residing among
them, who catches an animal or a bird that
may be eaten, shall pour out its blood and
cover it with earth.
14 Since the life of every living body is its
blood, I have told the Israelites: You shall not
partake of the blood of any meat. Since the
life of every living body is its blood, anyone
who partakes of it shall be cut off."

1 Sam 14:33-34
"Informed that the people were sinning
against the LORD by eating the flesh with
blood, Saul said: "You have broken faith. Roll
a large stone here for me."
He continued: "Mingle with the people and tell
each of them to bring his ox or his sheep to
me. Slaughter it here and then eat, but you
must not sin against the LORD by eating the
flesh with blood." So everyone brought to the
LORD whatever ox he had seized, and they
slaughtered them there."

There are five Catholic responses to this argument:

1) God has the authority to change the law. Since Jesus is God He can allow what was forbidden in the Old Testament (e.g. making all foods clean) or prohibit what was allowed (e.g. divorce).

2) The prohibition of drinking blood is part of the ceremonial law (e.g. circumcision, sacrifices, kosher laws), which passed away after the coming of Christ(see Acts 10, 11 & 15).

3) Blood was prohibited in the Old Testament because it was a form of deification. By drinking the blood of an animal, they were participating in the animal's life. But it is not only permitted but required to participate in the life of God.

4) When we partake of the Eucharist we do so under the species or form of bread and wine. If the accidents were changed, we could not partake of it.

5) Jesus' holiness would prohibit any action that would be immoral (even on a symbolic level). Therefore, drinking blood must be in principle permissible.

The institution of the Eucharist was performed during the feast of Passover.

Let's review what the Passover is.

Exodus 12:1-20
1 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the
land of Egypt, 2 "This month shall stand at the
head of your calendar; you shall reckon it the
first month of the year. 3 Tell the whole
community of Israel: On the tenth of this
month every one of your families must procure
for itself a lamb, one apiece for each
household. 4 If a family is too small for a
whole lamb, it shall join the nearest household
in procuring one and shall share in the lamb in
proportion to the number of persons who
partake of it. 5 The lamb must be a year-old
male and without blemish. You may take it
from either the sheep or the goats. 6 You shall
keep it until the fourteenth day of this month,
and then, with the whole assembly of Israel
present, it shall be slaughtered during the
evening twilight. 7 They shall take some of its
blood and apply it to the two doorposts and
the lintel of every house in which they partake
of the lamb. 8 That same night they shall eat its
roasted flesh with unleavened bread and bitter
herbs. 9 It shall not be eaten raw or boiled, but
roasted whole, with its head and shanks and
inner organs.

10 None of it must be kept beyond the next
morning; whatever is left over in the morning
shall be burned up. 11 "This is how you are to
eat it: with your loins girt, sandals on your
feet and your staff in hand, you shall eat like
those who are in flight. It is the Passover of
the LORD.

12 For on this same night I will go through
Egypt, striking down every first—born of the
land, both man and beast, and executing
judgment on all the gods of Egypt-I, the
LORD!

13 But the blood will mark the houses where
you are. Seeing the blood, I will pass over
you; thus, when I strike the land of Egypt, no
destructive blow will come upon you. 14 "This
day shall be a memorial feast for you, which

all your generations shall celebrate with pilgrimage to the LORD, as a perpetual institution. [15] For seven days you must eat unleavened bread. From the very first day you shall have your houses clear of all leaven. Whoever eats leavened bread from the first day to the seventh shall be cut off from Israel.

[16] On the first day you shall hold a sacred assembly, and likewise on the seventh. On these days you shall not do any sort of work, except to prepare the food that everyone needs. [17] "Keep, then, this custom of the unleavened bread. Since it was on this very day that I brought your ranks out of the land of Egypt, you must celebrate this day throughout your generations as a perpetual institution.

[18] From the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month until the evening of the twenty-first day of this month you shall eat unleavened bread. [19] For seven days no leaven may be found in your houses. Anyone, be he a resident alien or a native, who eats leavened food shall be cut off from the community of Israel. [20] Nothing leavened may you eat; wherever you dwell you may eat only unleavened bread"

Some things to take out of this narrative:

The salvation of the Jews from the Egyptians consisted of two actions: the death of the first born sons of Egypt (the gentiles) and the slaying of the lambs (by the Jews). Jesus' work on the cross accomplishes both for our salvation. It is the death of the first born Son of God and the true Passover lamb.

John's Gospel makes it very clear that that was the true Passover lamb:

John 19:14
It was preparation day for Passover, and it was about noon. And he said to the Jews, "Behold, your king!"

Noon was when the Jews began slaying the Passover lambs in the temple.

John 19:23
When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took His clothes and divided them into four shares, a share for each soldier. They also took His tunic, but the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top down.

Jesus is wearing a linen ephod which the priest would wear when they are slaughtering the lambs.

John 19:23
There was a vessel filled with common wine. So they put a sponge soaked in wine on a sprig of hyssop and put it up to His mouth.

Hyssop is what was used to sprinkle the lambs blood on the doorposts during the Passover.

John 19:31-36
Now since it was preparation day, in order that the bodies might not remain on the cross on the Sabbath, for the Sabbath day of that week was a solemn one, the Jews asked Pilate that their legs be broken and they be taken down. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and then of the other one who was crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs, but one soldier thrust his lance into His side, and immediately blood and water flowed out. An eyewitness has testified, and his testimony is true; he knows that he is speaking the truth, so that you also may (come to) believe. For this happened so that the scripture passage might be fulfilled: "Not a bone of it will be broken."

This refers to the requirement that the Passover lamb could not have any broken bones.

If Jesus' death accomplishes the salvation of world through the death of the first born Son (gentiles) and the Passover lamb (Jews), how is this sacrifice applied to the people?

If we look back on the Passover narrative in Exodus, we find that it was not enough simply to kill the lamb and spread its blood on the doorpost. The blood on the door post was to indicate that the family inside had EATEN THE LAMB since this is required.

The Eucharist (or the Lord's Supper) is a new Passover meal. But if the type holds true, it follows that Christ's followers must EAT THE LAMB. A symbol of the lamb will not do.

Scott Hahn poses a further argument (which may or may not be solid). He argues that the narrative of the Last Supper speaks of only three of the four cups that is usually celebrated during the Passover. In the Eucharist, we partake of the third cup (the cup of blessing). But the Passover is not completed until one drinks of the final cup, which Christ did on the Cross. This, Hahn argues, is why Christ says after drinking the sour wine “It is finished.” We too must drink the third cup and go out into the night and pick up our crosses and follow Jesus
.

-In Brief-

1) The Institution Narratives are those passages in Scripture that describe Christ's institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper (e.g. Matthew 26:26-28, Mark 14:22-26, Luke 22:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26;

2) Christ does not say "This bread is my body" (which would be in line with the Lutheran position) nor does He say "This bread is a symbol of my body" (which would be the Calvinist and Baptist position). Instead, he refers to what was bread with the demonstrative pronoun "this."

3) God's word is creative (Genesis 1, John 1:1-5, Isaiah 55:11). When Christ says, "This is my body" It is His body since all of creation obeys the word of God. Protestants say that the word of the institution of the Eucharist is symbolic because elsewhere He says things like: "I am the Bread of Life" (John 6:48)"I am the Light of the World" (John 8:12) "I am the Door" (John 10:19) "I am the Good Shepherd" (John 10:11) "I am the Resurrection and the Life" (John 11:25) "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (John 14:6).

4) Christ's "I am" statement differ from that of the institution in that they are self-referential. However, the Institution Narratives are directional. Christ words are direct to what he has in his hands. Christ never says, "This door is my body" or "The light of the World is me."

5) Protestants also reject the Real Presence because they claim that eating flesh and blood are forbidden in the Scripture (Leviticus 1:17; 7:26-27; 17:10-14).

6) These prohibitions are not binding upon Christians: (1) Christ has the authority to change what is binding upon the people of God. If he commands us to eat his flesh and blood than it is licit regardless of what had forbidden before; (2) The prohibition against eating and drinking blood was part of the ceremonial law (e.g. circumcision, sacrifices, kosher laws), which is no longer binding on Christians (see Acts 10, 11 & 15); (3) Blood was forbidden in the Old Testament because it was a form of pagan deification. It was believed that by drinking blood of animals you would share in the same power and strength. It is ok to share in Christ's life; (4) If the Eucharist were under the species of food, we could not eat because it would be flesh and blood as flesh and blood. We consume it under the species of a Sacrament so we eat Christ's body and blood as sacramental bread and wine. (5) Christ's holiness prohibits him from commanding anything that offends God (even symbolically). Therefore, the Eucharist cannot be offensive to God.

7) The Last Supper was a celebration of the Jewish Passover. In the Passover, the Angel of Death would Passover any household that (1) ate the unspotted sacrificial Passover lamb (2) had its blood sprinkled on the door posts. They could not consume a symbol of the Lamb, but the real thing. Christ is our Passover lamb (1 Cor. 5:7 – "For Christ our Passover has been sacrificed"). John 19 also portrays Christ's death on the cross as a Passover sacrifice. Therefore, we must eat the Lamb of God as our true Passover.

The Bread of Life Discourse

John 6

1 After this, Jesus went across the Sea of Galilee (of Tiberias).

2 A large crowd followed him, because they saw the signs he was performing on the sick.

3 Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples.

4 The Jewish feast of Passover was near.

5 When Jesus raised his eyes and saw that a large crowd was coming to him, he said to Philip, "Where can we buy enough food for them to eat?"

6 He said this to test him, because he himself knew what he was going to do.

7 Philip answered him, "Two hundred days' wages worth of food would not be enough for each of them to have a little (bit)."

8 One of his disciples, Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, said to him,

9 "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish; but what good are these for so many?"

10 Jesus said, "Have the people recline." Now there was a great deal of grass in that place. So the men reclined, about five thousand in number.

11 Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed them to those who were reclining, and also as much of the fish as they wanted.

12 When they had had their fill, he said to his disciples, "Gather the fragments left over, so that nothing will be wasted."

13 So they collected them, and filled twelve wicker baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves that had been more than they could eat.

14 When the people saw the sign he had done, they said, "This is truly the Prophet, the one who is to come into the world."

Commentary

14 - 15 - The miracle of the Loaves is one of the most staggering incomprehensible miracles Jesus did during his ministry. It not only caused 5000 people to declare him the Messiah (i.e. the Prophet) and try to forcibly install him as the Messianic King after it had taken place, but it was the most difficult for the apostles to fathom.

15 Since Jesus knew that they were going to come and carry him off to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain alone.

16 When it was evening, his disciples went down to the sea,

17 embarked in a boat, and went across the sea to Capernaum. It had already grown dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them.

18 The sea was stirred up because a strong wind was blowing.

19 When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they began to be afraid.

20 But he said to them, "It is I. Do not be afraid."

21 They wanted to take him into the boat, but the boat immediately arrived at the shore to which they were heading.

22 The next day, the crowd that remained across the sea saw that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not gone along with his disciples in the boat, but only his disciples had left.

23 Other boats came from Tiberias near the place where they had eaten the bread when the Lord gave thanks.

24 When the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into boats and came to Capernaum looking for Jesus.

25 And when they found him across the sea they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?"

26 Jesus answered them and said, "Amen, amen, I say to you, you are looking for me not because you saw signs but because you ate the loaves and were filled.

27 Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him the Father, God, has set his seal."

28 So they said to him, "What can ***we do*** *to* ***accomplish*** *the* ***works of God****?"*

29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in the one he sent."

16 - According to Mark, after Jesus walks on water Mark adds the following scene:

Mark 6:50-52 - 50 They had all seen him and were terrified. But at once he spoke with them, "Take courage, it is I, do not be afraid!" He got into the boat with them and the wind died down. They were (completely) astounded. They had not understood the incident of the loaves. On the contrary, their hearts were hardened.

The miracle of the loaves was not their multiplication (taking one bread and making many other loaves), but their multi-location (the bread that was located in the 5000 is the same bread that they held in their hands and filled 12 wicker baskets). Hence, even Jesus walking on the water did not compare to what had happened with the loaves.

26 - In my opinion, the bread of life discourse is really two discourses in one. The discourse begins with the question, "who is Jesus?" The second part answers the first, "He is the one who is able to give himself to eat He is the living Manna."

29 - Note here (and I'll explain why later) that Jesus speaks of the food "which the Son of Man will give you."

30 So they said to him, "What sign can you
do, that we may see and believe in you? What
can you do?
31 Our ancestors ate manna in the desert,
as it is written: 'He gave them bread from
heaven to eat.'"
32 So Jesus said to them, "Amen, amen, I
say to you, it was not Moses who gave the
bread from heaven; my Father gives you the
true bread from heaven.
33 For the bread of God is that which
comes down from heaven and gives life to the
world."
34 So they said to him, "Sir, give us this
bread always."
35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of
life; whoever comes to me will never hunger,
and whoever believes in me will never thirst.
36 But I told you that although you have
seen (me), you do not believe.
37 Everything that the Father gives me will
come to me, and I will not reject anyone who
comes to me,
38 because I came down from heaven not to
do my own will but the will of the one who
sent me.
39 And this is the will of the one who sent
me, that I should not lose anything of what he
gave me, but that I should raise it (on) the last
day.
40 For this is the will of my Father, that
everyone who sees the Son and believes in him
may have eternal life, and I shall raise him
(on) the last day."
41 The Jews murmured about him because
he said, "I am the bread that came down from
heaven,"
42 and they said, "Is this not Jesus, the son
of Joseph? Do we not know his father and
mother? Then how can he say, 'I have come
down from heaven'?"
43 Jesus answered and said to them, "Stop
murmuring among yourselves.
44 No one can come to me unless the Father
who sent me draw him, and I will raise him on
the last day.
45 It is written in the prophets: 'They shall
all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to
my Father and learns from him comes to me.

44-51 This is the second part where Jesus reassures the apostles that there are some who don't listen to the Father and they are given the ability to come to Jesus and believe.

46 Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father.

47 Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life.

48 I am the bread of life.

49 Your ancestors ate the manna in the desert, but they died;

50 this is the bread that comes down from heaven so that one may eat it and not die.

*51 **I am the living bread** that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; **and the bread that I will give** is my flesh for the life of the world."*

*52 The Jews **quarreled** among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us (his) flesh to eat?"*

53 Jesus said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you.

*54 Whoever **eats** my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day.*

55 For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink.

*56 Whoever **eats** my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him.*

*57 Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who **feeds** on me will have life because of me.*

*58 This is the bread that came down from heaven. Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died, whoever **eats** this bread will live forever."*

59 These things He said while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

60 Then many of His disciples who were listening said, "This saying is hard; who can accept it?"

51 - [Very important] In verse 29, Jesus speaks of the food that He will give. In this verse, we see that there are two breads that are being spoken of in John 6. The "Bread of Life" which is a metaphor for Jesus and the bread that Jesus gives which is his flesh (himself in the Eucharist). Notice that Jesus switches from a self-referential verb (I am) to a transitive verb (I will give). The verses that follow will speak of this bread which the Bread of Life will give.

52 - Greek: A dispute breaks out. The Jews understand Jesus to literally give His flesh to eat.

53 - In the Old Testament, people would sometimes speak of "eating ones flesh" as a metaphor for reviling or persecuting someone (e.g. Mic 3:3 - They eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from them, and break their bones also see Psalm 27:2; Isa. 9:20; 49:26; Mic. 3:3; 2 Sam. 23:17; Rev. 16:6; 17:6, 16). This, however, would make Jesus promise eternal life to anyone who persecutes him, which is impossible.

53 - Jesus, knowing that they take his words literally raises the stakes by introducing drinking his blood.

55 - Jesus forthrightly states he is speaking literally (ἡ γὰρ σάρξ μου ἀληθής ἐστιν βρῶσις, καὶ τὸ αἷμά μου ἀληθής ἐστιν πόσις).

 '*ho trogon*' [in bold] - The word is translated as "eat" is a very strong word in Greek. It means literally "munch" or "chew." Unlike the other word for eat (Greek: *Phago*) which may be symbolic, *trogo* is never used for anything other than literal chewing.

61 Since Jesus knew that His disciples were murmuring about this, He said to them, "Does this shock you?

62 What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before?

63 It is the spirit that gives life, while the flesh is of no avail. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

61 - This verse indicates that Jesus is fully aware that his disciples were understanding his words to be literal and not merely a metaphor to believe in him. After all, Jesus repeated told his hearers that they must believe in him without any murmuring or dispute.

61-63 - Anti-Catholics are fond of quoting verse 63 as "proof" that what is being spoken of it purely symbolic. They say that eating and drinking Jesus' flesh and blood must be a metaphor for believing in him because Jesus says that his words or "spirit and life."

The last word "life" is easy to understand. It means that the words that Jesus spoke in John 6 pertain to eternal life, but what about "spirit." If "spirit" means symbolic or metaphorical, then this is the only place in the Bible where the word "spirit" (Greek: *pneuma*) means a symbol. In fact, if one interprets "spirit" to mean something spiritual or symbolic one comes up with all sorts of heretical notions.

My approach to this verse is to examine it in context. Starting in verse 61:

61 Since Jesus knew that his disciples were murmuring about this, he said to them, "Does this shock you? 62 What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?

Does this (i.e. eating my flesh) shock you? What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? Put another way, "if you were to see where the Son of Man was before, the idea of "eating my flesh" would not shock you. Jesus is the All-Mighty and the All-Mighty can do all things. Giving his flesh to eat is nothing compared to creating the universe out of nothing. If Jesus were an ordinary man, this would be shocking indeed. No man can give his flesh for others to eat. Rather, it is by the power of God this is accomplished. This is why Jesus says in verse 63 - " It is the spirit that gives life, while the flesh is of no avail. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and life." Giving his flesh as food is accomplished not by human innovation, but by the Spirit of God.

Sometimes anti-Catholics will argue that even if the Eucharist were true, it would not avail spiritually because Jesus says, "The flesh profits nothing..." But as Augustine notes it is

the crucifixion of Christ's flesh that avails for our salvation, so the physical flesh can produce spiritual benefits.

64 But there are some of you who do not believe." Jesus knew from the beginning the ones who would not believe and the one who would betray him.

64 - If we are correct in understanding 61-63, than 64 fits perfectly within this line of thought. If you knew who Jesus really was and where he came from, you'd know that he could give his flesh to eat. Verse 64- But there are some of you who do not believe.

65 And He said, "For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by my Father."

65- This harkens back to the earlier passage where Jesus speaks about no one coming to him but by the Father and "they shall all be taught by God."

66 As a result of this, many (of) His disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied Him.

66 - Very important verse here in John 6:66. Jesus' disciples abandon him and returned to their former way of life. They understood Jesus to speaking literally and they understood verses 61-63 not to be a retraction of what was just said, but rather a "line-in-the-sand."

67 Jesus then said to the Twelve, "Do you also want to leave?"

67 - No one will deny that Jesus is a great teacher. He is surely the greatest teacher in history. But even a mediocre teacher would not let their students misunderstand them with attempting to correct it. Jesus knew that his disciples understood his words literally. He let them go. Here he turns to his closest disciples and asks if they would like to go as well.

68 Simon Peter answered Him, "Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.
69 We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God."

68 - This is also a confirmation that we are understanding 62-63 correctly. Peter does not say anything about flesh or blood, but upon the authority of Christ to teach - "Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God." Put another way, "You are the Holy One of God. Therefore, what you said is spirit and life (it will come about).

70 Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you twelve? Yet is not one of you a devil?"
71 He was referring to Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot; it was he who would betray him, one of the Twelve.

70-71 - There was on apostle who did not believe and didn't have the integrity to leave - Judas. Judas didn't believe in the Real Presence.

-In Brief-

1) Christ performs the miracle of the loaves before the bread of life discourse. The miracle could be called the multi-location of loaves since more loaves were not created, but the same loaves were present in the five thousand.

2) It is important to follow what Jesus says and what the crowd understands.

3) Jesus begins his discourse speaking of himself metaphorically as the "Bread of Life." But in verse 29 He introduces another element "the bread that the Son of Man will give you." It is this second bread that Jesus says is his flesh and blood and true food and true drink.

4) Jesus uses the word "*trogon*," which is never used in literature for something purely symbolic. It means literally "munch down" or "chew."

5) His listeners (disciples) understand Jesus literally and leave. Elsewhere in Scripture, when his disciples misunderstand what he told them, he corrects them. Here he lets them go. Why? Because they understood him correctly. He even asks Peter if he also wishes to leave.

Paul's Understanding of Real Presence

Christ Our Passover

In many ways Paul affirms what we have just stated. One of the more significant remarks that Paul makes is in regards to Christ and the Passover.

1Cor 5:7-8
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:

Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened [bread] of sincerity and truth.

Paul's remark that Christ is our Passover lamb that has been sacrifice strongly implies (again, given the background in Exodus) that we now keep the feast by eating the lamb.

1 Corinthian 10:1-6

1 I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea,
2 and all of them were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.
3 All ate the same spiritual food,
4 and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they drank from a spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was the Christ.
5 Yet God was not pleased with most of them, for they were struck down in the desert.
6 These things happened as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil things, as they did.

In Exodus, the Israelites were supernaturally fed Manna (bread), quail (meat) and water (from the rock). Since Paul links both the drinking of the rock with "spiritual food" as well, he must also see this as somehow mystically feeding on Christ.

If "these things happened as examples for us," what spiritual food and drink do Christians have that would parallel or even supersede the spiritual food and drink the Israelites enjoyed in the desert?

1 Corinthian 10:14 - 17

14 Therefore, my beloved, avoid idolatry.
15 I am speaking as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I am saying.
16 The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?
17 Because the loaf of bread is one, we, though many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

Paul concludes what he has said earlier (in avoiding temptation and falling) with the warning "avoid idolatry." In his very next sentence, Paul immediately addresses the Eucharist. If there is no Real Presence, why would the Eucharist come into Paul line of thought after this warning?

"The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation (*koinonia*) in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation (*koinonia*) in the body of Christ?"

The Greek "*koinonia*" means participation or sharing as well as friendship and fellowship. But Paul must mean a real participation in Christ because he specifies that the bread is a "*koinonia*" with the Body and "cup of Blessing (Eucharist)" is a "*koinonia*" with the Blood. This is not simply friendship or fellowship. We actually partake of Christ's body and blood.

"Because the loaf of bread is one, we, though many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf."

Paul could not have said this unless he believed that the bread (or one loaf) as nothing other than the one body of Christ.

Notice the cause and effect of Paul's words. We are made ONE because we all partake of the ONE loaf. But if there is no Real Presence than we partake of many loaves of bread and Paul's words do not make sense.

Remember the miracle of the loaves. Jesus did not "multiply" the loaves so that there was enough bread to feed everyone. Rather, he enabled the same loaves to

feed everyone. In a similar way, Paul here says that we, although many, are all fed by the one loaf... which is Christ.

1 Corinthian 11:23-34

23 For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night He was handed over, took bread,
24 and, after He had given thanks, broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."
25 In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."
26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until He comes.
27 Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord.
28 A person should examine himself, and so eat the bread and drink the cup.
29 For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself.
30 That is why many among you are ill and infirm, and a considerable number are dying.
31 If we discerned ourselves, we would not be under judgment;
32 but since we are judged by (the) Lord, we are being disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.
33 Therefore, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.
34 If anyone is hungry, he should eat at home, so that your meetings may not result in judgment. The other matters I shall set in order when I come.

What sin would there be in eating a symbol of Christ.

Matthew 6:8 reads:

"This is how you are to pray:
Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
10 your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
11 Give us today our **daily bread**;
12 and forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors;
13 and do not subject us to the final test, but
deliver us from the evil one.

The word translated "daily" here in Greek is not exactly accurate. The Greek word is *epiousion* (ἐπιούσιον).
This word is composed of *epi-* = over and *-ousia* = substance or nature. The same Greek word used to define that Jesus is of the same nature as the Father (*homousia*). Literally, in the Greek, Our Lord says "Give us this day our supernatural bread. This is how Origen, Chrysostom and Jerome understood it (See Bauer, Walter, Gingrich, F. Wilbur, and Danker, Frederick W., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) 1979).

It has been interpreted variously: Syriac - *continual* ; Peshitta - *for our need;* Latin 'panis quotidianus', 'daily bread'; Jerome 'panis supersubstantialis.' Your typical English translation will interpret it as "daily bread."

But surely our Lord isn't asking us to petition him so that we will have food on the table. Our Lord warns us not to be concerned about what we will eat, drink or wear, but to set our sights on heaven (cf. Matthew 6:25-32, Luke 12:29). Certainly, our Lord must want us to ask the Father to send us another kind of bread.

One cannot help but remember John 6:27,34-35 where Our Lord says, "Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you... So they said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always." Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst."

The Lord's Prayer and the Eucharist go hand in hand.

-In Brief-

1) 1 Cor. 10:1-5 – Paul implies that Christians also have a "spiritual food" and "drink."

2) 1 Cor. 10:14-17 – Paul says that the "cup of blessing" and the "bread that we break" are a communion in Christ's body and blood. The word for communion (*koinonia*) refers to a real participation in something.

3) 1 Cor. 11:23-34 – Paul states to receive the Eucharist unworthy is to guilty of "Christ's body and blood." If the Eucharist were just a symbol, there would be no such crime. Moreover, Paul says that because of this unworthy reception many are sick and some have died.

4) Matthew 6:8 says, "Give us this day our super-substantial bread." Although this does not prove the existence of the Real Presence it does point out its supernatural origin.

The Real Presence and the Early Fathers

Remember to use the Early Fathers as WITNESSES, not opinion makers or exegetes.

We trust their writings in that they are a witness to the earliest Christian Faith.

ST. CLEMENT OF ROME (c. 80 A.D.)

Our sin will not be small if we eject from the episcopate those who blamelessly and holily have ***offered its sacrifices*** [or ***offered the gifts,*** referring to the Eucharist]. (Letter to Corinthians 44:4)

==========

ST. IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH (c. 110 A.D.)

I have no taste for corruptible food nor for the pleasures of this life. I desire the Bread of God, ***which is the flesh of JESUS CHRIST***, who was of the seed of David; and for drink ***I desire His blood***, which is love incorruptible. (Letter to Romans 7:3)

Take care, then, to use one Eucharist, so that whatever you do, you do according to God: ***for there is one flesh of our lord Jesus Christ***, and one cup ***in the union of His blood***; one ***altar***, as there is one bishop with the presbytery... (Letter to Philadelphians 4:1)

They [i.e. the Gnostics] abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer, because they do not confess that ***the Eucharist is the flesh of our savior Jesus Christ***, flesh which suffered for our sins and which the Father, in His goodness, raised up again. **(Letter to Smyrna 7:1)**

==========

ST. JUSTIN THE MARTYR (c. 100 - 165 A.D.)

We call this food Eucharist; and no one else is permitted to partake of it, except one who believes our teaching to be true and who has been washed in the washing which is for the remission of sins and for regeneration [Baptism], and is thereby living as Christ has enjoined.

For not as common bread nor common drink do we receive these; but since Jesus Christ our Savior was made incarnate by the word of God and had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so too, as we have been taught, the food which has been made into the Eucharist by the Eucharistic prayer set down by Him, ***AND BY THE CHANGE OF WHICH*** our blood and flesh is nourished, ***IS BOTH THE FLESH AND THE BLOOD OF THAT INCARNATED JESUS***. **(First Apology 66)**

Moreover, as I said before, concerning the sacrifices which you at that time offered, God speaks through Malachi [1:10-12]...It is of the ***SACRIFICES***

OFFERED TO HIM IN EVERY PLACE BY US, the Gentiles, that is, ***OF THE BREAD OF THE EUCHARIST AND LIKEWISE OF THE CUP OF THE EUCHARIST***, that He speaks at that time; and He says that we glorify His name, while you profane it. **(Dialogue with Trypho 41)**

==========

DIDACHE or TEACHING OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES (c. 140 A.D.)

On the Lord's Day of the Lord gather together, break bread and give thanks, after confessing your transgressions ***SO THAT YOUR SACRIFICE MAY BE PURE***. Let no one who has a quarrel with his neighbor join you until he is reconciled by the Lord: "In every place and time let there be ***OFFERED TO ME A CLEAN SACRIFICE***. For I am a Great King," says the Lord, "and My name is wonderful among the Gentiles." **(14:1-2)**

==========

ST. IRENAEUS (c. 140 - 202 A.D.)

...He took from among creation that which is bread, and gave thanks, saying, "***THIS IS MY BODY***." The cup likewise, which is from among the creation to which we belong, ***HE CONFESSED TO BE HIS BLOOD***.

He taught ***THE NEW SACRIFICE OF THE NEW COVENANT***, of which Malachi, one of the twelve prophets, had signified beforehand: [quotes Mal 1:10-11]. By these words He makes it plain that the former people will cease to make offerings to God; ***BUT THAT IN EVERY PLACE SACRIFICE WILL BE OFFERED TO HIM***, and indeed, a pure one; for His name is glorified among the Gentiles. **(Against Heresies 4:17:5)**

But what consistency is there in those who hold that the bread over which thanks have been given ***IS THE BODY OF THEIR LORD***, and the cup ***HIS BLOOD***, if they do not acknowledge that He is the Son of the Creator... How can they say that the flesh which has been nourished ***BY THE BODY OF THE LORD AND BY HIS BLOOD*** gives way to corruption and does not partake of life? ...For as the bread from the earth, receiving the invocation of God, ***IS NO LONGER COMMON BREAD BUT THE EUCHARIST***, consisting of two elements, earthly and heavenly... **(Against Heresies 4:18:4-5)**

If the ***BODY*** be not saved, then, in fact, neither did the Lord redeem us with His ***BLOOD***; and neither is the cup of the ***EUCHARIST THE PARTAKING OF HIS BLOOD*** nor is the bread which we break ***THE PARTAKING OF HIS BODY***...He has declared the cup, a part of creation, ***TO BE HIS OWN BLOOD***, from which He causes our blood to flow; and the bread, a part of creation, ***HE HAS ESTABLISHED AS HIS OWN BODY***, from which He gives increase to our bodies.

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***...receiving the Word of God, ***BECOMES THE EUCHARIST, WHICH IS THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST***... **(Against Heresies 5:2:2-3)**

==========

TERTULLIAN (c. 155 - 250 A.D.)

Likewise, in regard to days of fast, many do not think they should be present at the ***SACRIFICIAL*** prayers, because their fast would be broken if they were to receive ***THE BODY OF THE LORD***...***THE BODY OF THE LORD HAVING BEEN RECEIVED AND RESERVED***, each point is secured: both the participation ***IN THE SACRIFICE***... **(Prayer 19:1)**

The flesh feeds on ***THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST***, so that the ***SOUL TOO*** may fatten on God. **(Resurrection of the Dead 8:3)**

The Sacrament of the Eucharist, which the Lord commanded to be taken at meal times and by all, we take even before daybreak in congregations... ***WE OFFER SACRIFICES FOR THE DEAD*** on their birthday anniversaries.... We take anxious care lest something of our Cup or Bread should fall upon the ground... **(The Crown 3:3-4)**

A woman, after the death of her husband, is bound not less firmly but even more so, not to marry another husband...Indeed, 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***. **(Monogamy 10:1,4)**

==========

ORIGEN (c. 185 - 254 A.D.)

We give thanks to the Creator of all, and, along with thanksgiving and prayer for the blessings we have received, we also eat the bread presented to us; and this bread ***BECOMES BY PRAYER A SACRED BODY***, which sanctifies those who sincerely partake of it. **(Against Celsus 8:33)**

You see how the ***ALTARS*** are no longer sprinkled with the blood of oxen, but consecrated ***BY THE***

PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST. **(Homilies on Josue 2:1)**

But if that text (Lev 24:5-9) is taken to refer to the greatness of what is mystically symbolized, then there is a 'commemoration' which has an ***EFFECT OF GREAT PROPITIATORY VALUE***. If you apply it to that 'Bread which came down from heaven and gives life to the world,' that shewbread which 'God has offered to us as a means of reconciliation, in virtue of faith, ransoming us with His blood,' and if you look to that commemoration of which the Lord says, 'Do this in commemoration of me,' then you will find that this is the unique commemoration ***WHICH MAKES GOD PROPITIOUS TO MEN***. **(Homilies on Leviticus 9)**

You are accustomed to take part in the divine mysteries, so you know how, when you have received ***THE BODY OF THE LORD***, you reverently exercise every care lest a particle of it fall, and lest anything of the consecrated gift perish....how is it that you think neglecting the word of God a lesser crime than neglecting ***HIS BODY***? **(Homilies on Exodus 13:3)**

...now, however, in full view, there is the true food, ***THE FLESH OF THE WORD OF GOD***, as He Himself says: "***MY FLESH IS TRULY FOOD, AND MY BLOOD IS TRULY DRINK***."
(Homilies on Numbers 7:2)

==========

ST. CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA (c. 150 - 216 A.D.)

Calling her children about her, she [the Church] nourishes them with holy milk, that is, with the Infant Word...The Word is everything to a child: both Father and Mother, both Instructor and Nurse. "***EAT MY FLESH***," He says, "***AND DRINK MY BLOOD***." The Lord supplies us with these intimate nutriments. ***HE DELIVERS OVER HIS FLESH, AND POURS OUT HIS BLOOD***; and nothing is lacking for the growth of His children. O incredible mystery! **(Instructor of Children 1:6:42,1,3)**

==========

ST. CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE (c. 200 - 258 A.D.)

And we ask that this Bread be given us daily, so that we who are in Christ and daily receive ***THE EUCHARIST AS THE FOOD OF SALVATION***, may not, by falling into some more grievous sin and then in abstaining from communicating, be withheld from the heavenly Bread, and be separated from Christ's Body... He Himself warns us, saying, "***UNLESS YOU EAT THE FLESH OF THE SON OF MAN AND DRINK HIS BLOOD, YOU SHALL NOT HAVE LIFE IN YOU***." Therefore do we ask that our Bread, ***WHICH IS CHRIST***, be given to us daily, so that we who abide and live in Christ may not withdraw from His sanctification and from His Body. **(The Lord's Prayer 18)**

Also in the priest Melchisedech we see ***THE SACRAMENT OF THE SACRIFICE OF THE LORD*** prefigured...The order certainly is that which comes from his [Mel's] sacrifice and which comes down from it: because Mel was a priest of the Most High God; because he offered bread; and because he blessed Abraham. And who is more a priest of the Most High God than our Lord Jesus Christ, who, ***WHEN HE OFFERED SACRIFICE TO GOD THE FATHER, OFFERED THE VERY SAME WHICH MELCHISEDECH HAD OFFERED, NAMELY BREAD AND WINE, WHICH IS IN FACT HIS BODY AND BLOOD!*** **(Letters 63:4)**

If Christ Jesus, our Lord and God, is Himself the High Priest of God the Father; ***AND IF HE OFFERED HIMSELF AS A SACRIFICE TO THE FATHER; AND IF HE COMMANDED THAT THIS BE DONE IN COMMEMORATION OF HIMSELF*** — then certainly the priest, who imitates that which Christ did, ***TRULY FUNCTIONS IN PLACE OF CHRIST***. **(Letters 63:14)**

==========

APHRAATES THE PERSIAN SAGE (c. 280 - 345 A.D.)

After having spoken thus ["This is My body...This is My blood"], the Lord rose up from the place where He had made the Passover and had given His Body as food and His Blood as drink, and He went with His disciples to the place where He was to be arrested. But ***He ate of His own Body and drank of His own Blood***, while He was pondering on the dead. ***With His own hands the Lord presented His own Body to be eaten, and before He was crucified He gave His blood as drink***... **(Treatises 12:6)**

==========

ST. EPHRAIM (c. 306 - 373 A.D.)

Our Lord Jesus took in His hands what in the beginning ***was only bread***; and He blessed it, and signed it, and made it holy in the name of the Father and in the name of the Spirit; and He broke it and in His gracious kindness He distributed it to all His disciples one by one. ***He called the bread His living Body, and did Himself fill it with Himself and the Spirit***. And extending His hand, He gave them the Bread which His right hand had made holy: "Take, all of you eat of this, which My word has made holy. ***Do not now regard as bread*** that which I have given you;

but take, eat this Bread [of life], and do not scatter the crumbs; ***for what I have called My Body, that it is indeed. One particle from its crumbs is able to sanctify thousands and thousands, and is sufficient to afford life to those who eat of it. Take, eat, entertaining no doubt of faith, because this is My Body***, and whoever eats it in belief eats in it Fire and Spirit. But if any doubter eat of it, for him it will be only bread. And whoever eats in belief the Bread made holy in My name, ***if he be pure, he will be preserved in his purity; and if he be a sinner, he will be forgiven***." But if anyone despise it or reject it or treat it with ignominy, it may be taken as a ***certainty that he treats with ignominy the Son, who called it and actually made it to be His Body***.

After the disciples had eaten the new and holy Bread, and when they understood by faith that they had ***eaten of Christ's body***, Christ went on to explain and to give them the whole Sacrament. He took and mixed a cup of wine. Then He blessed it, and signed it, and made it holy, ***declaring that it was His own Blood, which was about to be poured out***...Christ commanded them to drink, and He explained to them that the cup ***which they were drinking was His own Blood***: "This is truly My Blood, which is shed for all of you. Take, all of you, drink of this, because it is a new covenant in My Blood. As you have seen Me do, do you also in My memory. Whenever you are gathered together in My name in Churches everywhere, do what I have done, in memory of Me. ***Eat My Body, and drink My Blood***, a covenant new and old." **(Homilies 4:4; 4:6)**

==========

ST. ATHANASIUS (c. 295 - 373 A.D.)

You shall see the Levites bringing loaves and a cup of wine, and placing them on the table. So long as the prayers of supplication and entreaties have ***not*** been made, there is ***only bread and wine***. ***But after the great and wonderful prayers have been completed, then the bread is become the Body, and the wine the Blood, of our Lord Jesus Christ***....Let us approach the celebration of the mysteries. This bread and this wine, so long as the prayers and supplications have not taken place, remain simply what they are. ***But after the great prayers and holy supplications have been sent forth, the Word comes down into the bread and wine — and thus is His Body confected***. **(Sermon to the Newly Baptized, from Eutyches)**

==========

ST. CYRIL OF JERUSALEM (c. 350 A.D.)

For just as the bread and the wine of the Eucharist ***before*** the holy invocation of the adorable Trinity were ***simple bread and wine, but the invocation having been made, the bread becomes the Body of Christ and the wine the Blood of Christ***... **(Catechetical Lectures 19 [Mystagogic 1], 7)**

This one teaching of the blessed Paul is enough to give you complete certainty about the Divine Mysteries, by your having been deemed worthy of which, you have become ***united in body and blood with Christ***. For Paul proclaimed clearly that: "On the night in which He was betrayed, our Lord Jesus Christ, taking bread and giving thanks, broke it and gave it to His disciples, saying: 'Take, eat, This is My Body.' And taking the cup and giving thanks, He said, 'Take, drink, This is My Blood.'" ***He Himself, therefore, having declared and said of the Bread, "This is My Body," who will dare any longer to doubt? And when He Himself has affirmed and said, "This is My Blood," who can ever hesitate and say it is not His Blood?*** **(22 [Mystagogic 4], 1)**

Once in Cana of Galilee ***He changed the water into wine***, a thing related to blood; and is ***His changing of wine into Blood not credible***? When invited to an ordinary marriage, with a miracle He performed that glorious deed. And is it not much more to be confessed that ***He has betowed His Body and His Blood upon the wedding guests***? **(22 [Mystagogic 4], 2)**

Do not, therefore, regard the Bread and the Wine ***as simply that***; ***for they are, according to the Master's declaration, the Body and Blood of Christ. Even though the senses suggest to you the other, let faith make you firm. Do not judge in this matter by taste, but — be fully assured by the faith, not doubting that you have been deemed worthy of the Body and Blood of Christ***. **(22 [Mystagogic 4], 6)**

Having learned these things, and being fully convinced that ***the apparent bread is not bread, even though it is sensible to the taste, but the Body of Christ; and that the apparent Wine is not wine, even though the taste would have it so***... **(22 [Mystagogic 4], 9)**

Then, having sanctified ourselves by these spiritual songs, we call upon the benevolent God to send out the Holy Spirit upon the gifts which have been laid out: that ***He may make the bread the Body of Christ, and the wine the Blood of Christ***; for whatsoever the Holy Spirit touches, ***that is sanctified and changed***. **(23 [Mystagogic 5], 7)**

Then, upon the completion of the ***spiritual sacrifice***, the ***bloodless worship***, over that ***PROPITIATORY victim*** we call upon God for the common peace of the Churches, for the welfare of the world, for kings, for soldiers and allies, for the sick, for the afflicted; and in summary, we all pray and ***OFFER THIS SACRIFICE FOR ALL WHO ARE IN NEED***.

Then we make mention also of those who have already ***fallen asleep***: first, the patriarchs, prophets, Apostles, and martyrs, that through their prayers and supplications God would receive our petition; next, we make mention also of the holy fathers and bishops who have already ***fallen asleep***, and, to put it simply, of all among us 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, while this HOLY AND MOST SOLEMN SACRIFICE IS LAID OUT***.

For I know that there are many who are saying this: 'If a ***soul departs from this world with sins***, what does it profit it to be remembered in the prayer?'...[we] grant a remission of their penalties...***we too offer prayers to Him for those who have fallen asleep though they be sinners***. We do not plait a crown, but ***OFFER UP CHRIST WHO HAS BEEN SACRIFICED FOR OUR SINS; AND WE THEREBY PROPITIATE THE BENEVOLENT GOD FOR THEM AS WELL AS FOR OURSELVES***. **(23 [Mystagogic 5], 8, 9, 10)**

==========

ST. HILARY OF POITIERS (c. 315 - 368 A.D.)

When we speak of the reality of Christ's nature being in us, we would be speaking foolishly and impiously — ***had we not learned it from Him. For He Himself says: "My Flesh is truly Food, and My Blood is truly Drink. He that eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood will remain in Me and I in Him." As to the reality of His Flesh and Blood, there is no room left for doubt, because now, both by the declaration of the Lord Himself and by our own faith, it is truly Flesh and it is truly Blood***. And These Elements bring it about, when taken and consumed, that we are in Christ and Christ is in us. Is this not true? ***Let those who deny that Jesus Christ is true God be free to find these things untrue. But He Himself is in us through the flesh and we are in Him, while that which we are with Him is in God.***

Notice that the belief in the Real Presence appears very early, often and spread out throughout the ancient world.

-In Brief-

1) If Christ is only symbolically present in the Eucharist than it would be blaspheme and idolatry to worship it. However, if He is substantially present than not to worship Him in the Eucharist, it would be a crime. This doctrine is black and white, not gray. The practices and writings of the earliest Christians ought to be a true indicator as to which doctrine is true.

2) It is important to explain who the early fathers were and why they are authentic witnesses to the teaching of Christ. Don't just proof text!

3) Clement, the bishop of Rome who likely knew Paul and Peter, spoke of the sacrifices offered by the priests in the Church.

4) Ignatius of Antioch (disciple of St. John) stated in his letter to Smyrna 7:1 that the Eucharist is : ***THE EUCHARIST IS THE FLESH OF OUR SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST***, flesh which suffered for our sins and which the Father, in his goodness, raised up again."

5) Justin Martyr, who died ca 145 AD wrote that the Eucharist is the flesh and blood of our Incarnate Lord.

6) The Didache, a first century document written by Christians during time of the New Testament, applies Malachi 1:11 to the Eucharist.

7) Irenaeus of Lyon, disciple of Polycarp (a disciple of St. John) likewise speaks of the Eucharist and the sacrifice of the New Covenant and flesh and blood.

8) No father taught a purely symbolic presence. All referred to the Eucharist as the actual body and blood of Christ.

Understanding Sacrifice

Debt of Thanks

It is the law of justice written in everyone's heart that every recipient of a gift is under a debt of thanks to the giver. And this debt of thanks is in proportion to the amount of what is given. If someone sends me a Christmas card, I owe them at least a response equal to what is given. I think everyone would agree that it would be inappropriate for me to offer lifelong servitude to the card giver. However, it is not out of place (at least in past times) for someone to owe their very lives to someone who saved it in an accident or in the battle field. Saving one's life demands a much greater debt of thanks.

What then is our debt of thanks to God? Paul asks rhetorically in 1 Corinthians 4:7 - "What do you possess that you have not received?" We have received everything, including our very existence, from God. Therefore, our debt of thanks to God is immeasurable and we must unceasingly offer everything we have back to God. Since we can't satisfy this debt to God completely, humans offer tokens of their thanks to God (or the gods) in sacrifice.

This means that the Mass is comprehendible (at least potentially) to every culture on earth. Since it is written in our hearts that it is "right and just to give God praise." Modern culture is unique in that it doesn't immediately see its dependence on God and therefore does not see that a debt of thanks is required. This is because, I believe, societies of the past were much closer to nature and knew how fragile life is since bad weather, disease or foreign invaders could end their lives at any moment. However, if you ask some probing questions about what is truly theirs and what is given to them by God, they will end up with the same conclusions as all humanity.

Three Parts of a Sacrifice

Immolation
Transfer from profane to sacred

Oblation
Offering of the victim to God

Communion
Partaking of the victim by priest and/or people (not present in all sacrifices)

Need for Reparation

Our debt of thanks is a positive way of looking at things. There is also a negative way as well. If Adam and Eve remained sinless, we would owe God a simple debt of thanks, but they didn't. They transgressed God's commandments and lost sanctifying grace and made a breach between God and man.

In addition to giving God thanks, we also, in addition to this obligation, need to offer God a sacrifice that can bridge this breach. The problem is that the breach is too great for anyone to close. The reason for this is that the severity of an offense is in proportion to the dignity of the person offended. If I swore at a stranger during a fight, that would be bad. If I swore at a close friend, that would be worse. But if I swore at by mother or father, that would be a serious sin. Likewise, if I punched the nose of a person during a drunken bar fight, that would be bad. However, if I punched the president of the United States, I would go to Federal prison. When we apply Adam and Eve's offense to God, one can see that the severity of the offense is far more grave than anything that could be made on earth. The severity of the offense is infinite. Therefore, only a sacrifice of infinite value could satisfy this offense. This is why God become man so that he could offer a just sacrifice on our behalf.

Understanding Sacrifice

What is a sacrifice? There are many sacrifices offered in history. There is the Christian sacrifice of the Mass. There are Jewish sacrifices that are prescribed in the Old Testament. There are also numerous pagan sacrifices offered by pagans throughout the world. What is a sacrifice?

Probably the first thing that comes to mind when we hear the word sacrifice is death whether it be the killing of animals or the sacrifice of the Cross. We are tempted to simply say that sacrifice is the killing of something. However, this is not altogether true. The Old Testament is filled with sacrifices that do not involve the death of an animal. These sacrifices involve grain, wine, oil and other items. So, we have to expand our definition to fit these offerings as well. Perhaps it is best for us to say that our sacrifices involve placing something that is for everyday use into a special condition that is only for the use of God or the gods. In other words, it is a transfer of something from the secular realm into the sacred realm, where only God (or the gods) and priests (or priestesses) can partake of them. This is called the immolation of a sacrifice.

But if I killed a deer during hunting season, would this be a sacrifice? No, it has to be a transfer from the profane to the sacred. But what if a priest kills the deer? Is that enough to make it a sacrifice? There is still something missing. That which is immolated (in this case the deer) needs to be offer to God. Otherwise, the prayerful killing of the deer is just that... the prayerful killing of the deer. It is not a sacrifice. The priest must offer the immolation to God on behalf of himself or others. This is called the oblation of the sacrifice.

There is another aspect to sacrifice that is not present in every sacrifice. That is the aspect of communion. In some sacrifices, the priest and /or the people partake of the victim. The communion aspect of a sacrifice signifies the sharing of a common meal between the minister and God. It implies the establishment of family, harmony and fellowship.

The cosmos and sacrifice

Let's tie in all that we have learned together by looking at how the Jews saw the world, the temple and sacrifice. This world view explains a lot about the "mechanics" of the Mass.

You see there is a little problem with the oblation part of sacrifices. For the pagans, the problem was how do we get our offerings here on earth up to the heavens for the gods? They needed something that would take the sacrifice to heaven. This was the purpose of the ziggurat. The sacrifices would be offered at the bottom of the temple by the priests/priestesses and it was believed that angels at the top of the ziggurat would offer it on the top. This was not a problem for the Jews. Unlike the pagans, God dwelt among them and God told them how he wanted the Jews to offer sacrifices. He commanded a temple to be built.

Hebrew 7:25

"Therefore, he is always able to save those who approach God through him, since he lives forever to make intercession for them. It was fitting that we should have such a high priest: holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, higher than the heavens. He has no need, as did the high priests, to offer sacrifice day after day, first for his own sins and then for those of the people; he did that once for all when he offered himself."

The design of the Temple is very exact. In fact, the designs are mentioned not once, but twice in the Old Testament. It says that God commanded the Temple to be built in such and such a manner and then it says that the Jews built the temple in such and such a fashion. Where did the design of the Temple come from? We are told that Moses was shown the Temple in heaven and that the Temple in Jerusalem is to be a created copy of the Temple in heaven. With God's glory cloud present in the Temple, the oblations of the Jewish nation was made directly to God. The Temple becomes an intersection between heaven and earth. The innermost section of the Temple is the Holy of Holies. It is where God's presence dwelt. It is also where the Ark of the Covenant rested.

Not everybody could enter the holiest place of the Temple. It was only one day a year, on the day of Atonement, that the high priest would enter into the Holy place to offer gifts and sacrifices on behalf of the people. In other words, the oblation was offered in the Holy of holies. The immolations made here on earth was also made in heaven since God was present in the Holy of holies. When the presence of God departed from the Temple, the Jews believed that angels took their sacrifices to heaven to offer it to God.

The Mass and the Jewish Cosmology

Let's apply what we have learned to the Mass. The Christian sacrifice is not like that of the Jews. The offering of the blood of goats and bulls do not take away sins. As we said earlier, they were only tokens of our interior sacrifice. But when God becomes man, Christ offers a sacrifice of Himself that is of infinite value. Christ is our High Priest and He is also the Victim. The immolation of Christ's sacrifice took place on the Cross on Calvary. But just Christ's death on the Cross is not enough. There also needs to be an oblation. The book of Hebrews (8 & 9) tells us that Christ our High Priest offers Himself to the Father eternally in the Holy of Holies in Heaven. Christ himself offers the oblation in heaven for us and for our sins. This is why the immolation of the Cross can be applied to all people at all times because Christ offers an eternal oblation in heaven. At Mass, Christ is made present as the Oblation in Heaven that "appears to have been slain" (See Revelation 5:6 – where Jesus is seen in Heaven on the Lord's Day as a slaughtered Lamb). He is not re-immolated again for Christ died once for sins. It cannot be repeated nor does it need to be repeated like the sacrifice of bulls and goats in the Old Testament. Christ died once for all. When Christ becomes present in the Eucharist, we enter into the eternal oblation in heaven. This is why Catholic liturgies speak of our being in the presence of angels and saints during Mass. At Mass, heaven and earth connect and Christ is present at both in heaven and earth. The liturgy also reflects this in that we sing the same song as the angels during the "Holy, Holy, Holy" and other parts of the Mass. We then finish with communion where partake of the lamb.

Summary

Christ died once for all on Calvary. It is never to be repeated. The immolation at Calvary is made present again at the Mass since it is the Lamb who is made present in the Eucharist. We can speak of a sacramental immolation in the

Hebrews 8:5 - "They worship in a copy and shadow of the heavenly sanctuary, as Moses was warned when he was about to erect the tabernacle. For he says, "See that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."

Hebrews 9 - "Now (even) the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly sanctuary. For a tabernacle was constructed, the outer one, in which were the lamp stand, the table, and the bread of offering; this is called the Holy Place. Behind the second veil was the tabernacle called the Holy of Holies, in which were the gold altar of incense and the ark of the covenant entirely covered with gold. In it were the gold jar containing the manna, the staff of Aaron that had sprouted, and the tablets of the covenant. Above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the place of expiation. Now is not the time to speak of these in detail. With these arrangements for worship, the priests, in performing their service, go into the outer tabernacle repeatedly, but the high priest alone goes into the inner one once a year, not without blood that he offers for himself and for the sins of the people. In this way the holy Spirit shows that the way into the sanctuary had not yet been revealed while the outer tabernacle still had its place. This is a symbol of the present time, in which gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the worshiper in conscience but only in matters of food and drink and various ritual washings: regulations concerning the flesh, imposed until the time of the new order. But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that have come to be, passing through the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made by hands, that is, not belonging to this creation, he entered once for all into the sanctuary, not with the blood of goats and calves but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the sprinkling of a heifer's ashes can sanctify those who are defiled so that their flesh is cleansed, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from dead works to worship the living God. For this reason he is mediator of a new covenant: since a death has taken place for deliverance from transgressions under the first covenant, those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance. Now where there is a will, the death of the testator must be established. For a will takes effect only at death; it has no force while the testator is alive. Thus not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. When every commandment had been proclaimed by Moses to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves (and goats), together with water and crimson wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, "This is 'the blood of the covenant which God has enjoined upon you.'" In the same way, he sprinkled also the tabernacle and all the vessels of worship with blood. According to the law almost everything is purified by blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. Therefore, it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified by these rites, but the heavenly things themselves by better sacrifices than these. For Christ did not enter into a sanctuary made by hands, a copy of the true one, but heaven itself, that he might now appear before God on our behalf. Not that he might offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters each year into the sanctuary with blood that is not his own; if that were so, he would have had to suffer repeatedly from the foundation of the world. But now once for all he has appeared at the end of the ages to take away sin by his sacrifice. Just as it is appointed that human beings die once, and after this the judgment, so also Christ, offered once to take away the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to take away sin but to bring salvation to those who eagerly await him."

Mass in that the bread (which is a sign of Christ's body) and the wine (which is a sign of Christ's blood) are consecrated separately symbolizing death. Since death occurs when the blood is separated from the body.

There is only one High Priest. The oblation of the Mass is our joining in with Christ's oblation in heaven. The priest, in persona Christi, makes this oblation present to us. We are also priests in virtue of our baptism. The laity offer their good works and deeds to God through this oblation.

There is also only one communion since we all partake of the one loaf. We partake of the lamb and are filled "with every grace and blessing."

-In Brief-

1) Immolation - Taking an animal or food from the realm of the profane (everyday use) to sacred use. It is usually done through ritually killing an animal or poring oil on grain.

2) Oblation – Offering the Immolation to God for some purpose. This is usually performed by spreading the blood on the altar, pouring wine, grain or blood on the ground or burning the victim (the smoke ascends to God as something pleasing).

3) Communion – Eating the oblated victim. For example, the Jews were to eat the Passover Lamb. Not every sacrifice has communion. For example, the Holocaust offering has no communion because the whole victim is burned up.

4) The Immolation of the New Covenant is Christ's death on the Cross. This happened once and for all in time and it is never to be repeated.

5) The Oblation of the New Covenant occurs in the Holy of Holies in Heaven (Hebrews 8-9).

6) At Mass, Christ is made present as the Oblation in Heaven that "appears to have been slain" (See Revelation 5:6 – where Jesus is seen in Heaven on the Lord's Day as a slaughtered Lamb). We join in on this oblation offering all our works to the Father through Jesus in the Holy Spirit. We receive the Lamb as Communion establishing and strengthening our union with God through the Incarnate Lord.

Protestant Denial

One of the first "reforms" Luther set in place after his break with the Church was to revamp the liturgy. Under Luther's reconstruction, Christian worship ceased to have a sacrificial aspect to it and it became a mere remembrance. Other Protestant sects followed suit even denying the Real Presence in the Eucharist.

Today, Protestant anti-Catholics object to the sacrificial aspect of the Mass along the following lines:

1) Mass contradicts Scripture

Protestants claim that the Mass contradicts Scripture in that it "re-sacrifices Christ" over and over again in the Mass. But Scripture states that it is impossible for Christ to die again:

Romans 6:9
"We know that Christ, raised from the dead, **dies no more;** death no longer has power over him."

Hebrews 9:27-28
" Just as it is appointed that human beings **die once,** and after this the judgment, so also Christ, offered once to take away the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to take away sin but to bring salvation to those who eagerly await him.

Since Christ cannot die again, there cannot be another sacrifice.

2) Jesus dies once

Another very popular Protestant objection is based on Jesus' offering being, "once for all." The argument carries within it several smaller arguments. Each of the following paragraphs are labels so as to show each of these smaller arguments:

A) The sacrifice of Calvary happened once for all never to be repeated or represented. This point is made over and over again in Scripture.

Hebrews 7:27
"…He did that **once for all** when He offered himself."

Hebrews 9:12
"…[H]e entered **once for all** into the sanctuary, not with the blood of goats and calves but with His own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption.

Hebrews 9:26
"But now **once for all** He has appeared at the end of the ages to take away sin by His sacrifice."

Hebrews 10:10
"By this 'will,' we have been consecrated through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ **once for all.**"

B) Christ's sacrifice has no need of repetition or representation. If it did, it would imply that Christ sacrifice was not sufficient to take away sin since Christ's sacrifice is not like those of the Old Testament that needed to be continually repeated.

Hebrew 7:27
"He has no need, as did the high priests, to offer sacrifice day after day, first for his own sins and then for those of the people; he did that once for all when he offered himself."

Hebrews 9:24-26
"For Christ did not enter into a sanctuary made by hands, a copy of the true one, but heaven itself, that he might now appear before God on our behalf. **Not that he might offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters each year into the sanctuary with blood that is not his own; if that were so, he would have had to suffer repeatedly from the foundation of the world.** But now once for all he has appeared at the end of the ages to take away sin by his sacrifice."

C) Not only is the Mass said over and over again around the world, but individual Catholics repeatedly receive communion. If the Mass truly is the representation of Christ's sacrifice on Calvary and Catholics

partake of this same sacrifice at Mass by receiving communion than this proves that Catholics believe Christ's sacrifice is not perfect and complete.

Let's put it this way. If Christ's sacrifice is perfect and totally sufficient for taking away sins (as the Catholic Church teaches), then individual Catholics need to attend only one Mass since that single representation ought to be sufficient to sanctify them completely and perfectly. But Catholics must attend Mass repeatedly and Catholic theology admits that the reception of communion may not produce perfect results. Therefore, the Catholic Church implicitly teaches that Christ's sacrifice is not perfect. However, the Bible teaches that it is perfect.

1 John 2:2 -
"He is expiation for our sins, and not for our sins only but for those of the whole world."

3) Christ did not mean for the Lord's Supper to be a Sacrifice

There is no indication in Scripture that Christ meant the Lord's Supper to be anything like a sacrifice. It is simply a fellowship meal by which we remember what Christ has done for us. There is no hint of sacrifice in the context of the Lord's Supper.

4) Apostles are not priests

If Christ wanted the apostles to offer the sacrifice of the Mass, then they would have been priests (since only priests can offer sacrifice). But the New Testament is very careful not to ever call any Christian a "priest." Moreover, only Christ is our priest and this special priesthood cannot be transferred to any other person.

Hebrews 7:23-24
"Those priests were many because they were prevented by death from remaining in office, but he, because he remains forever, has a priesthood that does not pass away."

5) Sacrifice of praise is the only offering

The only sacrifices Christians offer is the "sacrifice of praise"

Hebrew 13:15
"Through him (then) let us continually offer God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name."

6) Christ's oblation is once

Christ does not make an eternal oblation in heaven since he is "seated at the right hand of the Father." If he did make an oblation, it is over.

7) Mass is Old Testament copy

God does not desire our worship to be like the Mass. Catholic unwittingly copy the old Jewish form of worship that involved material things, mysteries and signs.

Col 2:16-18
" Let no one, then, pass judgment on you in matters of food and drink or with regard to a festival or new moon or Sabbath. These are shadows of things to come; the reality belongs to Christ. Let no one disqualify you, delighting in self-abasement and worship of angels, taking his stand on visions, inflated without reason by his fleshly mind..."

God does not desire "fleshly" worship for spiritual worship:

John 4:22-24
"**You people worship what you do not understand**; **we worship what we understand,** because salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when **true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth;** and indeed the Father seeks such people to worship him. **God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and truth**."

God doesn't desire sacrifices, but people to turn their hearts to Him:'

Matthew 9:13
"'I desire mercy, **not sacrifice**.' I did not come to call the righteous but sinners."

When Christ died the veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom (Matthew 27:51). This means that God has revealed himself to the world and there is no more mysteries. There is no more signs and symbols

of the Hebrew sacrifices and there is no need for a priesthood. We all have access to God.

Hebrew 4:16
"So let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and to find grace for timely help."

We have no need for other priests or mediators because we have only ONE Mediator between God and man:

1 Timothy 2:5
"For there is one God. There is also one mediator between God and the human race, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself as ransom for all. This was the testimony at the proper time."

-In Brief-

1) Protestants argue that the Mass cannot "re-sacrifice" Jesus because Scripture teaches that Christ died once (Romans 6:9, Hebrew 9:27-28).

2) Scripture also teaches that the sacrifice of the Cross cannot be repeated (Hebrews 7:27; 9:24-26).

3) They also argue that if Christ's sacrifice is all sufficient and the Eucharist is partaking of this sacrifice then one only needs to receive communion once.

4) But the Church teaches that communion ought to be received often. Therefore, it teaches that Christ's death on the Cross is insufficient.

5) Finally, that if the Mass is true, than the apostles were priests, but no Christian is ever called a priest and there is only one mediator between God and man – Jesus Christ.

Answers to Objections

Objection 1: Protestants claim that the Mass contradicts Scripture in that it "re-sacrifices Christ" over and over again in the Mass. But Scripture states that it is impossible for Christ to die again:

Answer 1: This is a misunderstanding of the Catholic position. The Catholic Church does **not** claim to "re-sacrifice" Christ every time there is a Mass. She teaches that the sacrifice of Calvary is "made present" in the Mass since the same Lamb of God that was slayen on Calvary is also present in the Eucharist.

In terms of immolation, oblation and communion, the immolation happened once for all on the Cross on Calvary. Therefore, Catholics agree with Scripture in that Christ died once for all and death cannot overtake him.

However, the sacrifice of the Cross was not completed on Calvary; only the Immolation. We know from Scripture that that same immolated victim is in heaven offering himself to the Father as an eternal oblation.

John tells us that he saw Jesus in Heaven and he describes him as:

Revelation 5:6
"Then I saw standing in the midst of the throne and the four living creatures and the elders, a Lamb that seemed to have been slain."

Hebrews 9:12
"He [Jesus] entered once for all into the sanctuary [in Heaven], not with the blood of goats and calves but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption."

Hebrew 8:1-3
"The main point of what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle that the Lord, not man, set up. Now every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; thus the necessity for this one also to have something to offer."

This oblation is accessible to everyone at all time because his ministry continues:

Hebrews 7:23-25
"Those priests were many because they were prevented by death from remaining in office, but he, because he remains forever, has a priesthood that does not pass away. Therefore, he is always able to save those who approach God through him, since he lives forever to make intercession for them."

Therefore, the immolation does not happen again, but rather we join in the oblation of Christ in Heaven where He (the immolated lamb) is interceding on our behalf to the Father.

This answer also addresses Protestant **Objection 2A:** since the "once for all" aspect of Christ's sacrifice is not violated by the Mass. Rather, we have access to that "once for all" sacrifice since Christ is in Heaven and can make it present.

Protestant Objection 2B: "Christ's sacrifice has no need of repetition or representation. If it did, it would imply that Christ's sacrifice was not sufficient to take away sin since Christ's sacrifice is not like those of the Old Testament that needed to be continually repeated."

Answer 2A & 2B: While Christ's sacrifice is truly perfect, complete and lacking nothing, it still needs to be applied to us sinners on earth. This application does not imply that anything is lacking in Christ's sacrifice anymore than the fact that Protestants claim that it is necessary for all to be "born again" implies that Christ's death was not sufficient to save the whole world.

Although the source of our sanctification (Christ's sacrifice) is perfect in every way, its application to the body of Christ may not be perfect because of our love for sin. Hence, Paul can write:

Col. 1:24
"Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ on behalf of his body, which is the church."

In regards to the Scripture cited, it is referencing the Old Testament immolations that could not take away sins. Catholics do not claim to re-immolate Christ in the Mass. It is only an "entering- in" or a "representation" of that immolation. Therefore, these texts do not apply.

Protestant Objection 2C: "Not only is the Mass said over and over again around the world, but individual Catholics repeatedly receive communion. If the Mass truly is the representation of Christ's sacrifice on Calvary and Catholics partake of this same sacrifice at Mass by receiving communion than this proves that Catholics believe Christ's sacrifice is not perfect and complete."

Answer 2C: Our last objection already pretty much answers this objection. But one more thing can be said.

Our spiritual disposition at communion affects how much benefit we receive from this reception. If we are not properly disposed, we will not receive as much grace as we would have, but this does not imply that the source of this grace is somehow lacking. A good example to use in this case is a window that let's in sunshine. If the window is clean, all of the light that the sun radiates comes into the room. However, if the window has mud, very little light shines in the room. The sun, in both cases, is the same.

There is nothing lacking in the sunlight in the room that has little light. Rather, the fault is with the muddy windows. The same is true with communion. There is nothing lacking in Christ that we all do not receive the same benefit or that we need to repeat communion. The fault is solely with us.

Protestant Objection 3: There is no indication in Scripture that Christ meant the Lord's Supper to be anything like a sacrifice. It is simply a fellowship meal by which we remember what Christ has done for us. There is no hint of sacrifice in the context of the Lord's Supper.

Answer 3: This objection will be answered in the next section.

Protestant Objection 4: If Christ wanted the apostles to offer the sacrifice of the Mass, then they would have been priests (since only priests can offer sacrifice). But the New Testament is very careful not to ever call any Christian a "priest." Moreover, only Christ is our priest and this special priesthood cannot be transferred to any other person.

Answer 4: It is not true that Christians are call "priests." First, Christ is called our "High Priest." Moreover, we are all part of a "royal priesthood" -

1 Peter 2:5
"…and, like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

1 Peter 2:9
"But you are 'a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, so that you may announce the praises' of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."

The writers of the New Testament were careful not to call Christians "priests" because this would have confused them with the priests who were currently serving in the Temple.

However, we see that it does identify Jesus as High Priest and all Christians as a "royal priesthood" in reflection of the Old Testament High Priest and all of Israel being a "royal priesthood" (Exodus 19:6). Implied is that there is a middle-ministerial priesthood just like the Old Testament.

In fact, Paul speaks of his mission to the gentiles as a "priestly" mission.

Romans 15:16
"…to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in performing the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering up of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit."

Apparently, the New Testament uses the word presbyters (or elders) for priests since the 24 elders (presbyters) in Revelation 5:6 are offering incense to God. This is an action that was to be done only by the priests.

Likewise, Jude pronounces a “woe” upon those Christians who are like those who perish in the rebellion of Korah (Numbers 16:1-35 & Numbers 17:1-5)

Number 16:1-35

[1] Korah, son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi, (and Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab, son of Pallu, son of Reuben) took [2] two hundred and fifty Israelites who were leaders in the community, members of the council and men of note. They stood before Moses, [3] and held an assembly against Moses and Aaron, to whom they said, "Enough from you! The whole community, all of them, are holy; the LORD is in their midst. Why then should you set yourselves over the LORD'S congregation?" [4] When Moses heard this, he fell prostrate. [5] Then he said to Korah and to all his band, "May the LORD make known tomorrow morning who belongs to him and who is the holy one and whom he will have draw near to him! Whom he chooses, he will have draw near him. [6] Do this: take your censers (Korah and all his band) [7] and put fire in them and place incense in them before the LORD tomorrow. He whom the LORD then chooses is the holy one. Enough from you Levites!" [8] Moses also said to Korah, "Listen to me, you Levites! [9] Is it too little for you that the God of Israel has singled you out from the community of Israel, to have you draw near him for the service of the LORD'S Dwelling and to stand before the community to minister for them? [10] He has allowed you and your kinsmen, the descendants of Levi, to approach him, and yet you now seek the priesthood too. [11] It is therefore against the LORD that you and all your band are conspiring. For what has Aaron done that you should grumble against him?" [12] [1] Moses summoned Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab, but they answered, "We will not go. [13] Are you not satisfied with having led us here away from a land flowing with milk and honey, to make us perish in the desert, that you must now lord it over us? [14] [1] Far from bringing us to a land flowing with milk and honey, or giving us fields and vineyards for our inheritance, will you also gouge out our eyes? No, we will not go." [15] Then Moses became very angry and said to the LORD, "Pay no heed to their offering. I have never taken a single ass from them, nor have I wronged any one of them." [16] Moses said to Korah, "You and all your band shall appear before the LORD tomorrow -- you and they and Aaron too. [17] Then each of your two hundred and fifty followers shall take his own censer, put incense in it, and offer it to the LORD; and you and Aaron, each with his own censer, shall do the same." [18] So they all took their censers, and laying incense on the fire they had put in them, they took their stand by the entrance of the meeting tent along with Moses and Aaron. [19] Then, when Korah had assembled all his band against them at the entrance of the meeting tent, the glory of the LORD appeared to the entire community, [20] and the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, [21] "Stand apart from this band, that I may consume them at once." [22] But they fell prostrate and cried out, "O God, God of the spirits of all mankind, will one man's sin make you angry with the whole community?" [23] The LORD answered Moses, [24] "Speak to the community and tell them: Withdraw from the space around the Dwelling" (of Korah, Dathan and Abiram). [25] [1] Moses, followed by the elders of Israel, arose and went to Dathan and Abiram. [26] Then he warned the community, "Keep away from the tents of these wicked men and do not touch anything that is theirs: otherwise you too will be swept away because of all their sins." [27] When Dathan and Abiram had come out and were standing at the entrances of their tents with their wives and sons and little ones, [28] Moses said, "This is how you shall know that it was the LORD who sent me to do all I have done, and that it was not I who planned it: [29] if these men die an ordinary death, merely suffering the fate common to all mankind, then it was not the LORD who sent me. [30] But if the LORD does something entirely new, and the ground opens its mouth and swallows them alive down into the nether world, with all belonging to them, then you will know that these men have defied the LORD." [31] No sooner had he finished saying all this than the ground beneath them split open, [32] and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them and their families (and all of Korah's men) and all their possessions. [33] They went down alive to the nether world with all belonging to them; the earth closed over them, and they perished from the community. [34] But all the Israelites near them fled at their shrieks, saying, "The earth might swallow us too!" [35] [1] So they withdrew from the space around the Dwelling (of Korah, Dathan and Abiram). And fire from the LORD came forth which consumed the two hundred and fifty men who were offering the incense.

17:1-5

[1]The LORD said to Moses, [2] "Tell Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, to remove the censers from the embers; and scatter the fire some distance away, [3] for these sinners have consecrated the censers at the cost of their lives. Have them hammered into plates to cover the altar, because in being presented before the LORD they have become sacred. In this way they shall serve as a sign to the Israelites." [4] So Eleazar the priest had the bronze censers of those burned during the offering

hammered into a covering for the altar, [5] in keeping with the orders which the LORD had given him through Moses. This cover was to be a reminder to the Israelites that no layman, no one who was not a descendant of Aaron, should approach the altar to offer incense before the LORD, lest he meet the fate of Korah and his band.

Jude applies this warning to Christians. Therefore, it is possible for laymen to try to usurp the ministerial priesthood. Therefore, the ministerial priesthood must exist.

Jude 1:11
"Woe to them! They followed the way of Cain, abandoned themselves to Balaam's error for the sake of gain, and perished in the rebellion of Korah."

Protestant Objection 5: "The only sacrifices Christians offer is the sacrifice of praise"

Answer 5: Scripture does speak of offering a sacrifice of praise and the sacrifice of converts to God. But there is another type of sacrifice that all Christians must make:

Romans 12:1
"I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, **to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice**, **holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual [reasonable] worship.**"

This is a very important apology against Protestants. Protestants agree that we are all members of the common priesthood and we know that it is the duty of priests to offer sacrifices. If our bodies are "living sacrifices" (immolations), how are we to oblate them to God?

Protestantism may permit the idea of sacrificing our bodies to God (immolation). But there is not means by which we oblate it to God in a manner pleasing to him. The typical Protestant response to this objection is that we ourselves oblate it to God in prayer. But this solution smacks of Pelagianism. Who are we to offer ourselves to God? Moreover, where is the Temple? How do we get our sacrifices up to Heaven?

Ultimately, it is Catholicism that is anti-Pelagian. We are able to be "living sacrifices" (immolations) by the grace of God and our incorporation into the body of Christ. We are able to offer our bodies (oblate) because as members of Christ's body in the Mass and as priests we offer ourselves in union with the eternal oblation of Christ in Heaven.

Protestant Objection 6: Christ does not make an eternal oblation in heaven since he is "seated at the right hand of the Father." If he did make an oblation, it is over.

Answer 6: See answer to objection 1.

Protestant Objection 7: "God does not desire our worship to be like the Mass. Catholics unwittingly copy the old Jewish form of worship that involved material things, mysteries and signs... God desires us to worship him in spirit and truth."

Answer 7: We have just seen in Romans 12:1 that God is pleased by the offering of our bodies in sacrifice. This is done in the Mass. Moreover, Christ commanded us to "do this in remembrance" of him that is celebrate the Lord's Supper (which is in essence the Mass). Therefore, the Mass is exactly the kind of worship that God desires because he commands us.

There is a Gnostic element to large segments of Protestantism. It sees all material as evil, worldly or fleshly and only non-material things as "spiritual" or godly. This is why their places of worship is usually stark and devoid of pictures, statues and the like.

The very fact that God took on our human nature shows that God loves matter. He created it and said that it is good. He ordered a very ornate and material manner of worship in the Old Testament and Christian worship under this materialistic system. Christ never denigrated the physical unless it was being used perversely.

Christ also used material things to produce supernatural effects. He used oil, dirt, spit. The apostles healed through the touching of face cloths, aprons and even their shadows.

God wishes us to become partakers of his divine nature. He communicates his divinity through his humanity so that through his humanity we can partake of his divine nature.

-In Brief-

1) Answer to Objection 1 – The immolation of Christ took place on Calvary once for all. He dies no more. Catholicism does not teach that Christ "dies again" in the Mass. The Christ that is truly present in the Eucharist is the glorified Christ in Heaven who offers himself to the Father.

2) Answer to Objection 2 - Same as Objection 1

3) Answer to Objection 3 – While Christ's sacrifice is infinite in its value, it is not infinite in our reception. We sometimes do not receive the full grace of communion because we are improperly disposed. This is what Paul has in mind in Col. 1:24 when he speaks of that which is "lacking in the suffering of Christ's body the Church."

4) Answer to Objection 4 – It is true that the apostles are not called:"priests." This may have been purposely done so as not to be confused with the Levitical priesthood. However, Paul speaks of his ministry as a "priestly" ministry (Romans 15:16). All Christians are priests (1 Peter 2:5 and 9). This is because we are part of the common priesthood of the laity. The New Testament also says that Christ is our High Priest. In the Old Testament, there was a common priesthood and a high priest and also a ministerial priesthood. First Peter, therefore, infers this middle priesthood (and it is confirmed by Paul's remarks). Jude also applies the warning of Korah's rebellion (laity assuming the ministerial priesthood) to Christians. Therefore, a middle ministerial priesthood must exist.

Sacrificial Language in the "Institution Narratives"

Matthew 26.22-28

26 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and giving it to his disciples said, "Take and eat; this is my body."

27 Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you,

28 for this is **my blood of the covenant,** which **will be shed** on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins.

Mark 14:22-24

22 While they were eating, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, and said, "Take it; this is my body."

23 Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it.

24 He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which **will be shed** for many.

Luke 22:19-20

19 Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which will be given for you; **do this** in **memory** of me."

20 And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup is the **new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you.**

1 Cor. 11:23-25

23 For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread,

24 and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. **Do this** in **remembrance** of me."

25 In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. **Do this,** as often as you drink it, in **remembrance** of me."

The Greek New Testament uses the Greek Septuagint translation of the Old Testament as its reference and draws from this translation. Therefore, it is imperative to study the usage of the New Testament Greek words in light of its usage in the Greek Old Testament (Septuagint).

DO - (Make or Offer)

Do this (Greek *poieo*) - The word "do" has two uses in the Bible. Most commonly, it means to do or to make something. In English, a parent may command his child to "do your homework." It means simply to perform some action. There is a second more technical usage for this term which is less common, but strongly represented in the Greek Old Testament and that is "do" means to "offer" a sacrifice.

Leviticus 5:10 - "The other bird shall be **offered** (do) as a holocaust in the usual way. Thus the priest shall make atonement for the sin the man committed, and it will be forgiven."

Leviticus 9:7 - "Come up to the altar," Moses then told Aaron, "and **offer** (do) your sin offering and your holocaust in atonement for yourself and for your family; then **present** (do) the offering of the people in atonement for them, as the LORD has commanded."

Leviticus 9;16 - "Then he brought forward the holocaust, other than the morning holocaust, and (do) **offered** it in the usual manner."

Leviticus 14:19 - " Only after he [the priest] has **offered** (do) the sin offering in atonement for the man's uncleanness shall the priest slaughter the holocaust."

Leviticus 15:15 - "who shall **offer** (do) them up, the one as a sin offering and the other as a holocaust. Thus shall the priest make atonement before the LORD for the man's flow.

Leviticus 16:24 - "After bathing his body with water in a sacred place, he shall put on his vestments, and then come out and **offer** (do) his own and the people's holocaust, in atonement for himself and for the people,"

Leviticus 17:8-9 - "Tell them, therefore: Anyone, whether of the house of Israel or of the aliens residing among them, who offers (do) a holocaust or sacrifice without bringing it to the entrance of the meeting tent to offer (do) it to the LORD, shall be cut off from his kinsmen."

Numbers 6:17 - " He shall then offer (do) up the ram as a peace offering to the LORD, with its cereal offering and libation, and the basket of unleavened cakes.

Numbers 29:2 - "You shall offer (do) as a sweet-smelling holocaust to the LORD one bullock, one ram, and seven unblemished yearling lambs."

IMPORTANT: What determines whether "do" means "perform an action" or "offer a sacrifice" is the context.

Protestant scholars will acknowledge the use of this word for "offer," but they will say that there is nothing in the context of the Lord's Supper to suggest a sacrifice. Therefore, they argue that "do" simply is a command to perform an action.

What these scholars miss is that the Lord's Supper took place in the context of the Passover meal. All the Institution Narratives is explicit on this point. Moreover, the Passover was a sacrificial meal.

Thousands of lambs were brought to the Temple in Jerusalem to be slaughtered by the priests. The Passover meal is the communion of the Passover sacrifice as it says in Exodus:

Exodus 12:26 "When your children ask you, 'What does this rite of yours mean?' you shall reply, 'This is the **Passover sacrifice** of the LORD, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt; when he struck down the Egyptians, he spared our houses.' Then the people bowed down in worship..."

After the destruction of the Temple, the Passover could not be celebrated as it was before and it lost a lot of the most obvious sacrificial aspects. Protestants today (and probably a lot of Catholics as well) are ignorant of its sacrificial background.

This being said, it is clear that the Lord's Supper was taking place within a sacrificial context and the use of the word "do" can legitimately be translated "offer" as in "offer this in remembrance of me."

The Blood of the New Covenant...

Jesus mentions the "blood of the New Covenant" or the "new Covenant in My blood." This likewise is sacrificial terminology since it harkens back to the inauguration of the first Covenant with Moses:

Exodus 24:5ff
"Then, having sent certain young men of the Israelites to **offer holocausts and sacrifice young bulls as peace offerings to the LORD, Moses took half of the blood and put it in large bowls;** the other half he splashed on the altar. Taking the book of the covenant, he read it aloud to the people, who answered, "All that the LORD has said, we will heed and do." **Then he took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words of His."**

Jesus deliberately takes the words of Moses and applies it to the cup of the Lord's Supper when He says:

Mark 14:24
"He said to them, 'This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many.'"

Luke 22:20
"In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The blood of the first covenant was sprinkled on the altar (as an oblation to God) and on the people (as a communion). By this, the first covenant was ratified. If we follow the parallel, we find that the blood of Jesus that was shed on Calvary (immolation, oblation) still has to be communicated to all who enter into the New Covenant. Therefore, we need to partake of the blood of the sacrifice that opened up the New Covenant, not by being sprinkled by his blood, but by eating and drinking the Eucharist.

Which Is Shed (Poured Out) For You

The word that is translated "shed" really means "poured out" (Greek: *Ekchuno*). It refers both to the shedding of blood **and** to the oblation of pouring out the blood of sacrifices in the Temple. For example, it is used for the oblation of bullock's blood in Leviticus 4:7

Leviticus 4:7
"The priest shall also put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of fragrant incense which is before the LORD in the meeting tent. The rest of the bullock's blood he **shall pour out** (*Ekchuno*) at the base of the altar of holocausts which is at the entrance of the meeting tent."

Likewise, Exodus 29:12 speaks of blood being oblated to God.

Exodus 29:12
"Take some of its blood and with your finger put it on the horns of the altar. All the rest of the blood you shall pour out (*Ekeeis*) at the base of the altar."

It is also used when Moses ratifies the first Covenant in that half of the blood of the sacrifice was first "poured out" into a bowl and the other half sprinkled on the people.

Exodus 24:6
"Moses took half of the blood and put it (*Ekcheen*) in large bowls; the other half he splashed on the altar."

We therefore can re-translate the whole of the Institutional Narrative (if we wish to emphasis its sacrificial background) as follows:

"This is my body... this cup is the blood of the New Covenant (which is to be given to the people)... offer this as a memorial sacrifice of me."

So, the Institution Narratives gives us ample evidence that the Lord's Supper (the Mass) does have a sacrificial aspect to it and it is certainly conducive to the idea that we share in Christ's eternal oblation and receive His own body and blood in communion.

-In Brief-

1) The New Testament used the Greek Septuagint Old Testament. It often draws on this Greek translation for its language. When we look at the words of the Institution Narratives with an eye to how these words are used in the Septuagint, it becomes clear that the Last Supper was really a sacrificial meal.

2) The context of the Last Supper is the Passover. As we have seen earlier the Passover is a sacrificial meal.

3) "Do" – The word translated "do" is used in two senses in the Septuagint. It can mean perform or make something. It can also mean to perform a sacrifice. The context determines how this word should be rendered. Since the Passover is a sacrificial meal, we can translate "Do this" as "Offer this (sacrifice)."

4) "Blood of the Covenant" – This touches upon the words of Moses when he ratified the Old Covenant by sprinkling the blood of the sacrifice on the people.

5) "Poured Out" – Refers to the oblation of the sacrifices of the Old Testament. They were "poured out" on the altar or the ground.

6) The words of Jesus, given their Septuagint background, could be translated, "Offer this as a memorial sacrifice."

Other Evidence of Sacrifice

Another very strong indicator that the Lord's Supper (or the Mass) has a sacrificial aspect to it comes from the words of St. Paul. St. Paul writes:

1 Corinthians 10:14-22

14 Therefore, my beloved, avoid idolatry. 15 I
am speaking as to sensible people; judge for
yourselves what I am saying. 16 The cup of
blessing that we bless, is it not a participation
in the blood of Christ? The bread that we
break, is it not a participation in the body of
Christ? 17 Because the loaf of bread is one, we,
though many, are one body, for we all partake
of the one loaf. **18 Look at Israel according to
the flesh; are not those who eat the
sacrifices participants in the altar?** 19 So
what am I saying? That meat sacrificed to
idols is anything? Or that an idol is anything?
20 **No, I mean that what they sacrifice, (they
sacrifice) to demons, not to God, and I do
not want you to become participants with
demons. 21 You cannot drink the cup of the
Lord and also the cup of demons. You
cannot partake of the table of the Lord and
of the table of demons.** 22 Or are we
provoking the Lord to jealous anger? Are we
stronger than He?"

Paul states that by partaking of the Eucharistic bread and wine, we are truly participating (koinonia) in the body and blood of Christ. He uses this in his argument against idolatry. Can Christians partake of pagan sacrifices?

Paul draws upon the Jewish hearer's understanding of the sacrifices in Jerusalem. "Look to Israel," Paul writes, "are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar?" In other words, are not those who eat sacrificial animals participating in the oblation given at the altar? Eating sacrifices enters you into the oblation of the altar.

Likewise, Paul continues, those who eat the pagan sacrifices are entering into the oblation to demons. Paul then draws a strict parallel between the sacrifices and oblations of demons and of the Lord. This verse is key!

Paul writes in verse 21:

"You cannot drink the **cup of the Lord** and also the **cup of demons**. You cannot partake of the **table of the Lord** and of the **table of demons**."

If this parallel holds (and it is key to Paul's argument that it does hold otherwise it proves nothing) that the cup and "table of the Lord" is sacrifices. I would probably say that the cup is immolation / communion and the table being the oblation.

Earlier, Paul mentioned that Israel sacrifices on an altar and they are participants in the altar. In this parallel, Paul states that we are participants in the "table of the Lord." Does he mean to imply that our table is an altar?

The parallelism of this statement certainly implies this. But there is more. The phrase "table of the Lord" is not one coined by Paul. Everyone knew what the "table of the Lord" was since it is mentioned in Scripture;

Malachi 1:6-14

"If then I am a father, where is the honor due
to me? And if I am a master, where is the
reverence due to me?—So says the LORD of
hosts to you, O priests, who despise his name.
But you ask, "How have we despised your
name?" 7 By offering polluted food **on my
altar**! Then you ask, "How have we polluted
it?" By saying **the table of the LORD** may be
slighted! 8 When you offer a blind animal for
sacrifice, is this not evil? When you offer the
lame or the sick, is it not evil? Present it to
your governor; see if he will accept it, or
welcome you, says the LORD of hosts. 9 So
now if you implore God for mercy on us, when
you have done the like will he welcome any of
you? says the LORD of hosts."

10 Oh, that one among you would shut the
temple gates to keep you from kindling fire on
my altar in vain! **I have no pleasure in you,
says the LORD of hosts; neither will I
accept any sacrifice from your hands, 11 For
from the rising of the sun, even to its**

setting, my name is great among the nations; And everywhere they bring sacrifice to my name, and a pure offering; For great is my name among the nations, says the LORD of hosts.

12 But you behave profanely toward me by thinking the LORD'S table and its offering may be polluted, and its food slighted. 13 You also say, "What a burden!" and you scorn it, says the LORD of hosts; You bring in what you seize, or the lame, or the sick; yes, you bring it as a sacrifice. Shall I accept it from your hands? says the LORD. 14 Cursed is the deceiver, who has in his flock a male, but under his vow sacrifices to the LORD a gelding; For a great King am I, says the LORD of hosts, and my name will be feared among the nations.

This is the only place in the Old Testament that Paul could have gone to for his "table of the Lord." Malachi twice speaks of the "table of the Lord" as a sacrificial table where sacrifices are offered. Curiously, in between these two references God states that He will no longer accept the sacrifices of Israel, but will accept a pure offering made by the gentiles around the world. Malachi 1:11 was understood by many early Christian fathers as referring to the Mass. Also, from the very beginning, Christians have always understood the Eucharist to have a sacrificial aspect to it.

The Didache:
ssemble on the Lord's day, and break bread and offer the Eucharist; but first make confession of your faults, so that your sacrifice may be a pure one. Anyone who has a difference with his fellow is not to take part with you until he has been reconciled, so as to avoid any profanation of your sacrifice [Matt. 5:23–24]. For this is the offering of which the Lord has said, "Everywhere and always bring me a sacrifice that is undefiled, for I am a great king, says the Lord, and my name is the wonder of nations" [Mal. 1:11, 14] (Didache 14 [A.D. 70]).

Pope Clement I:
Our sin will not be small if we eject from the episcopate those who blamelessly and holily have offered its sacrifices. Blessed are those presbyters who have already finished their course, and who have obtained a fruitful and perfect release (Letter to the Corinthians 44:4–5 [A.D. 80]).

Ignatius of Antioch:
Make certain, therefore, that you all observe one common Eucharist; for there is but one body of our Lord Jesus Christ, and but one cup of union with His blood, and one single altar of sacrifice—even as there is also but one bishop, with His clergy and my own fellow servitors, the deacons. This will ensure that all your doings are in full accord with the will of God (Letter to the Philadelphians 4 [A.D. 110]).

Justin Martyr:
God speaks by the mouth of Malachi, one of the twelve [minor prophets], as I said before, about the sacrifices at that time presented by you: "I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord, and I will not accept your sacrifices at your hands; for from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, my name has been glorified among the Gentiles, and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure offering, for my name is great among the Gentiles" [Mal. 1:10–11]. He then speaks of those Gentiles, namely us [Christians] who in every place offer sacrifices to Him, that is, the bread of the Eucharist and also the cup of the Eucharist (Dialogue with Trypho the Jew 41 [A.D. 155]).

Irenaeus:
He took from among creation that which is bread, and gave thanks, saying, "This is my body." The cup likewise, which is from among the creation to which we belong, He confessed to be His blood. He taught the new sacrifice of the new covenant, of which Malachi, one of the twelve [minor] prophets, had signified beforehand: "You do not do my will, says the Lord Almighty, and I will not accept a sacrifice at your hands. For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name is glorified among the Gentiles, and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure sacrifice; for great is my name among the Gentiles, says the Lord Almighty" [Mal. 1:10–11]. By these words He makes it plain that the former people will cease to make offerings to God; but that in every place sacrifice will be offered to Him, and indeed, a pure one, for His name is glorified among the Gentiles (Against Heresies 4:17:5 [A.D. 189]).

Cyprian:
If Christ Jesus, our Lord and God, is himself the high priest of God the Father; and if He offered himself as a sacrifice to the Father; and if He commanded that this be done in commemoration of himself, then certainly the priest, who imitates that which Christ did, truly functions in place of Christ (Letters 63:14 [A.D. 253]).

Serapion:
Accept therewith our hallowing too, as we say, "Holy, holy, holy Lord Sabaoth, heaven and earth is full of your glory." Heaven is full, and full is the earth, with your magnificent glory, Lord of virtues. Full also is this sacrifice, with your strength and your communion; for to you we offer this iving sacrifice, this unbloody oblation (Prayer of the Eucharistic Sacrifice 13:12–16 [A.D. 350]).

Cyril:
Then, having sanctified ourselves by these spiritual hymns, we beseech the merciful God to send forth His Holy Spirit upon the gifts lying before Him, that He may make the bread the body of Christ and the wine the blood of Christ, for whatsoever the Holy Spirit has touched is surely sanctified and changed. Then, upon the completion of the spiritual sacrifice, the bloodless worship, over that propitiatory victim we call upon God for the common peace of the churches, for the welfare of the world, for kings, for soldiers and allies, for the sick, for the afflicted; and in summary, we all pray and offer this sacrifice for all who are in need (Catechetical Lectures 23:7–8 [A.D. 350]).

Gregory Nazianzen:
Cease not to pray and plead for me when you draw down the Word by your word, when in an unbloody cutting you cut the body and blood of the Lord, using your voice for a sword (Letter to Amphilochius 171 [A.D. 383]).

Ambrose:
We saw the prince of priests coming to us, we saw and heard Him offering His blood for us. We follow, inasmuch as we are able, being priests, and we offer the sacrifice on behalf of the people. Even if we are of but little merit, still, in the sacrifice, we are honorable. Even if Christ is not now seen as the one who offers the sacrifice, nevertheless it is He himself that is offered in sacrifice here on earth when the body of Christ is offered. Indeed, to offer himself He is made visible in us, He whose word makes holy the sacrifice that is offered (Commentaries on Twelve Psalms of David 38:25 [A.D. 389]).

John Chrysostom:
When you see the Lord immolated and lying upon the altar, and the priest bent over that sacrifice praying, and all the people empurpled by that precious blood, can you think that you are still among men and on earth? Or are you not lifted up to heaven? (The Priesthood3:4:177 [A.D. 387]).

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not communion of the blood of Christ?" Very trustworthy and awesomely does he [Paul] say it. For what he is saying is this: What is in the cup is that which flowed from His side, and we partake of it. He called it a cup of blessing because when we hold it in our hands that is how we praise Him in song, wondering and astonished at His indescribable gift, blessing Him because of His having poured out this very gift so that we might not remain in error; and not only for His having poured it out, but also for His sharing it with all of us. "If therefore you desire blood," He [the Lord] says, "do not redden the platform of idols with the slaughter of dumb beasts, but my altar of sacrifice with my blood." What is more awesome than this? What, pray tell, more tenderly loving? (Homilies on First Corinthians 24:1(3) [A.D. 392]).

Augustine:
In the sacrament He is immolated for the people not only on every Easter Solemnity but on every day; and a man would not be lying if, when asked, he were to reply that Christ is being immolated. For if sacraments had not a likeness to those things of which they are sacraments, they would not be sacraments at all; and they generally take the names of those same things by reason of this likeness (Letters 98:9 [A.D. 412]).

For when He says in another book, which is called Ecclesiastes, "There is no good for a man except that he should eat and drink" [Eccles. 2:24], what can he be more credibly understood to say [prophetically] than what belongs to the participation of this table which the Mediator of the New Testament himself, the priest after the order of Melchizedek,

furnishes with His own body and blood? For that sacrifice has succeeded all the sacrifices of the Old Testament, which were slain as a shadow of what was to come. . . . Because, instead of all these sacrifices and oblations, His body is offered and is served up to the partakers of it (The City of God 17:20 [A.D. 419]).

-In Brief-

1) 1 Cor. 10:14-22 – Paul warns Christians not to take part in pagan sacrifices. He draws a rather complex parallel between the sacrifices of the Jews and pagans and the Eucharist – implying that the Eucharist is also a sacrifice.

2) The cup of the Lord is a sacrificial cup by which we partake in the altar.

3) The "Table of the Lord" is applied to the Eucharistic table. The Jews also had an altar called "the table of the Lord.

4) Malachi 1 twice refers to the "table of the Lord" as a sacrificial altar (Mal. 1:7 and 1:12-13). In between these two condemnations is the famous prophecy that God will one day no longer accept the sacrifices of the Jews, but accept the offerings of gentiles around the world.

5) One of the earliest Christian writings, outside the New Testament, is the Didache, which applies Malachi 1:11 to the sacrifice of Christians (i.e. the Eucharist).

6) Pope Clement I (ca. 80 AD) speaks of bishops offering sacrifices.

7) Ignatius of Antioch (110 AD) likewise applies Malachi 1:11 to the Eucharist as does Irenause of Lyon.

8) From the very beginning, Christians have always understood the Eucharist to have a sacrificial aspect to it.

Chapter Four

Mary and the Saints

(Honor or Worship?)

Introduction to Mary

Problems with Mary

Many Protestants have a difficult time accepting Marian doctrine. The reasons for these difficulties are said to come from five sources.

1. Mary occupies only a small portion of Scripture. While the doctrine of the Virgin Birth is explicitly taught, none of the other Marian doctrines are mentioned.

2. Scripture places the emphasis on Christ who is the focal point of Scripture, not Mary. Therefore, devotion to Mary is out of keeping with Scripture.

3. Scripture seems to explicitly contradict Marian doctrine particularly Mary's Immaculate Conception (freedom from Original Sin), her subsequent sinless life, her perpetual virginity (post partum), Mary as Advocate and Mediatrix, and maybe even the Assumption.

4. Marian doctrine relies entirely on Tradition, which is condemned in the Bible.

5. That the honor given to Mary places her at a state where she is equal to God, which violates the First Commandment.

In addition to these sources, there is also a very strong "anti-Marian" strain of preaching within Protestantism. Mary is looked upon as a "Catholic thing" which competes with true authentic love and devotion to Christ. That is not to say that Protestants do not appreciate Mary. They do. They just don't see her as more important than any other Biblical character.

You will need to demonstrate the following:

- Marian doctrines are biblical. They may not be explicit, but they are found in Scripture. We will discuss this point later in this section.

- Marian doctrines are ultimately founded upon an authentic understanding of Christ and our redemption. They are not add-on's as if they were prerogatives given to Mary apart from Christ.

- All authentic Marian devotion is built upon and founded on an intense devotion of Christ. Without Christ, there is not Mary.

- Mary was predestined by God to this place and to have these prerogatives. It is not something that she earned apart from grace.

- Those passages that are said to contradict the Catholic teaching on Mary are either interpreted out of context or they do not truly contradict what is taught.

- While it is true, in terms of shear volume, there is little written explicitly about Mary in Scripture, it does not follow that what is written is not important. There are many central and important Christian teachings that are found only in a few passages of Scripture. This is also true for peculiar Protestant doctrines as well (e.g., the rapture, accepting Jesus as personal Lord and Savior, total corruption of man, eternal security). What is important is not "how much" is written in Scripture, but "what" is written in Scripture."

- Scripture forbids traditions (i.e. customs of human origin) that contradict or undermine the commandments of God. It does not (and it cannot) forbid Sacred Tradition since it too is the word of God.

- The honorific titles given to Mary in no way raise Mary to the level of being a goddess nor does it take anything away from the honor given to Christ.

- Scripture teaches that those who are intimately united to Christ share a filial love and devotion to his mother in a similar way that he does. This means that the warm love and devotion Catholics have to Mary is the product of a warm and intimate union and relationship with Christ.

- The First Commandment forbids the making of images that will be used as idols. It does not forbid the use of image per se (even images placed in places of worship - as long as they are not being worshipped).

All of these points will be demonstrated throughout our study of Mary.

Development

But how can the vast array of Catholic teachings on Mary be squared with the few passages in Scripture that mention Mary?

To answer this question, let's look back at when we first began to read Scripture as an adult. Do you remember your first appreciation of Scripture? Did it all make sense to you? All of us, when we first began to read the word of God, were impressed with certain things that were immediately clear. In addition, there were lots of questions. There were so many people in Scripture and towns, cultures, turns of phrases, words and relationships that were not all together clear.

After weeks or months of reading things became more clear. Biblical characters become more familiar and you began to discover all sorts of things that you had missed in previous reading sessions.

More reading produced more results things began to be more and more clear. Things that were implicit suddenly became more and more undeniable. You may have also experienced that some of the things that you thought were clear-cut and readily understandable were actually more complex and nuanced.

You may have reached a point in your study where things are as familiar as an old leather glove. You may have done word studies or learned some of the ancient languages. Again, things that you missed or were not so obvious become all the more obvious.

How do you think your understanding of Scripture would be one hundred years from now? Chances are it would be very advanced. Things that you may not even be aware of today in the text would then be so clear so that to deny it would be to deny Scripture. Imagine what this understanding would be after two thousand years! Yet this is what the Catholic Church has done collectively. (Actually, even this is not entirely correct, because if one were to study, copy, pray and contemplate Scripture for two thousand years you would end up being four thousand years away from the original languages and cultures of the Old Testament and unwritten teachings of the apostles). Catholicism has the great advantage of being two thousand years closer to the original. In fact, it began contemplating the word of God after being instructed by the apostles themselves!

This is not boasting. It's the truth and if anything the enquirer of Marian beliefs should consider the evidence for Marian doctrine with some humility (as we all do) because we believe that the Christian Faith is what is it regardless of my own person and imperfect grasp of what I believe Scripture teaches.

-In Brief-

1) The doctrines concerning the Virgin Mary is one of the biggest stumbling stones for Protestants. Their difficulties are said to come from the following reasons: (1) There is relatively little written about Mary in Scripture; (2) Catholic devotion to Mary seems to be at odds with the New Testament's emphasis on Jesus; (3) Some Scripture seems to explicitly contradict Catholic Marian doctrines; (4) Marian doctrine appears to be the product of Sacred Tradition, which they will not accept and (5) Mary seems to be given an honor equal to God.

2) What is missed by Protestants is: (1) What is written about Mary is packed with meaning and much can be learned about Mary's role *in the context* of salvation history; (2) Mary does not compete with Jesus. Rather, a clear understanding of Jesus and his work of redemption calls us to honor Mary. (3) The Scripture that seems to contradict Catholic doctrine does not. In fact, some text supports the Catholic position. (4) Marian doctrine comes from both Scripture and Tradition. (5) No creature can be raised to "godhood" except by calling them "God," which Catholics never do to Mary.

3) Protestants often miss important passages in Scripture because there is an anti-Marian bias in much of Protestantism. Moreover, since Mary is not seen as important, there is no incentive to dig into texts that may speak otherwise of the Blessed Virgin.

Mary as New Eve

If you were to pick up a standard Catholic apologetics work and read its section on Mary as the New Eve, it would probably say something like this:

"Mary is the fulfillment of Eve of the Old Testament.

Eve was a virgin in a garden.
Mary was a virgin in a garden.

Eve was approached by a fallen angel.
Mary was approached by a angel.

Eve was told a lie.
Mary was told the truth.

Eve believed the lie and disobeyed God.
Mary believed the angel and obeyed God.

Eve became the source of spiritual death.
Mary became the source of spiritual life."

The article would probably than conclude: "Mary is the one who untied the knot that Eve tied. We also know that Mary must be Immaculately Conceived since Eve was sinless and immaculate before she was tempted by the devil. Therefore, it was fitting for God to make Mary be in the same state as Eve when she accepted the gospel of the angel."

This line of argument is not very persuasive for Protestants because it seems like we are arguing that Eve is a type and Mary is the fulfillment of that type. The relationship between Eve and Mary may be interesting, but it seems completely arbitrary. In fact, Mary as the New Eve argument sounds a lot like a famous string of coincidences between presidents Lincoln and Kennedy.

Lincoln had a secretary named Kennedy.
Kennedy had a secretary named Lincoln.

Lincoln had a vice president named Johnston
Kennedy had a vice president named Johnston

Lincoln was shot in a theater and his assassin hid in a warehouse.
Kennedy was shot from a warehouse and his assassin hid in a theater.

John Wilkes Booth and Lee Harvey Oswald both have fifteen letters to their name.

What does this prove? Does it prove that Kennedy was a "New Lincoln"? Of course, not. It's just a bunch of interesting coincidences. So, what's the difference between Mary as New Eve and Kennedy as New Lincoln?

The problem with the standard argument for Mary as New Eve is that it has left behind the original explanation given by the earliest Christian writers which was (1) far more biblically orientated, (2) affirmed a kind of necessity for God making Mary a New Eve.

Sola Scriptura and Mary

If the Bible is your sole rule of Faith, you have a problem. The Bible is not laid out like a catechism where teachings are systematically laid out. Protestants therefore need something to put the various teachings in Scripture into a logical sequence and order. We talked about this earlier with the presence of the "Trump Verses." (see section on how Protestants use the Bible).

For American Protestantism, the bottom line is pragmatism: "What do I need to know to get to Heaven." If a teaching of Scripture isn't linked to the question of who God is and how do I get to Heaven, it is of little importance.

It is easy, then, to see why Mary simply is not on the radar screen of most American Protestants. She may be acknowledged for the Virgin Birth and maybe by some as being Mother God, but that's pretty much it because, to them, she doesn't have anything else to do with Who God is and how we are saved.

Therefore, any apology that is going to make an impact on Protestants concerning Mary needs to be linked to these two pragmatic criteria. Otherwise, if you are able to convince a Protestant that Mary was, for example, immaculately conceived, it just becomes just another biblical factoid. It is just another interesting thing in Scripture along with all the other interesting things of no importance.

This is why Mary as the New Eve teaching from the earliest Christians is far superior to that given in apologetic manuals because their presentation of this teaching is based upon two very important facts about our redemption that all Protestants (and Catholics for that matter) of any worth would affirm:

1) That God's act of redemption is perfect and completely lacking in nothing. God redeemed us in the most perfect possible way.

The second point is a corollary of the first:

2) In our redemption, the devil is utterly defeated and has no room for boasting against God.

These two points are the pillars for the Mary as New Eve argument. If one affirms with all their heart these two points, than it necessarily follows that Mary must be the New Eve (and everything that that belief implies).

How was it in the Beginning?

If you really want to learn about our Redemption, you need to first learn about the Fall. Just as a diagnosis must precede a treatment, we need to know how and why mankind fell in order that we can properly understand how God redeemed us from this fall.

The reason why the earliest Christians pickup so quickly on Mary as New Eve, I believe, is because they spent a long time studying the Fall. Let's briefly look at what was going on in Genesis chapters 2 & 3.

1) God Creates Adam and Eve

God created Adam from the virgin earth (Gen. 2:7). But it was not good that Adam was alone. He needed a helpmate (Gen. 2:18) so he had Adam name all the animals, but he could not find a suitable helpmate (Gen. 2:19-20). So, God formed Eve from the side of Adam (Gen. 2:21-22).

2) Two Covenants Were Formed In the Beginning

Since Covenants are family bonds we can see two covenants in Genesis 1-2. Between God and Adam and Eve since they are made in his image (Gen. 1:27) and a marriage covenant between Adam and Eve (Gen. 2:23; Matthew 19:4-6, et al.).

3) The Devil Wishes to Break the Covenant

The ancient Serpent (the devil) comes to tare down what God has set up (Rev. 12:9, Wis. 2:24). He wishes to destroy the two covenants that exist between God and man and Adam and Eve, but how? The target is certainly Adam since he is the origin of Eve, but how can he bring down Adam? The Scripture has already given a clue that the devil could not have missed. Adam was not created to be a solitary loner. He needs someone of his own flesh and blood. Adam (and the devil) also knows that only Eve will suffice, all the other animals and creatures God created will not due (Gen. 2:19).

4) Eve is the Serpent's Instrument

Eve is the Serpent's instrument to bring down Adam. Just like in bowling where you need to roll the bowling ball and hit the pins in the pocket in order to bring down all the pins. The devil approaches Eve knowing that if she can bring her to his side, Adam is at a disadvantage because he will be alone again (Gen. 3:17).

5) The First Covenant Is Broken

Therefore, the devil approaches Eve. It is very interesting to see how the early fathers describe this event. They use the language of a seduction scene because what is going on is a form of spiritual adultery.

The devil approaches Eve. He sows his seed (the lie). Eve conceives the lie and gives birth to death. Notice the sexual language. It is not surprising than to find throughout Scripture those who break their covenant with God to be described as adulterers and harlots.

St. Paul puts it like this:

1 Timothy 2:14
"Further, Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and transgressed."

Here is a question. If Eve was deceived, how could she be guilty of transgression? Think about it. If you didn't know you were doing wrong, are you still guilty of wrong-doing? How can Eve BOTH be deceived and guilty of transgression as Paul seems to say? The answer is that Eve was deceived into believing that the Serpent was her friend. She has changed her alliances with Adam and God and made them with the Serpent.

6) Eve Must Cooperate with the Devil

It is not enough for Eve to become friends with the Serpent and eat the fruit. Remember, the target is Adam. If Eve was the only one to do this, God could put Adam in a sleep again and make another helpmate. Eve HAD TO COOPERATE with the Devil's plan in order to bring down Adam, which she did (Gen. 3:6).

7) Second Covenant Broken

Adam sees himself alone. His covenant partner has changed alliances and broke the commandment that she learned through Adam (God didn't repeat his prohibition to Eve). Adam has the choice of remaining faithful to God while being estranged from his wife (Gen. 3:12) or to go along and eat the fruit. Adam eats and brings down the Second Covenant.

8) Adam and Eve Share In the Punishment

The woman is cursed by God in Genesis 3:16. The man is cursed in Genesis 3:17-19. It is also here that God says that man will not live forever and so they will now die (Gen. 3:22-23). Another important consequence is that all the offsprings of Adam will be in this disfellowshiped position with God. God no longer walks with man side by side (Gen. 3:8).

Adam names his wife Eve because she is the mother of all the living (Gen. 3:20). All who share in the fallen nature of Adam are the children of Eve.

9) God Curses the Serpent

The devil who had won a victory against God is cursed. God promises that what the Serpent had just accomplished will be taken away and undone.

God first tells the devil that he is cast out of creation and for his pride he will be humiliated.

Genesis 3:14 - "Because you have done this, you shall be banned from all the animals and from all the wild creatures; On your belly shall you crawl, and dirt shall you eat all the days of your life.

Next, God gives the "proto-evangelium" (the first Good News). It is here that we have the first prophesy concerning the Messiah. God says to the devil:

"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will strike at your head, while you strike at his heel."

The Woman of Genesis is not Eve

It is the seed of "the woman," that God states which will crush the head of the serpent. Protestants and Catholics agree that this refers to Christ. There are several reasons why "the woman" here refers to the immediate mother of the Messiah and not to Eve. For the sake of space we will only give four of these reasons. For a more thorough discussion, I recommend consulting "The First Gospel (Genesis 3:15) by Dominic Unger (Franciscan Press). Unger devotes an entire book to this one verse of Scripture and he produces a number of proofs as to why the "woman" here cannot primarily be Eve. Here are a couple:

1) God is to place "enmity" or "warfare" between "the woman" and the devil. But Eve, as we have seen, is friends with the devil and not enemies. Nowhere in Genesis (or any other portion of Scripture) is it stated that God has made enmity between Eve and the devil. Certainly, this enmity could only be produced by Christ's death and resurrection, thousands of years after the death of Eve.

2) Eve is the mother of Jesus only remotely. Mary is the true mother of the Messiah, not

Eve. Therefore, this passage would be considerably strained to pass over Jesus' immediate mother to be referring only to the distant Eve. Moreover, the New Testament numerous times links Jesus as the child of Mary. It never links Jesus with Eve; only Adam.

3) All of Eve's children were produced naturally, but Genesis 3:15 makes an unusual use of language of "woman's seed" (literally in Greek: *spermatos*). There is no mention of Adam as father in this passage and it strongly suggests that the "seed" that will crush the head of the Serpent comes only from "the woman." This hints at the Virgin Birth just as other prophesies concerning the mother of the Messiah speak of a Virgin Birth:

Isaiah 7:14 - "Therefore the Lord himself will give you this sign: the virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and shall name Him Immanuel."

There are other arguments but this should suffice for our purposes now.

Perfect Redemption

Now that we have covered the Fall. Let' look at the redemption. At the beginning, we laid out two important principles that must be held by Christians:

1) That God's act of redemption is perfect and completely lacking in nothing. God redeemed us in the most perfect possible way.

The second point is a corollary of the first:

2) In our redemption, the devil is utterly defeated and has no room for boasting against God.

How does God make a perfect redemption and take away the devil's victory over the human race? A good analogy for how this is to be accomplished is a football game.

Let's say that you and your friend are fans of two opposing football teams that are playing in the championship game. The score is tied near the end of the game. Your team is on the ten yard line and is about to score. Then the unthinkable happens. Your quarterback's pass is intercepted by your friend's team. In fact, it was the worst player on his time and that player runs the length of the field and scores the winning touchdown as the clock runs out. For the rest of the year, your friend boasts about his victory.

How do you redeem yourself after this loss? Well, your team could end up in the championship game again and beat your friend's team 128 - 0. That would be some victory! But would it take away all reason for your friend to boast? Couldn't he say, "Yah, but it was the last play, in the last seconds, and our worst player intercepted your pass and he ran all the way down the field and you couldn't stop him!" Even if the situation was similar, it would not be enough. If you intercepted the opponent's ball mid-field, your friend would still say, "Yah, but it was our worst player and he ran one hundred yards and you couldn't stop him." What do you need to do in order to "perfectly redeem" yourself and leave "no room for boasting" from your friend. You need to be in the championship game. Your friend's team is in the same scoring position. Your worst player intercepts the pass and he runs the length of the field and scores the winning touchdown... and then football is made illegal and there are no more championship games.

In a sense, this is what God did in our redemption. He rose up another virgin like Eve who was already in a covenant relationship with Himself (i.e. she was at enmity with the devil). This Virgin was approached by an angel and she remained faithful to God.

Just as Eve was the instrument of the devil to bring about the Fall. Mary is the instrument of God to bring about redemption. Just as Eve's change in alliances with the devil and eating the fruit was not enough - she had to cooperate with the devil's plan and give the fruit to Adam. So likewise, Mary had to cooperate with God's plan completely. It wasn't enough for Mary simply to believe or believe and bare God's Son because our redemption and victory over the devil and death was not accomplished when Jesus was born. He had to die on the Cross and be raised from the dead. Mary cooperated with God's plan. She remained ever faithful to God even through Christ's ministry (John 2), Christ's crucifixion (John 19) and the Resurrection.

But if you think about it, the work of redemption is still not completed since Christ's death on the Cross was the penultimate victory; the mop up battle is still going on. This is why Paul applies the language of Genesis 3:15 to all who are united to Christ when he says, "... then the God of peace will quickly crush Satan under your feet" (Romans 16:20). Paul certainly believed Christ to be the one who definitively crushed Satan's head. But Paul also knows that this act of redemption is being carried out in history by those who are united to Christ.

Again, just as Eve cooperated in the Fall by producing spiritually deprived offspring, Mary too cooperates with God's plan through her maternal care for Christ and those united to Christ.

Another aspect of this perfect redemption is found in the consequences. Eve tasted death as the fruit of her actions. She sinned and died. Mary, on the other hand, shares in the fruit of her actions. Mary believed and she cooperated with God's plan in total fidelity. Therefore, she shares the perfect fruit of this cooperation. She did not suffer corruption, but she was taken by Christ to reign in Heaven

-In Brief-

1) The argument for Mary as New Eve is NOT typology.

2) The order of Creation in Genesis places Adam as the origin of the human race and Eve as the crown of Creation.

3) The Serpent (i.e. the Devil) enters into the Garden to break the two covenants; between Adam and Eve and between Adam/Eve and God.

4) Knowing that Adam is lost without his helpmate, the Serpent chooses to seduce Eve and use her as his INSTRUMENT to bring about the Fall.

5) The Serpent deceives Eve into believing him to be her friend. She therefore moves her loyalties from Adam to the Serpent thus, in a sense, committing a kind of adulterous act breaking her marriage covenant.

6) The Serpent and Eve then tempt Adam who submits.

7) Eve had to cooperate fully with the devil's plan: (1) She had to be friends with the Devil; (2) She had to offer the fruit to Adam, (3) She became the mother of the living (that is fallen humanity), (4) She shared in the fruits of her sin – punishment and death.

8) God, who wished to completely erase any victory the Devil had won in the Fall and to bring about a most perfect redemption, chose to undo the twisted plot of the Devil.

9) God chose another virgin in a garden (Mary). He sent an angel who did not fall (Gabriel). Gabriel spoke to Mary the Good News (unlike the fallen angel speaking a lie). Mary believed the angel's words and became the mother of all the spiritually living.

10) Mary was God's INSTRUMENT to bring about our redemption. She, like Eve, had to cooperate fully with God's plan, which did not end at her consent since our redemption was not complete at the Incarnation. It had to continue through Christ's ministry, His death on the Cross, the Resurrection and the birth of the Church at Pentecost. At each turn, Mary is present. It also continues today because although our redemption is won by Christ on the Cross, it still needs to be applied to the Church in every age.

The Immaculate Conception

Ineffabilis Deus

Apostolic Constitution of Pope Pius IX on the Immaculate Conception

(December 8, 1854)

Apostolic Constitution issued on December 8, 1854.

The Definition

Wherefore, in humility and fasting, we unceasingly offered our private prayers as well as the public prayers of the Church to God the Father through his Son, that he would deign to direct and strengthen our mind by the power of the Holy Spirit. In like manner did we implore the help of the entire heavenly host as we ardently invoked the Paraclete. Accordingly, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, for the honor of the Holy and undivided Trinity, for the glory and adornment of the Virgin Mother of God, for the exaltation of the Catholic Faith, and for the furtherance of the Catholic religion, by the authority of Jesus Christ our Lord, of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and by our own:

> **"We declare, pronounce, and define that the doctrine which holds that the most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instance 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."**

Hence, if anyone shall dare—which God forbid!—to think otherwise than as has been defined by us, let him know and understand that he is condemned by his own judgment; that he has suffered shipwreck in the faith; that he has separated from the unity of the Church; and that, furthermore, by his own action he incurs the penalties established by law if he should dare to express in words or writing or by any other outward means the errors he thinks in his heart.

The Immaculate Conception is one of the most misunderstood Catholic doctrines in the secular world. It is not unusual to hear someone in modern popular fiction, "You didn't have a father: You were immaculately conceived." Of course, what they really wanted to say was that the person was the product of a virgin birth (that is they were born without the agency of a father). The Immaculate Conception has nothing to do with the parents of an individual. It is a "singular act of God" that the Virgin Mary was conceived without the stain of Original Sin; that is she was conceived in a state of grace.

In our last section, we discussed how the fathers understood Mary as New Eve and how this fits perfectly with some of the main tenants that Catholics and Protestants share.

In this section, we will examine in detail three Scriptural proofs for the Immaculate Conception: The Proto-evangelium, Gabriel's declaration "Hail, Full of Grace" and Mary as the "Ark of the Covenant."

First, we will take another look at Genesis 3:15 since it is so prominent in the definition of the Immaculate Conception.

There was never any widespread doubt as to whether the Virgin Mary was of a special sanctity. Only a handful of fathers seem to contradict it and their reasoning for their doubts was not based on a widespread, well accepted belief, but their own personal (and erroneous) way of reasoning.

There was some discussion to when Mary was sanctified. Was she sanctified when her body was made or when her soul was infused into her body? This problem was a product of medieval science since we now know that there is not this separation since the body is formed when the soul is infused into the body, not after.

Genesis 3:15

In Genesis 1 and 2, God creates Adam. Paradise is interrupted when, in Genesis 3, the Serpent (i.e. the devil) enters the garden and attempts to undo everything that God has accomplished. It works and Adam and Eve fall. In Genesis 3:15, God comes in judgment and pronounces three curses: on the Serpent, the woman and Adam.

The curse on the Serpent (Genesis 3:15) is really a prophecy that God will undo everything that the Serpent had just accomplished.

One difficulty you will find with using Genesis 3:15 is the use of pronouns. There are so many pronouns being used in this verse that it is difficult to convey what is going on to a person who may not be familiar with this verse. It is best to replace the pronouns with words. For example, "God will place enmity between the woman and the Serpent and between the woman's child and the Serpent's children. The Serpent will strike at the woman's child's heel, while he crushes the head of the Serpent."It is best to move backwards through this prophecy. Who is the "woman's child" that will crush the head of the devil? Jesus. To what degree was Jesus "at enmity" with the devil? He was completely at enmity with the devil. Was there ever a time where Jesus was friends with the devil? No. Who is the mother of Jesus? Mary. Mary is likewise prophesied that she will be at enmity with the devil. How complete was her enmity? Total. Why? Because this prophecy places the enmity of the woman and her child in parallel, they shared the same

(continued from previous page)

The Annunciation

When the Fathers and writers of the Church meditated on the fact that the most Blessed Virgin was, in the name and by order of God himself, proclaimed full of grace by the Angel Gabriel when he announced her most sublime dignity of Mother of God, they thought that this singular and solemn salutation, never heard before, showed that the Mother of God is the seat of all divine graces and is adorned with all gifts of the Holy Spirit. To them Mary is an almost infinite treasury, an inexhaustible abyss of these gifts, to such an extent that she was never subject to the curse and was, together with her Son, the only partaker of perpetual benediction. Hence she was worthy to hear Elizabeth, inspired by the Holy Spirit, exclaim: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb."

Mary Compared with Eve

Hence, it is the clear and unanimous opinion of the Fathers that the most glorious Virgin, for whom "he who is mighty has done great things," was resplendent with such an abundance of heavenly gifts, with such a fullness of grace and with such innocence, that she is an unspeakable miracle of God—indeed, the crown of all miracles and truly the Mother of God; that she approaches as near to God himself as is possible for a created being; and that she is above all men and angels in glory. Hence, to demonstrate the original innocence and sanctity of the Mother of God, not only did they frequently compare her to Eve while yet a virgin, while yet in innocence, while yet incorrupt, while not yet deceived by the deadly snares of the most treacherous serpent; but they have also exalted her above Eve with a wonderful variety of expressions. Eve listened to the serpent with lamentable consequences; she fell from original innocence and became his slave. The most Blessed Virgin, on the contrary, ever increased her original gift, and not only never lent an ear to the serpent, but by divinely given power she utterly destroyed the force and dominion of the evil one.

Biblical Figures

Accordingly, the Fathers have never ceased to call the Mother of God the lily among thorns, the land entirely intact, the Virgin undefiled, immaculate, ever blessed, and free from all contagion of sin, she from whom was formed the new Adam, the flawless, brightest, and most beautiful paradise of innocence, immortality and delights planted by God himself and protected against all the snares of the poisonous serpent, the incorruptible wood that the worm of sin had never corrupted, the fountain ever clear and sealed with the power of the Holy Spirit, the most holy temple, the treasure of immortality, the one and only daughter of life—not of death—the plant not of anger but of grace, through the singular providence of God growing ever green contrary to the common law, coming as it does from a corrupted and tainted root.

Explicit Affirmation . . .

...They also declared that the most glorious Virgin was Reparatrix of the first parents, the giver of life to posterity; that she was chosen before the ages, prepared for himself by the Most High, foretold by God when He said to the serpent, "I will put enmities between you and the woman." Unmistakable

(continued on next page)

enmity. Therefore, was there ever a time when Mary was friends with the devil (sinned or in a state of sin)? No. She must have had God's life within her from the first moment of her existence.

The parallel enmity of Genesis 3:15 is affirmed in Luke 1:41-42 where Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit and cries out, "When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb." Elizabeth, inspired by the Holy Spirit, gives a parallel blessing to both Mary and her child.

To be a friend of the devil (or the world since the devil is called the prince of the world) is to be at enmity with God. See James 4:4, "…do you not know that friendship with the **world** is hostility toward **God**? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the **world** makes himself an enemy of **God**." On the other hand, to be justified or righteous is to be a friend of God and to be blessed. For example James 2:3 says, "and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "AND **ABRAHAM BELIEVED** GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS," and he was called the **friend** of God." Likewise, Romans 4:6-8 - "**…** just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: "BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED. "BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT."

According to the Bible, Mary was justified or in a state of righteousness from the first moment of her existence. She is at total enmity with the devil and is said by

(continued from previous page)
evidence that she had crushed the poisonous head of the serpent. And hence they affirmed that the Blessed Virgin was, through grace, entirely free from every stain of sin, and from all corruption of body, soul and mind; that she was always united with God and joined to him by an eternal covenant; that she was never in darkness but always in light; and that, therefore, she was entirely a fit habitation for Christ, not because of the state of her body, but because of her original grace.

. . . Of a Super Eminent Sanctity

To these praises they have added very noble words. Speaking of the conception of the Virgin, they testified that nature yielded to grace and, unable to go on, stood trembling. The Virgin Mother of God would not be conceived by Anna before grace would bear its fruits; it was proper that she be conceived as the first-born, by whom "the first-born of every creature" would be conceived. They testified, too, that the flesh of the Virgin, although derived from Adam, did not contract the stains of Adam, and that on this account the most Blessed Virgin was the tabernacle created by God himself and formed by the Holy Spirit, truly a work in royal purple, adorned and woven with gold, which that new Beseleel made. They affirmed that the same Virgin is, and is deservedly, the first and especial work of God, escaping the fiery arrows the evil one; that she is beautiful by nature and entirely free from all stain; that at her Immaculate Conception she came into the world all radiant like the dawn. For it was certainly not fitting that this vessel of election should be wounded by the common injuries, since she, differing so much from the others, had only nature in common with them, not sin. In fact, it was quite fitting that, as the Only-Begotten has a Father in heaven, whom the Seraphim extol as thrice holy, so he should have a Mother on earth who would never be without the splendor of holiness.

This doctrine so filled the minds and souls of our ancestors in the faith that a singular and truly marvelous style of speech came into vogue among them. They have frequently addressed the Mother of God as immaculate, as immaculate in every respect; innocent, and verily most innocent; spotless, and entirely spotless; holy and removed from every stain of sin; all pure, all stainless, the very model of purity and innocence; more beautiful than beauty, more lovely than loveliness; more holy than holiness, singularly holy and most pure in soul and body; the one who surpassed all integrity and virginity; the only one who has become the dwelling place of all the graces of the most Holy Spirit. God alone excepted, Mary is more excellent than all, and by nature fair and beautiful, and more holy than the Cherubim and Seraphim. To praise her all the tongues of heaven and earth do not suffice.

Everyone is cognizant that this style of speech has passed almost spontaneously into the books of the most holy liturgy and the Offices of the Church, in which they occur so often and abundantly. In them, the Mother of God is invoked and praised as the one spotless and most beautiful dove, as a rose ever blooming, as perfectly pure, ever immaculate, and ever blessed. She is celebrated as innocence never sullied and as the second Even who brought forth the Emmanuel.

Elizabeth to be Blessed like her son.

Implied also in these verses is that Mary remained in this state her entire life since her condition parallels that of her son Jesus who was always righteous before God, at friendship with God and at enmity with the devil.

Hail Mary, Full of Grace

The second proof that can be drawn from Scripture is the proclamation of the angel Gabriel to Mary, "Hail, Full of Grace."

As we will see, this verse (as an apologetic proof) is limited and it is not as full as the Genesis 3:15 verse. However, it does serve to reconfirm the foundation that was laid out in our last section.

Luke 1:26-28:

"Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was."

Notice that here we have an angel once again approaching a virgin and he greets her. The Serpent did not greet the woman. He had to seduce her into believing that he was her friend. Contrary wise, Gabriel pronounces to Mary that she is already a friend of God: She is full of grace or highly favored.

The first thing an apologist should point out is that this dialogue is very formalized. It is, what scholars call, in a literary form known as a "call narrative." Dialogues like this can be found elsewhere in Scripture that they are used when a person is being "called" to a special service or duty to God. A good example of the call narrative similar to Mary's is found in Judges 6:11-18:

11 "Then the angel of the LORD came and sat under the oak that was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite as his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the wine press in order to save {it} from the Midianites. *12* The angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, "The LORD is with you, O valiant warrior." *13* Then Gideon said to him, "O my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, 'Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?' But now the LORD has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian." *14* The LORD looked at him and said, "Go in this your strength and deliver Israel from the hand of Midian. Have I not sent you?" *15* He said to Him, "O Lord, how shall I deliver Israel? Behold, my family is the least in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father's house." *16* But the LORD said to him, "Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat Midian as one man." *17* So Gideon said to Him, "If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who speak with me. *18* "Please do not depart from here, until I come {back} to You, and bring out my offering and lay it before You." And He said, "I will remain until you return."

Notice all the parallels between the calling of Gideon and the calling of Mary. In fact, make a short list of all the parallels between these two passages. You will notice that they both share the same form of dialogue.

What does this passage tell us about Gabriel's visit with Mary? First and foremost, Mary is being called by God to a special mission just like Gideon was in the Book of Judges. Secondly, for our purposes, the greeting of Gideon gives us some insight as to who and what Mary is in the plan of God.

In Judges 6:12, the angel says to Gideon "The LORD is with you, O valiant warrior." In Luke 1:28, Gabriel says, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." Both Gideon and Mary's names are placed by a title that describes how God has prepared them for their mission. With Gideon, he is called "Valiant warrior" or "man of valor." Gabriel, likewise, replaces Mary's name with a descriptive title, "favored one" or "full of grace."

What is the meaning of Mary's name? The phrase "full of grace" or "highly favored one" is a single Greek word: *kecharitomena*. It is a perfect passive participle.

This Greek word is made up of three parts: ke - *charito* - *mena*. Let's look at each part in turn:

ke - This prefix indicates that the word is in the perfect - that is it describes an action or state that begun sometime in the past and it continues on through the future. For example, in English we would say, "I have washed my car." This means that sometime in the past I was washing my car and my car is now presently in a washed state. This means that Mary was already in a graced or favored state prior to Gabriel approaching her with the Good News. Does this mean that this state existed at the first moment of her existence? No. But it is equal with that idea. For the Protestant, when Mary says, "let it be done to me according to your word" that she comes to saving faith, *kecharitomena* actually demonstrates that she was already in a saving relationship with God prior to that point.

Justified	**Unjustified**
Friendship with God	Enmity with God
Enmity with the devil (and the fallen world)	Friends with the devil (and the fallen world)
To be in a state of Blessing	Not Blessed

Also, the perfect generally carries with it a sense of completeness, integrity and perfect. One of the most frequently used words in the perfect in the New Testament is "*gegraphetai*." This is usually a formula used in citing Scripture. It is translated, "it is written." If you wished to give this word all its punch as a perfect, it would be translated, "It has been written and it stands written." In other words, what had been written in the past is complete and unalterable and nothing can be added to it. With Mary, her state is likewise has a sense of completeness or fullness to it in that nothing can be added to it.

charito - This Greek word is usually translated as "grace" in the New Testament. We have already discussed grace in our section on Justification. Catholics emphasize WHAT is grace - that is God's life within us. Protestants emphasize WHY grace is given - God's merciful undeserved kindness or favor. This is why Protestant and Catholic translations sometimes differ. However, it seems to me that if this passage is, like Judges 6:12, describing what Mary is in God's mission, then it ought to be rendered "full of grace" rather than highly favored. In verse 30, the angel describes WHY Mary is called: She has found favor with God. Why is Mary favored by God? Is it because she worked harder at doing good works than the other Jews? No, it is because God has made her favorable.

- *mena* - This signals that the word is in the second person, passive. In other words, Mary passively received this grace from God. It was not something that she created.

Taken together, we can translate "*kecharitomena*" as "she who has been and is graced and stands in grace by God."

Does this prove the Immaculate Conception? No. Does this prove Mary's subsequent sinlessness? It could. But it definitely does strongly imply these two doctrines and if Mary was conceived with Original Sin, this greeting would not be very fitting.

The most important part to remember about "full of grace" is that it is a NAME that is given in a CALL NARRATIVE as mentioned above. These facts favor strongly the Catholic position.

Mary as the Ark of the Covenant

There is another inspired line of thought at work in Luke 1 concerning Mary. Luke is

deliberately describing Mary with terms and phrases drawn from narratives that describe the Ark of the Covenant.

First, what is the Ark of the Covenant? The Ark is a throne box that contained three things: the Ten Commandments, Aaron's rod that blossomed and a bowl of Manna (Hebrews 9:4). Scholars believe it to be a throne-chair and God would overshadow the Ark. The Ark was also the most holy object in all of Israel. Only the priests were allowed to touch the Ark, anyone else would be struck dead by God as was the case when the Ark was being transported to Jerusalem.

2 Samuel 6

1 Now David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. *2* And David arose and went with all the people who were with him to Baale-judah, to bring up from there the ark of God which is called by the Name, the very name of the LORD of hosts who is enthroned {above} the cherubim. *3* They placed the ark of God on a new cart that they might bring it from the house of Abinadab which was on the hill; and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were leading the new cart. *4* So they brought it with the ark of God from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill; and Ahio was walking ahead of the ark. *5* Meanwhile, David and all the house of Israel were celebrating before the LORD with all kinds of {instruments made of} fir wood, and with lyres, harps, tambourines, castanets and cymbals. *6* But when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out toward the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen nearly upset {it.} *7* And the anger of the LORD burned against Uzzah, and God struck him down there for his irreverence; and he died there by the ark of God. *8* David became angry because of the LORD'S outburst against Uzzah, and that place is called Perez-uzzah to this day. *9* So David was afraid of the LORD that day; and he said, "How can the ark of the LORD come to me?" *10* And David was unwilling to move the ark of the LORD into the city of David with him; but David took it aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. *11* Thus the ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months, and the LORD blessed Obed-edom and all his household. *12* Now it was told King David, saying, "The LORD has blessed the house of Obed-edom and all that belongs to him, on account of the ark of God." David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David with gladness. *13* And so it was, that when the bearers of the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling. *14* And David was dancing before the LORD with all {his} might, and David was wearing a linen ephod. *15* So David and all the house of Israel were bringing up the ark of the LORD with shouting and the sound of the trumpet. *16* Then it happened {as} the ark of the LORD came into the city of David that Michal the daughter of Saul looked out of the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart. *17* So they brought in the ark of the LORD and set it in its place inside the tent which David had pitched for it; and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. *18* When David had finished offering the burnt offering and the peace offering, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts. *19* Further, he distributed to all the people, to all the multitude of Israel, both to men and women, a cake of bread and one of dates and one of raisins to each one. Then all the people departed each to his house. *20* But when David returned to bless his household, Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David and said, "How the king of Israel distinguished himself today! He uncovered himself today in the eyes of his servants' maids as one of the foolish ones shamelessly uncovers himself!" *21* So David said to Michal, {It was} before the LORD, who chose me above your father and above all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel; therefore I will celebrate before the LORD. *22* "I will be more lightly esteemed than this and will be humble in my own eyes, but with the maids of whom you have spoken, with them I will be distinguished." *23* Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death."

Luke uses language from this chapter in Second Samuel to describe Mary visit to her kinswoman Elizabeth.

Let's look at how Luke does this;

Second Samuel 6 - The Ark of the Covenant and 1 Chronicles 16:4-5, 42	**Luke 1:39ff - Mary as Ark of the New Covenant**
2 Samuel 6:2 - And David **arose and went** with all the people who were with him to Baale-**judah.**	Luke 1:39 - Now at this time Mary **arose and went** in a hurry to the hill country, to a city of **Judah.**
2 Samuel 6:9 - So **David was afraid** of the LORD that day; and he said, "**How can the ark of the LORD come to me**?"	Luke 1:43 - "**And how has it happened to me, that the mother of my Lord would come to me**?
2 Samuel 6:12 - "...David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David with gladness (Joy - Greek: *en euphrosune*).	Luke 1:44 - "For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb **for joy**." (Greek: *en agalliasei*)
2 Samuel 6:14 - "And **David was dancing** before the LORD with all {his} might, and David was wearing a linen ephod. 2 Samuel 6:16 - "Then it happened {as} the ark of the LORD came into the city of David that Michal the daughter of Saul looked out of the window and saw King David **leaping and dancing before the LORD**..." 2 Samuel 6:21b - "So David said to Michal, "{It was} before the LORD, who chose me above your father and above all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel; **therefore I will celebrate before the LORD**." (Greek - *eskirtesen* (from *skirtao*))	Luke 1:44 - "For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby **leaped** in my womb for joy." (Greek: *eskirtesen*)
2 Samuel 6:15 - "So David and all the house of Israel were bringing up the ark of the LORD with **shouting** and the sound of the trumpet." (Greek: *krauge*)	Luke 1:42 - "And she **cried out** with a loud voice and said, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!'" (Greek: *krauge*)
1 Chronicles 16:4 - "He appointed some of the Levites {as} ministers before the ark of the LORD, even **to celebrate** and to thank and praise the LORD God of Israel:" (Greek - *ephonesen*)	Luke 1:42 - "And she cried out with **a loud voice** and said, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!'" (Greek: *anephonesen*)
1 Chronicles 16:5- "Asaph the chief, and second to him Zechariah, {then} Jeiel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, Obed-edom and Jeiel, with musical instruments, harps, lyres; also Asaph {played} **loud-sounding** cymbals...." (Greek: *anaphonesen*)	
1 Chronicles 16:42 - And with them {were} Heman and Jeduthun {with} trumpets and cymbals for those who should **sound aloud,** and {with} instruments {for} the songs of God, and the sons of Jeduthun for the gate." (Greek: *anaphonein*).	

Second Samuel 6 - The Ark of the Covenant	**Luke 1:39ff - Mary as Ark of the New Covenant**
2 Samuel 6:11 - "Thus the ark of the LORD **remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months**, and the LORD blessed Obed-edom and all his household."	Luke 1:56 - **"And Mary stayed with her about three months**, and then returned to her home."
2 Samuel 6:11 - "Thus the ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months, and **the LORD blessed Obed-edom and all his household**."	Luke 1:41 - "When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.
Overshadow in the Bible	**Overshadow in the Bible**
Hebrews 9:4 - " Behind the second veil was the tabernacle called the Holy of Holies, in which were the gold altar of incense and the ark of the covenant entirely covered with gold. In it were the gold jar containing the manna, the staff of Aaron that had sprouted, and the tablets of the covenant. Above it were the cherubim of glory **overshadowing** the place of expiation. Now is not the time to speak of these in detail." (Greek: *kataskeonzonta*)	Luke 1:35 - "The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will **overshadow you** (Greek: *episkenen*); and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.
2 Samuel 6:2 - "And David arose and went with all the people who were with him to Baale-judah, to bring up from there the ark of God which is called by the Name, the very name of the LORD of hosts who is **enthroned {above} the cherubim.**	
Exodus 40:1-3, 34-35 - "***1*** Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "On the first day of the first month you shall set up the tabernacle of the tent of meeting. You shall place the ark of the testimony there, and you shall screen the ark with the veil. **Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting** (Greek: *skenen*)**, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.** Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and **the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle."**	

-In Brief-

1) Genesis 3:15 – God prophecies that one day he will place enmity (warfare) between "the woman" and the Serpent and between the woman's offspring and the Serpent's offspring. The Serpent will strike at the woman's offspring's heal while the woman's offspring will crush the Serpent's head.

2) Identify the characters in reverse order: (1) the "woman's seed" is Jesus. (2) The Serpent is Satan (Rev. 12), the "woman" is the mother of Jesus – Mary.

3) This prophecy draws a parallel enmity between "the woman" and the Serpent and Jesus and the Serpent. Jesus is at perfect enmity with Serpent. He never sinned. Mary likewise is at perfect enmity with the Serpent – otherwise the parallel would be broken.

4) Elizabeth gives a parallel blessing shared by both Mary and her unborn Son. Luke 1:26-28.

5) "Full of Grace" [Greek: *kecharitomena*] – Is a perfect, passive, participle. Mary is named "full of Grace." It means, "she who has been and continues to be graced."

6) The form in which the angel addressed Mary is a "call narrative" where Mary is being called to a special role in Redemption.

7) Mary – Ark of the Covenant – Luke paints Mary's journey to Elizabeth's house with language taken from David's journey with the Ark of the Covenant in 2 Samuel 6.

Answering Objections to the Immaculate Conception

Now that we have established the fact of the Immaculate Conception through prophecy and confirmation in the Old and New Testaments it is time to tackle the objections.

As before, we ought to try to understand the Protestant mind-set in order to correct their objections and communicate the truths of the Catholic Church.

The first and primary unspoken objection or misunderstanding against Mary's Immaculate Conception is that our blessed mother has been raised by Catholics to a level appropriate only for God.

Objection #1 - To sin is human

Most Protestants believe in the total corruption of man that is that we are not only deprived of God's grace (i.e. sanctifying grace), but that our nature has been destroyed so that we cannot do anything pleasing to God - and some believe even after we have been "born again." It is in our nature to sin. For some Protestants, Mary's preservation from sin, therefore, suggests something very unnatural.

Answer: What some Protestants forget is that our "natural" state of nature is not to be sinful or to have Original Sin, but to be immaculate. God did not create man with a fallen nature. He created him in a state of grace and we are made for him. It was when Adam and Eve fell that an un-natural state occurred - we were separated from God.

Therefore, the Immaculate Conception of Mary is unique but it is not un-natural. Mary was created as we all ought to have been.

Objection #2 - The Immaculate Conception Raises Mary to godhood.

Many Protestants equate sinlessness with divinity. Here is how they understand redemption. We are all sinners and therefore we are incapable of offering a sacrifice to reconcile us to God. Therefore, God becomes man so that he can live a sinless life and although he knew not sin nor was he guilty of sinning Jesus alone was able to offer the perfect sacrifice of the Cross and atone for all sins. They will cite Scripture to show that sinlessness is a property given to Christ alone:

2 Corinthians 5:21 - For our sake he made him to be sin who did not know sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

Hebrews 4:15 - For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin.

Hebrews 7:26 - It was fitting that we should have such a High Priest: holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, higher than the heavens.

1 John 3:5 - You know that he was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin.

If Mary was Immaculate then she could have been able to offer herself on the Cross and atone for the sins of humanity, but this cannot be so. Only Christ was sinless since he is God. God offers the sacrifice. We are all sinners.

Answer: Although it is true that Christ is sinless because he is God, it does not follow that only God can be sinless. It follows the same illogic as this argument:

All dogs have tails.
This animal has a tail.
Therefore, it is a dog.

Christ's divinity would not allow sin. However, there are other ways in which human nature can be prevented from sinning without bestowing divinity upon them. For example, perfect cooperation with God's grace would produce a sinless life as well.

Another problem with the Protestant understanding on this point stems from their misunderstanding of justification and atonement. Since justification must be a legal declaration whereby we are declared to be innocent (sinless) in God's sight, the mode of our redemption must also be hinged on Christ's sinlessness. So many Protestants move the importance of the Incarnation to be cause of our redemption but not the means by which we are redeemed.

For example, in Catholic theology there is a way of conceiving the sacrifice of Christ in this manner. First, we must accept the principle that the severity of an offence is in proportion to the one who is offended. If I strike my friend, that is a bad offense. If I strike my mother, it is a grave sin. If I punch a fellow worker, I may lose my job. If I punch the president, I go to prison. When Adam and Eve sinned they offended God. The offense is "infinitely severe." Only an infinite sacrifice can repair the damage caused by this offense. Therefore, God became man and offered the infinite sacrifice on the Cross. What Protestants sometimes do is substitute Christ's holiness in place of his divinity so that the Incarnation is there only to affect a sinless Christ.

A closer examination of these verses reveals that the Scripture had no idea of this concept of atonement or redemption when it mentions Christ's sinlessness.

2 Corinthians 5:21 - "For our sake he made him to be sin who did not know sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him." - has no preceding context. Paul is simply stating a summary of our redemption in Christ. His thought that "he made him to be sin who did not know sin" comes from Galatians 3:10-13. Paul's argument here is complex (for us non-Jews who are not familiar with the Old Testament history). For our purposes, we will direct our attention only to the question - Is Christ's sinlessness that which enables him to offer a perfect sacrifice?

Galatians reads - "For all who depend on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not persevere in doing all the things written in the book of the law." And that no one is justified before God by the law is clear, for "the one who is righteous by faith will live." But the law does not depend on faith; rather, "the one who does these things will live by them." Christ ransomed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who hangs on a tree"..."

First we see that Paul's thought in Galatians is a parallel of 2 Corinthians with only the word "curse" being used instead of "sin." Paul states, quoting Deuteronomy 27:26 that everyone who does not do all the things written in the Law are under a curse. If Christ's sinlessness is that which enables us to be freed from this curse, Paul should have said, "therefore, Christ did all that is required in the Law and he was able to free us as well." Instead, Paul says that Christ took on the curse (of violating the Law) by hanging on a tree (which was the sign of being cursed by God).

In other words, we can see 2 Corinthians saying, "for our sakes he made him to be sin (Christ died on a Cross) who did not know sin (Christ is God)." Sin in this passage appears to be only a round-about way of stating Christ's divinity and his death on the Cross.

Hebrews 4:15 - For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin.

Hebrews 7:26 - It was fitting that we should have such a high priest: holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, higher than the heavens.

The contexts of these two passage reveal that St. Paul is not saying that only Christ is sinless nor does it link his sinlessness to the sufficient cause of our redemption. Rather it speaks that Christ is our fitting representative since he has been tested "in every way." Also, Hebrew 7:26 talks about Christ's priesthood in Heaven, not on earth, where he "lives forever to make intercession" for us. Christ is a "priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek" (Heb. 6:20) and he is a fitting minister in the Temple IN HEAVEN.

1 John 3:5 - The context shows that we become what we imitate. If we base our hope in him who is pure, we become pure (1 John 3:3). If we commit sin we become lawless,

because sin is lawlessness (1 John 3:4). Christ did not know sin took away sin (1 John 3:5). Therefore, no one who sins remains in him or knows Christ (because he did not know sin and he took away sin). It does not say, "Christ took away sin because he did not have sin."

Objection #3 - All have sinned.

Protestants argue that Scripture explicitly states that everyone sins without exception. Therefore, Mary must have sinned.

Romans 3:23 - "all have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God."

Romans 5:12 - "Therefore, just as through one person sin entered the world, and through sin, death, and thus death came to all, inasmuch as all sinned —"

Answer: First, if all without exception sinned than Jesus sinned. No one would agree to that. Therefore, these statements that "all have sinned" must be speaking in general terms and not without any exceptions.

Notice also that Paul says, "have sinned." He is not talking about Original Sin because he would have used sin as a noun since Original Sin is a state not an action. He should have said, "all are in a state of sin." Instead, he uses an action verb "have sinned." This means that he is speaking of what Catholics call "actual sin" that is sins that are committed by our actions or inactions (as is the case with sins of omission).

Is it true that every human being has committed actual sin? What about unborn babies, or the retarded, or those in comas, or still borns, or those who die before the age of reason? Did they commit actual sins? No. As you can see, there are an awful lot of exceptions to this statement even though Paul does not qualify it.

We have already laid down the case for the Immaculate Conception in the other section. Therefore, there is ample reason to believe there is an exception with Mary as well.

Moreover, the context, especially of Romans 3:23 reveals that he is not speaking about the universal sinfulness of man, but only that being a member of Jewish religion (or the pagan religions) will not guarantee that you will be righteous and in Heaven. The Jews are not excused from accepting Jesus as the Christ and being saved through faith. They need it just as much as the gentiles. Otherwise, as Paul asks in Romans 3:29 - "Does God belong to Jews alone? Does he not belong to Gentiles, too?"

I did not include Romans 3:1ff (e.g. "no one is righteous no not one") since we have already gone over this in our section on Justification. However, they will use it and you should be familiar with them.

Romans 5:12 - "Therefore, just as through one person sin entered the world, and through sin, death, and thus death came to all, inasmuch as all sinned —"

death came to all, inasmuch as all sinned... Notice that death did not come to all in the Old Testament.

Genesis 5:23-24 - "The whole lifetime of Enoch was three hundred and sixty-five years. Then Enoch walked with God, and he was no longer here, for God took him."

2 Kings 2:11 - "As they walked on conversing, a flaming chariot and flaming horses came between them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind."

If all did not die, than all did not sin. That is the way Paul qualifies it as "in as much as all sinned." We will examine the "death" of Mary in our section on the Assumption.

Objection #4 - Mary needed a Savior

Protestants argue that if Mary was immaculately conceived she did not need a Savior because she was "already saved." However, Mary herself says that she does have a Savior:

Luke 1:47 - "My spirit rejoices in God my savior."

Protestants reason that since Mary had a Savior, she had to have been in need of saving. Therefore, she was a sinner like all of us.

Answer: For a thoughtful Protestant, this verse is more of a mystery than an apologetic against the Immaculate Conception. If Mary has a savior, she must have been saved. When was she saved? It must have been prior (not after) the angel approached her since he states that she has "already been graced by God" (*kecharitomena*). Yet, we know that Mary (like all Jewish girls of marrying age) was quite young. How much prior to the angel's visit did she come to "saving faith?" Moreover, can such a young girl really make an act of faith since she probably would not have reached the age of reason by this time.

Of course, even if Mary was immaculately conceived, it doesn't follow that she would not have been saved by God since the Immaculate Conception IS the act by which Mary is saved from Original Sin.

Theologians call the Immaculate Conception a "preservative miracle." It was done in the view of Christ's passion and death. God prevented her from the lot that was due as a child of Eve by infusing her with a soul that was already in a state of grace. Much like a person can be saved from a pit in two ways: one can either be pulled out of a pit or be prevented from falling into a pit. Mary was saved by the latter means. We all are saved by the former means. Both people are saved, but in different ways.

One can also see by this analogy that of the two ways of being saved. The latter is superior to the former. Since it is better not to fall in a pit at all than to have fallen and be pulled out. The salvation that Mary received is far superior to us and therefore God's saving act in Mary is far greater as well. Therefore, God really was her savior!

There is another difficulty with the Immaculate Conception because there is a difficulty with how Protestants understand Original Sin. For them, it is a corruption of our nature and soul. For Catholics, it is a corruption of our soul and a wounding of our nature.

Jesus is also said to rebuke Mary at the wedding feast at Cana calling her "Woman." Catholic and Protestant scholars agree that there is nothing derogatory in Jesus' words. Had Jesus wished to rebuke Mary, he would not have followed her request to change water into wine.

-In Brief-

1) Jesus is like us in all things but sin. Protestants unknowingly add "because He is God." When Catholics claim Mary to be without sin, Protestants hear in this doctrine the claim of divinity.

2) Mary's Immaculate Conception is not something outside of God's order. God created all things good and it was through sin that we are born with Original Sin.

3) Romans 3:23 - "All have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God," is part of Paul's argument in Romans that the circumcised Jews who follow the law will not escape God's judgment. Hence "all" (i.e. Jews and Gentiles) have sinned." The word "all" is used in the distributive sense.

4) Romans 3:23 is speaking about actual sin (using the verb) not Original Sin (which would have used a noun saying "All are in the state of sin."). We know that not everyone has committed actual sin (e.g. Infants who die at birth, Jesus, children who die before the age of reason, the mentally disabled). Therefore, it must admit exceptions and the only question is whether Mary could be an exception. Being the New Eve, we have good grounds to believe so.

5) Luke 1:47 – Mary states that God is her savior. One does not need a savior unless one needed to be saved. This is true for Mary as well. Only God saved her preemptively by not allowing her to be born with Original Sin.

6) Jesus is also said to rebuke Mary at the wedding feast at Cana calling her "Woman." Catholic and Protestant scholars agree that there is nothing derogatory in Jesus' words. Had Jesus wished to rebuke Mary, he would not have followed her request to change water into wine.

Mary: Mother of God

The definition that Mary is Mother of God came from the Council of Ephesus in 431 AD against the Nestorians.

Nestorious correctly affirmed that Jesus is a divine person - the Second Person of the Trinity. He also correctly confirmed that he had a divine nature as well. In other words, he was fully God. Where Nestorious erred is in understanding Christ's humanity. He believed that Jesus not only had human nature, but that he was a human person as well.

Before we continue, it is important to lay-down a proper understanding of person and nature. The best and simplest way to do this is to use the words "who" and "what."

Who am I? We would answer this question with a name. You are so-and-so. "Who" refers to the person who lives or does things. When someone asks, "Who left his paper on my desk?" You do not answer, "A human left it." You answer, "Gary (or whoever) left it" When I do something, it is the person who does it.

When we ask "what" something is, we are enquiring about its nature. What is Gary? Gary is a human. A person operates through its nature. A human can do all the things a human can do. Humans are both elevated (they can do a lot of things other objects in creation cannot do) and they are also limited (e.g. humans cannot breath underwater because it is not in our nature to do so).

Therefore, when we ask "What is Jesus?" We are asking what is t he nature of Jesus. The answer is that Jesus is true God and true man. When we ask "Who is Jesus?" We are asking about the Person of Christ. Who is it that saved us? The answer is the Second Person of the Trinity. Jesus is a divine person.

The problem with Nestorious was that he attempt to reject both Arianism (that denied Christ's divine personhood and nature) and Docetism (that denied Christ's humanity). By affirming the two, he slipped into the error of affirming that Jesus was both God and man in his person (not just nature). He rejected the title 'Mother of God" because Mary did not give birth to God, but the God-man.

Protestant objections

1) Some Protestants, usually Fundamentalist, will deny the title "Mother of God" to Mary.

2) They object to this title because it is found no where in Scripture. If Mary was the Mother of God, the Bible would have taught us as much.

3) Another objection is that the title Mother of God implies that Mary is the origin of Christ's divine nature or Godhood. It elevates the dignity of Mary to divine status.

Many Protestants don't see the danger of saying that Mary gave birth to Jesus or the human nature of Christ. For them it is more accurate because it doesn't imply that Mary originated Christ's divinity and it doesn't touch on any important doctrine of the Christian Faith.

4) There are also some Protestants who will understand the background of the title, but say it ought not to be used simply because it could cause confusion and err. Therefore, it is best not to speak of Mary's divine maternity at all.

Answer to Objection #1

The claim that the title "Mother of God' should be rejected because it is not in Scripture is false. There are many terms that Protestants use as a touchstone of orthodoxy that are not in Scripture. Protestants speak of the "Trinity," "accepting Christ as Personal Lord and Savior,"

"the Rapture," "Age of reason," "Christianing," "Extrinsic righteousness," "altar call" and a whole host of terms that are found no where in the Scripture. Of course, Protestants will insist that these "words" may not be in Scripture, but their concepts are taught there. The same is true with Mary as Mother of God.

Touchstone of Christological Orthodoxy

Christological Heresies	Mother of God Refutes
Arianism - The belief that Jesus is only man and not God both in person and nature. He did however have a divine indwelling of the Trinity.	According to Arianism, Mary is the mother of a human person, but Mother of God speaks of a divine person.
Adoptionism - The belief that Jesus is only the adopted son of God. He is not co-eternal with the Father. He was elevated to 'Godhood" at his baptism.	According to Adoptionism, Mary gave birth to a human person who later became God. Mother of God places Christ divinity at birth.
Docetism / Gnosticism - The belief that Jesus had only a divine nature. His human nature was an illusion or phantom. Therefore, he only appeared to die on the Cross.	According to Docetism, Mary was not Jesus' mother since he did not have a human nature. But Mary's motherhood prevents this understanding.
Apollinarianism - The belief that Jesus had a divine mind and soul only, but not a human mind and soul. Therefore, he was not fully human.	According to Apollinarianism, Mary is only partly a mother because Jesus was not fully human. They would not accept this definition.
Ebionism - The belief that Jesus was a human prophet.	According to Ebionism, Jesus is not God.
Eutychianism - The belief that Jesus was "theanthropic" - he possessed a mixture of divine / human natures. Therefore, he was part human and part divine, but not fully human and fully divine.	According to Eutychianism, Mary was not fully Jesus' mother nor is Jesus fully God. Mother of God unambigously asserts both truths.
Nestorianism - The belief that Jesus is a divine and a human person that possesses divine and human natures.	According to Nestorianism, Mary is the mother of the God-man since Jesus is both a human person and a divine person. Mother of God asserts that Jesus is a divine person only.

While Scripture does not explicitly call Mary "Mother of God" it does come very close.

Luke 1:42-43 reads, "[4]Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the **mother of my Lord** should come to me?

It may be dangerous to push these words too far, but they suggest that she is calling Mary "mother of my God" for two reasons:

First, the Greek literally says, "the mother of the Lord of me towards me."
The presences of the article, "the Lord" instead of simply "lord" may indicate she is talking about a specific person namely either God or the Messiah (or both since she is filled with the Holy Spirit).

Second, the Jews would many times replace the name of God with the word "Lord." So,

Elizabeth's declaration could be in reference to God rather than a ruler.

Answer to Objection #2 -

Is it true that Mother of God implies that Mary is the origin of Christ's divinity?

People can imagine any kind of meaning to any term or religious teaching. Look at the New Age movement, or the Mormons or the Jehovah's Witnesses. They all use the term "Trinity," but they do so in completely heterodox ways. What matters is how this term is defined and understood.

For this definition, we go to the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

466 The Nestorian heresy regarded Christ as a human person joined to the divine person of God's Son. Opposing this heresy, St. Cyril of Alexandria and the third ecumenical council, at Ephesus in 431, confessed "that the Word, uniting to himself in his person the flesh animated by a rational soul, became man." Christ's humanity has no other subject than the divine person of the Son of God, who assumed it and made it his own, from his conception. For this reason the Council of Ephesus proclaimed in 431 that Mary truly became the Mother of God by the human conception of the Son of God in her womb: "Mother of God, not that the nature of the Word or his divinity received the beginning of its existence from the holy Virgin, but that, since the holy body, animated by a rational soul, which the Word of God united to himself according to the hypostasis, was born from her, the Word is said to be born according to the flesh."

In the very text in which Ephesus defines "Mother of God" it states that this DOES NOT imply that she originated Christ's divinity.

Answer to Objection #3

Protestants who do not see the importance of this title ought to look at the table on the previous page. It is this title that secures the most orthodox understanding of who Christ is and what is his nature. If they have problems with it, they likely have an erroneous understanding of Christ.

As for its importance, one ought to walk them through the implications of Nestorianism.

First, what is Nestorianism really? It essentially teaches that Jesus was a human person who was "possessed" by God. In other words, he had another person living within him, sometimes directing his thoughts and actions and sometimes not.

Let's consider this in light of the crucifixion. Christ saves us by dying on a Cross. Who saves us? Did a human person offer himself on the Cross or God? Did a human save us? If a human person saved us, than what need is there for the Incarnation? If God saved us, how do we know that this particular action is God's and not the human Jesus? How do we know any action is not purely human? Are there some actions of Christ that we ought not to follow and some that are?

Scripture affirms that it is God who is our Savior, not a man possessed by God. Read the Book of Titus and see how, in Paul's thought God is our Savior and Jesus is our Savior. They are the same and interchangeable and not distinct.

Answer to Objection #4

It is true that Mother of God could be understood incorrectly and that there is a danger in this. However, the same is true for any term (even though in Scripture).

I would propose that the danger seems great to Protestants and not to Catholics because many Protestants believe Catholics "worship Mary" or raise her to the same level as Jesus.

The teaching in this regard is unambiguous and the title Mother of God has been used for so long that it is not really prone to misunderstanding except maybe with the ignorant. But we should not give up titles that are true and clear because those who are uninstructed (or were instructed incorrectly) misunderstand it. If that were true, all Christian terminology should be rejected as well. What we need to do is correct those who have a false misunderstanding and Protestants should help out in the task.

-In Brief-

1) The title Mary: Mother of God is more of a declaration about who and what Jesus is than a statement about Mary.

2) Definition: Person – "Who" a person is or performs an action.

3) Definition: Nature – "What" a person is.

4) Who is Jesus? He is the Second Person of the Trinity. What is Jesus? Jesus possesses two natures – Divine and Human nature.

5) In reaction to a heresy that mixed together the human and divine natures of Christ, Nestorius so separated the two natures of Christ so as to make him into two persons. Orthodox Catholics, when asked "who" Mary gave birth to would answer "God." Nestorius would not allow this.

6) A good way to describe to Protestants what Nestorians taught is to say that "Jesus was a man who was possessed by God" like a person may be possessed by the devil. The human Jesus had another person in him directing him.

7) Luke 1:42 – Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit and asks how "The Mother of my Lord" should come to me. If Elizabeth meant Yahweh when she said "Lord" then we have a declaration of this doctrine in Scripture.

8) Protestants sometimes do not have any problem with calling Mary Mother of God per se. They only object to its use because it may lead Catholics to misunderstand Mary's role and think that she is a goddess. Of course, No Catholic believes this. Also, there is always a danger in any terminology of misuse or misunderstanding. We do not, therefore, reject all terminology, but we are encouraged to teach people more clearly about its meaning so misunderstandings will be less likely.

Mary: Ever Virgin

How can Mary be "Ever Virgin" when the Bible claims that she had other children?

Matthew 13:55-56 (Mk 6:3)
Is he not the carpenter's son? Is not his mother named Mary and his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas? Are not his sisters all with us? Where did this man get all this?"

Matthew 12:46-48
While he was still speaking to the crowds, his mother and his brothers appeared outside, wishing to speak with him. (Someone told him, "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, asking to speak with you.") But he said in reply to the one who told him, "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?"

John 2:12
After this, he and his mother, (his) brothers, and his disciples went down to Capernaum and stayed there only a few days.

John 7:3-5
So his brothers said to him, "Leave here and go to Judea, so that your disciples also may see the works you are doing. No one works in secret if he wants to be known publicly. If you do these things, manifest yourself to the world." For his brothers did not believe in him.

Acts 1:14
All these devoted themselves with one accord to prayer, together with some women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

Did Mary have other children? What we are dealing with is what I call a "biblical illusion." When translating from one language to another, it is important not only to give the words that were used but also their meaning. Languages often use roundabout ways of saying things that do not make sense in other languages. For example, if I said "I need to go to the *bathroom*." Taken literally, one would expect me to need to take a bath instead of use the toilet. The same type of idioms and turns of phrases are used, perhaps more frequently, in ancient languages. A problem lies then when someone picks up a Bible that is literalistic in its translations (in other words it doesn't interpret these unique ways of saying things) and he or she reads and interprets it like they would any other modern text. The problem is that the Bible isn't a modern text. Therefore, the Bible seems to be saying things that it really isn't. The best example of this type of "biblical illusion" is the "brothers/sisters of the Lord."

A quick way to show that "brother" and "sister" doesn't mean what we commonly understand it to be is to define the terms "brother" and "sister." What do they mean? A brother or sister is one who shares the same mother and father. Now ask the question, "Can Jesus really have "brothers" or "sisters" in the strict modern sense of those words?" No. Even if these siblings were the children of Mary they would only be half-brothers or half-sisters because they cannot share the same father as Jesus. Jesus was born via the Virgin Birth. Therefore, even from the Protestant perspective, brothers and sisters must mean a more distant relation than these words are commonly used today.

The question is not whether these words can denote more distant blood relations, but rather how distant of a relation can these words denote. The following page gives examples of the use of the word brother (*adelphos*) and sister (*adelphe*).

By comparing Gen 14:14 with 11:26-7, we find that Lot, called Abram's "brother", is actually his nephew.

Genesis 14:14
When Abram heard that his nephew [*Adelphos*] had been captured, he mustered three hundred and eighteen of his retainers, born in his house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan."

Genesis 11:26-27
"When Terah was seventy years old, he became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran. This is the record of the descendants of Terah. Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran, and Haran became the father of Lot."

Jacob is called the "brother" of his Uncle Laban (Gen 29:10,15).

Genesis 29:10,15
As soon as Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of his uncle [brother] Laban, with the sheep of his uncle Laban, he went up, rolled the stone away from the mouth of the well, and watered his uncle's sheep...Laban said to him: "Should you serve me for nothing just because you are a relative [brother] of mine? Tell me what your wages should be."

Cis and Eleazar are described as "brethren", whereas they are cousins (1 Chron 23:21-2).

"The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. The sons of Mahli: Eleazar and Kish.... Eleazar died leaving no sons, only daughters; the sons [brothers] of Kish, their kinsmen, married them."

By comparing Mt 27:56; Mk 15:40; and Jn 19:25, we find that James and Joseph - mentioned in Mt 13:55 with Simon and Jude as Jesus' "brethren" - are also called sons of Mary, wife of Clopas. This other Mary (Mt 27:61; 28:1) is called Mary's "*adelphe*" in Jn 19:25 (two Marys in one family?! - thus even this usage apparently means "cousins" or more distant relative). Mt 13:55 and Mk 6:3 mention Simon, Jude and "sisters" along with James and Joseph, calling all "*adelphoi*". Since we know that James and Joseph are not Jesus' blood brothers, it is likely that all these other "brethren" are cousins, according to the linguistic conventions discussed above.

What about **Matthew 1:25** that claims that Mary had normal relations with Joseph after the birth of Christ:

"He had no relations with her until she bore a son, and he named him Jesus."

But does "until" mean that a change occurred?

1 Sam 15:35
And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death (KJV)

2 Sam 6:23
Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death.

Matthew 12:20
A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory

Romans 8:22
For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now

1 Timothy 4:13
"Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine"

1 Timothy 6:14
That thou keep *this* commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ

Revelation 2:25
But that which ye have *already* hold fast till I come

-In Brief-

1) The New Testament speaks of Jesus' brothers and sisters. Protestants infer from this that they must be the "other children of Mary."

2) Even Protestants cannot take brothers and sisters in the strict sense because to be a brother or sister means that you share the same mother and Father. But Jesus only had a human mother. The best these siblings could be is half-brothers or half-sisters. If brothers and sisters can be stretched to also include half-brothers and half-sisters, how far does Scripture strength the meaning of these words.

3) Hebrew is very limited in its ability to speak about different degrees of blood relations. The words "brothers" and "sisters' can refer to aunts, uncles, cousins, nephews, and even tribes or people that agree with you. The same is true with the New Testament.

4) In John 19, Jesus entrusts his mother to the John. But John is only Jesus' cousin. If brother existed, Jesus would have been legally bound to entrust his mother to them, but he didn't.

5) John 7:3-5 Jesus' brothers gave him advice. In ancient Eastern culture, it would have been unthinkable that a young brother would give advice to the eldest brother. This implies that these brothers were older than Jesus.

6) The brothers and sisters are never explicitly said to be Mary's children. They are only mentioned in relation to Jesus.

7) At the Foot of the Cross, there are two Mary's – The Virgin Mary and another Mary would is the mother of some of the "brethren of the Lord." Therefore, it is impossible for these "brothers" to be half-brothers. They may be cousins or more distant relations.

8) Matthew 1:25 mentions Joseph not having relations with Mary until she bore a son. But this until does not mean what it might implies. Until could mean that it reaches that thing itself without passing it. See 1 Sam 15:35; 2 Sam 6:23; Matthew 12:20; Romans 8:22 ; 1 Timothy 4:13 ; 1 Timothy 6:14; Revelation 2:25.

The Assumption of Mary / Mother of All Christians

Definition - Munificentissimus Deus by Pope Pius XII

"[W]e pronounce, declare, and define it to be a divinely revealed dogma: that the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory."

Objection #1 - Mary was a sinner:
Anti-Catholics argue that Mary's death proves that she was a sinner since death is the curse given to Adam and Eve for sinning.

Answer: The definition leaves open the possibility that Mary may or may not have died.

While it is true that a sinful person dies, the converse is not necessarily true (i.e. a sinless person cannot die). Jesus is sinless yet He died on the Cross. It's possible for Mary to have died because, as Pope John Paul II has noted, she may have wished to follow her Son in everything.

Objection #2 - No one, other than Jesus, rose to Heaven: Scripture never speaks of bodies being taken into Heaven.

Answer: Wrong. There are three instances of people who were taken body and soul into Heaven: Enoch, Elijah and Moses.

Enoch: Then Enoch walked with God, and he was no longer here, for God took him (Genesis 5:24).

Elijah: As they walked on conversing, a flaming chariot and flaming horses came between them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind (1 Kings 2:11)

Moses is a little different. We know from Scripture that Moses died and was buried (Duet. 34:5-7). However, Jude 1:9 says, "Yet the archangel Michael, when he argued with the devil in a dispute over the body of Moses, did not venture to pronounce a reviling judgment upon him but said, 'May the Lord rebuke you!'" It was not the Will of the Father for Moses to remain buried, so God took him. Although Scripture does not tell us God took Moses to Heaven, he is seen with Elijah the prophet (who was also taken bodily to heaven) conversing with Jesus at the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:3-4).

Note also that we have examples of both live and dead people being taken up to Heaven. Therefore, regardless of how Mary finished her life, there is biblical precedence.

It is not proper for a holy person's body to be corrupted (Act 2:24-28). Although St. Peter quotes this Psalm (16:8-11) as being Messianic in that it most fully applies to Christ's Resurrection, it can have a secondary application to the saints as well. Indeed, Christianity is well aware of saints whose bodies remained free of corruption.

Mary differs from Enoch, Moses and Elijah in that they were taken by God out of Mercy while Mary's Assumption was the fruit of her cooperation with Christ.

Remember Genesis 3, it was not enough for Eve to believe the Serpent to bring about the Fall. She had to cooperate with the devil's plan completely for it to be fulfilled and she reaped the fruits of her work - a curse and death. Mary did not only believe, but she had to cooperate with God's plan entirely and through the Assumption she reaped the fruit of her actions.

Objection #3 - Scripture is silent:
Scripture says nothing about Mary being assumed into Heaven.

Answer: Revelation 12:1ff reads:

"A great sign appeared in the sky, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.

She was with child and wailed aloud in pain as she labored to give birth. Then another sign appeared in the sky; it was a huge red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on its heads were seven diadems. Its tail swept away a third of the stars in the sky and hurled them down to the earth. Then the dragon stood before the woman about to give birth, to devour her child when she gave birth. She gave birth to a son, a male child, destined to rule all the nations with an iron rod. Her child was caught up to God and his throne."

Let's try to identify the characters in this passage. We know who the dragon is since Revelation 12:9 tells us that it is the devil and the "ancient Serpent" (Genesis 3). Next, who is the "male child, destined to rule all the nations with an iron rod?" This is a messianic reference in Psalm 2:9. Clearly, the male child is Christ. Then who is Christ's mother? The Woman must be Mary. Note the employment of Genesis 3:15 imagery here in Revelation 12.

But note that the woman is seen IN HEAVEN with a body (she has a head, clothing and feet). Nowhere prior to this section in the Book of Revelation does one find people with bodies in Heaven. They are all like the souls crying for vengeance in Revelation 6:9. They have no bodies. Therefore, Revelation 12:1 demonstrates that Mary was taken to Heaven bodily.

Objection #4 - Revelations 12 is not Mary: Some Bibles say that this is not Mary. Moreover, Revelation 12:2 says that she "labored in pain." Yet, labor pains is part of the curse for sin.

Answer: Although some bible commentators claim this cannot be Mary, they never offer any reason for this statement. There is nothing in this text that forbids a Marian interpretation. Indeed, the text itself cries out for Mary to be the Woman.

In regards to the "labor pains," one must be more cautious in interpreting its meaning. We can identify the characters with certainty since the text is most explicit about who they are. As for the details of the text, we are a bit more at a loss. In Scripture, "labor pains" is used quite often in a symbolic sense as well as a literal. For example, the apostles grief and joy are likened to a woman in labor (John 16:20). Paul states that all of creation is in "labor pains" in order to bring forth the children of God (Rom. 8:22). Likewise, in Galatians 4:19, Paul speaks of his instruction as being in labor. Any kind of tribulation is likened to labor pains (see Matthew 24.8; Mk 13.8; 1 Thes. 5:3). Therefore, "labor pains" may point to some other trial, tribulation, grief or strong desire.

Another lesser proof is based upon Mary as the new Ark of the Covenant (see section on the Immaculate Conception). We know that the Ark was made of incorruptible wood, adorned with pure gold, and it was placed in God's Temple (2 Samuel 6). If the Old Testament Ark found its place in God's Temple on earth, what happened to the New Testament Ark? It was placed in God's Temple in Heaven.

Objection #5 - Early Church does not mention it:
The Church Fathers do not mention the Assumption of Mary until very late.

Answer: It is true that the patristic evidence is late (4th-5th century). But when they are mentioned they are consistent, found over a widespread area and show no signs of being a recent innovation. Therefore, they all must have stemmed from a common source much earlier than their dates.

There is also the fact that the bodies of the early saints were protected and Christians would often visit their burial sites. For example, the tombs of the Apostles are well known. However, this is not true for Mary. There are two places that claim to be her resting place but neither of them claim to have her body. Certainly, the tomb of the Mother of God would have been venerated from earliest times, but there is no such claimant.

Mary: Mother of All Christians.

All acknowledge that Jesus is the Seed of Genesis 3:15. But we have also seen in Paul that all Christians, by God's grace, likewise are the Seed that crushes the head of the Serpent (Romans 16:20). It is our radical union with Christ through the Sacraments that make us one body with him. What, therefore, are the implications for us?

In Revelation 12, how many children does the Woman have? Many answer that "She had one - the male child." But this is not true. Although the Woman gives birth to only one child, she has many.

Revelation 12:17 - "Then the dragon became angry with the woman and went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring [Seed], those who keep God's commandments and bear witness to Jesus."

The Greek uses "Seed" in the singular not the plural. The Woman has one "seed' but many children. So it is with Mary. How many times was Mary a mother? Once, right? Nope. She becomes a mother a second time at the foot of the Cross:

John 19:26: "When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son.'"

Note: Jesus calls his mother "woman" and he gives her his "beloved disciple" as a son. Who are Christ's beloved disciples? We are. John 19:26 is a fulfillment of Genesis 3:15 in that we all are the "seed" of the Woman.

-In Brief-

1) Anti-Catholics argue that Mary must have sinned if she died since death is the penalty for sin. Whether Mary died or not is an open question in Catholicism. We really don't know. What we do know is that the early Church cherished the bones of the saints and no country claims to have the body of Mary only her empty tomb. If Mary did die, it was because she was perfectly united to her Son and wished to enter Heaven the same way he did. Moreover, Jesus (who did not sin) nevertheless died. Therefore, it is possible for a sinless person to die.

2) Anti-Catholics claim that something like the Assumption is impossible and unbiblical. They forget that Enoch was taken bodily into Heaven as was the prophet Elijah. On the mount of Transfiguration both Moses and Elijah are seen in their bodies talking to Jesus. Jewish tradition holds that Moses died and his body was taken up into Heaven (see Jude 1:9).

3) Mary's Assumption is the consequence of her cooperating with God's plan and reaping the benefits of God's actions. Eve sinned and reaped the penalty for sin – death and corruption. Mary cooperated with God and reaped the benefit of grace – everlasting life and incorruption.

4) Revelation 12:1ff shows Mary bodily in Heaven (she has a head, feet and a body). Although this text may also refer to the Old Testament Church, it must also include Mary. There is no way to exclude her from this image since she is, after all, the one who gave birth to the male-child.

5) Revelations 12 also teaches that Mary is the mother of all Christians. At the beginning of the chapter, Mary gives birth only to her son. At the end of the Chapter, she is said to have other children – those who keep the commandments of God and bear witness to Christ.

6) In John 19, Mary becomes the mother of the beloved disciple and she becomes his mother. All faithful Christians are Christ's beloved disciples. Therefore, Mary is the mother of all Christians.

Intercession of the Saints

Protestant Rejections:

The intercession of the Saints is a doctrine commonly rejected by Protestantism for mainly four reasons: (1) It is believed that by asking the saints in heaven to pray for us, we are detracting from the unique mediation of Jesus. (2) It is interpreted as "worship" since the highest form of "worship" a Protestant can offer is prayer to God. (3) the Bible condemns "necromancy" or "communication with the dead." (4) The Bible does not command us to pray to the dead or there is no example in the New Testament of Christians doing so.

These points are easily dismissed.

Objection #1 - Prayer detracts from the "unique mediation of Christ."

1 Timothy 2:5 is usually quoted to back up this contention. It reads: "For there is one God. There is also one mediator between God and the human race, Christ Jesus, himself human..."

Answer: It is true and it must be granted that Christ's mediation as true God and true man is unique and it cannot be duplicated by any creator. However, 1 Timothy 2:5 is not teaching that since Christ has this unique mediation others cannot intercede for one another... and 1 Timothy 2:1-5 proves it. The preceding context reads: "First of all, then, I ask that supplications, prayers, petitions, and thanksgivings be offered for everyone, for kings and for all in authority, that we may lead a quiet and tranquil life in all devotion and dignity. This is good and pleasing to God our savior, who wills everyone to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth. For there is one God. There is also one mediator between God and the human race, Christ Jesus, himself human..."

It is Christ's unique mediatorship as the God-man that we can intercede for one another effectively. Being united to Christ in Baptism, our petitions are offered with Christ and are pleasing to the Father. Intercession does not detract from Christ, but rather Christ's unique mediatorship is the basis for our intercessions.

Objection #2 - Prayer is worship due to God alone.

Answer: If asking someone to pray for us is idolatry, than all Christian who pray for one another are also committing idolatry. We are commanded over and over again in Scripture to pray for one another.

The main problem with this objection is language. The word "pray" in English has developed over the years. Not too long ago it was common to hear someone use the word "pray" for "please" (i.e. as a petition). For example, one may say, "Pray, pass the salt." If you don't believe me, read a Sherlock Holmes novel or the poetry of Edgar Allen Poe. When Catholics speak of "praying" to the saints, we mean it in the more archaic fashion. We are asking the saints to pray to God for us. The modern sense of the word "pray" connotes asking God to provide for us from his own power. Praying, in this sense, is only proper for God. Once this is cleared up, non-Catholics usually will move on to the next point.

Objection #3 - Prayer is Necromancy

Answer: It is true that the Bible condemns communication with the dead. The Catechism condemns it as well:

2117 All practices of *magic* or *sorcery*, by which one attempts to tame occult powers, so as to place them at one's service and have a supernatural power over others - even if this were for the sake of restoring their health - are gravely contrary to the virtue of religion. These practices are even more to be condemned when accompanied by the intention of harming someone, or when they have recourse to the intervention of demons. Wearing charms is also reprehensible. *Spiritism* often implies divination or magical practices; the Church for her part warns the faithful against it. Recourse to so-called traditional cures does not justify either the

invocation of evil powers or the exploitation of another's credulity."

Two things have to be present for the sin of "Spiritism" or "Necromancy" to take place. First, the person must be dead and second the use of a technique to make the dead present so as to receive a communication. Neither condition is present in the prayers to the saints.

The saints aren't dead! As we will see in our Biblical proofs, the saints are alive and well in heaven. They are not, as it were, trapped in Sheol or Hades awaiting Christ. Christ has come. Never buy the line that the saints are dead. They are more alive in Christ now than they were on earth.

The second point is a bit more subtle in that we are not attempting to communicate with the dead like King Saul and the Witch of Endor (1 Sam. 28:12). We are merely asking the saints, in Christ, to pray for us to God. There is no effort to make them appear to us or to communicate to us. It is entirely placed in God's hands from beginning to end.

Objection #4 - There is no Scripture proof.

Answer: There are a number of Scriptural arguments that can be made to demonstrate the intercession of the saints. Let's examine each one in turn.

(1) The Bible explicitly teaches that those in heaven pray for us.

2 Maccabees 15:13 - "Onias then said of him, "**This is God's prophet Jeremiah, who loves his brethren and fervently prays for his people and their holy city."** Stretching out his right hand, Jeremiah presented a gold sword to Judas. As he gave it to him he said..."

Jeremiah continually prays for God's people hundreds of years after his death. This text explicitly teaches saintly intercession.

Of course, Protestants will not accept this verse because it comes from the Deuterocanon. The canon is one of the strongest cases one can make as a Catholic apologist. The only reason Maccabees was rejected by Protestants was because it taught Catholic doctrine.

2634 Intercession is a prayer of petition which leads us to pray as Jesus did. He is the one intercessor with the Father on behalf of all men, especially sinners. He is "able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them." The Holy Spirit "himself intercedes for us . . . and intercedes for the saints according to the will of God."

956 *The intercession of the saints*. "Being more closely united to Christ, those who dwell in heaven fix the whole Church more firmly in holiness. . . . They do not cease to intercede with the Father for us, as they proffer the merits which they acquired on earth through the one mediator between God and men, Christ Jesus. . . . So by their fraternal concern is our weakness greatly helped."

1369 *The whole Church is united with the offering and intercession of Christ*. Since he has the ministry of Peter in the Church, the *Pope* is associated with every celebration of the Eucharist, wherein he is named as the sign and servant of the unity of the universal Church. The *bishop* of the place is always responsible for the Eucharist, even when a *priest* presides; the bishop's name is mentioned to signify his presidency over the particular Church, in the midst of his presbyterium and with the assistance of *deacons*. The community intercedes also for all ministers who, for it and with it, offer the Eucharistic sacrifice .

(2) The New Testament, likewise, also depicts saints in heaven interceding.

Revelation 5:8 - "When he took it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each of the elders held a harp and gold bowls filled with incense, which are the prayers of the holy ones."

Revelation 8:3 - "Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a gold censer. He was given a great quantity of incense to offer, along with the prayers of all the holy ones, on the gold

altar that was before the throne."

Here we have two instances of men and angels offering "prayers of all the holy ones" in heaven. But whose prayers are these that are being offered? Are they the saints on earth or are they the saints in heaven? Really, it doesn't matter either way. If they are the prayers of the saints on earth, than we have an explicit case for heavenly intercession. If it is the saints in heaven, then these prayers must be for those on earth since those in heaven do not need prayers. Either way, it is a "win / win" situation.

(3) The saints in heaven pray for us because they are still members of the Body of Christ.

1 Cor. 12:22-27 - "Indeed, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are all the more necessary, and those parts of the body that we consider less honorable we surround with greater honor, and our less presentable parts are treated with greater propriety, whereas our more presentable parts do not need this. **But God has so constructed the body** as to give greater honor to a part that is without it, **so that there may be no division in the body, but that the parts may have the same concern for one another**. If (one) part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy. Now you are Christ's body, and individually parts of it."

Those who die are still member of Christ's Body. According to Paul, all the parts of the Body "have the same concern for one another." Indeed, the rich man, after he had died and went to a place of torment, nevertheless was concerned about his brothers (Luke 16:28) and he asks Abraham to warn them. If this is true of the rich man in torment, how much more concern do those in glory have for the saints on earth? The rich man was asking Abraham's intercession. Surely, he did not believe that Abraham could raise Lazarus from the dead! He must have understood that Lazarus would pray to God for this to come about. Interestingly enough, Jesus raises a person named Lazarus. Could this parable be about him? Did Abraham pray to God?

(4) If the prayers of sinners is effective, how much more so those in heaven? James 5:16 says, "The fervent prayer of a righteous person is very powerful." In heaven, the saints are completely righteous (Protestants believe both imputed and actual). Therefore, they are best suited for prayers.

(5) All the components for prayers to the saints are present in the New Testament.

a) We are commanded to pray for one another (James 5:15, 1 Tim. 2:5, et al.)

b) The saints in heaven are concerned about us (1 Cor. 12:22-27, Luke 16:28, et al.).

c) Their prayers are most effective (James 5:15)

d) Saints in heaven *are* offering prayers (Revelation 5:8, 8:3).

e) The saints in heaven are aware of what is happening on earth (Revelation 6:9-10, Hebrews 12:1).

It is sometimes argued that the saints in heaven, being mere creatures, could not be able to hear and understand all the prayers offered on earth.

There are two good answers to this objection. First, life in heaven is not the same as here on earth. They are, in a sense, outside of time. Therefore, they may not have the same limitations that we do here on earth. It may be possible for them to hear (what is for us) many things at once.

Hebrews 12:1 provides the second example. It reads, speaking of the Old Testament saints: "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses..." What does Paul mean by "great cloud?" Is he just using flowery language, or is it Biblically based? If one were to do a word study in Scripture of the use of the word "cloud" one would find that it is used in two ways. Either for real clouds (e.g. dust clouds or clouds in the sky). The second use of "cloud" refers to a theophany (i.e. God is present on earth). Let's look at a couple examples:

Exodus 13:22 - "Neither the column of cloud by day nor the column of fire by night ever left its place in front of the people."

Exodus 16:10 - "When Aaron announced this to the whole Israelite community, they turned toward the desert, and lo, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud!"

Exodus 19:9
"The LORD also told him, "I am coming to you in a dense cloud, so that when the people hear me speaking with you, they may always have faith in you also."
(Also Ex. 20.21, 24.15-18, 33.9-10)

Exodux 40:34 - "Then the cloud covered the meeting tent, and the glory of the LORD filled the Dwelling."

(Also Lev. 16.2, 13; Num. 9-15-22; 1 Kings 8.10)

Psalm 97:2 - "Cloud and darkness surround the Lord; justice and right are the foundation of his throne."

Matthew 17:3-5 - "And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, conversing with him. Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud cast a shadow over them, then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him."

Here Moses and Elijah appear to Jesus and then a cloud casts a shadow on them and God's voice saying "this is my beloved Son."

Luke 21:27 - "And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."

Acts 1:9 - "When he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight."

What does Hebrew 12:1 teach us about the saints? They are in the theophany of God. When God is present, so is his heavenly court. When we pray to God we are in his presence:

Matthew 18:20 - " For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Romans 8.26 - " In the same way, the Spirit too comes to the aid of our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit itself intercedes with inexpressible groanings."

Matthew 6:6 - "But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you."

When we pray, God is present and those in his "cloud" witness our prayers. It is not difficult to see in this that the Bible does teach that the saints can and do hear our prayers.

Pragmatic Explanation:

We have mentioned earlier in our section on Mary that Protestants need a pragmatic element to help them incorporate doctrines into their theology. The logic of heavenly intercession evades them. Here is an interesting argument you may wish to use.

Let's establish some points that both Catholics and Protestants accept.

1) Sanctification (Protestant: Actual Sanctification) is becoming more like Christ. When we are holy we imitate Christ. 1 Peter 2.17

2) All the saints in heaven will be completely sanctified (Protestant: positional and actual).

3) Therefore, the saints in heaven must be imitating Christ perfectly and completely.

Problem: They cannot imitate Jesus in their suffering (1 Peter 2:17) because Christ does not suffer any longer nor do his saints suffer in heaven. How then do they imitate Christ? They must imitate Christ in his glory and what is Christ doing in his glory? Reigning and making intercessions:

Hebrews 7:25 - "Therefore, he is always able to save those who approach God through him, since he lives forever to make intercession for them."

So too, those who are perfectly and completely sanctified in heaven must also be making intercessions as well. Not as the God-man offering his body once for all in the Holy of

Holies in heaven, but as fellow priests offering incense, which is the prayers of the saints.

If saints do not intercede in heaven, then they do not perfectly imitate Christ, and by definition, they must not be perfectly sanctified. But Scripture teaches that all who are in heaven are perfectly sanctified:

Hebrews 14:12 - "Strive for peace with everyone, and for **that holiness without which no one will see the Lord.**"

Revelation 21:27 - "… but nothing unclean will enter it [the Holy Temple in heaven]."

Therefore, saints must be praying for us much like Christ is praying for us.

-In Brief-

1) If sanctification means being like Christ, then in Heaven we are perfectly like Christ. In this world, we are like Christ by suffering like he suffered. In Heaven, we are like Christ in that we intercede to the Father on the behalf of others.

2) Revelation 5:8 and 8:3 show angels and elders in Heaven offering prayers to God. Either they are their own prayers (which cannot be for themselves since they are in bliss so it must be for those on earth) or it is for those on earth.

3) 1 Cor. 12:22-27 teaches that all the members of the body of Christ have concern for one another and glory in each other. The saints who die are still members of Christ's body… indeed, they are more members than when they were here on earth.

4) If holiness affects the power of one's prayers here on earth (James 5) then those who are in Heaven must have very powerful prayers since they are perfected in holiness.

5) Scripture teaches that those who die still have concern for those who are alive and that they are aware of what is happening on earth.

6) Hebrews 12:1 shows us that the saints have access to us on earth through the presence of God. The "cloud" refers to a theophany (God present on earth).

Chapter Five

Predestination and Salvation

(How are we predestined to be saved?)

Predestination and Election

The doctrine of predestination is a difficult one. It is in many ways mysterious in that it opens up questions that God has not revealed the answers.

Predestination, in regards to salvation, can be broken down into three basic parts: how God chooses His elect, what is entailed in those who go to glory, what is entailed in those who are damned or reprobated.

How Does God Choose the Elect?

There are two major schools of thought within Catholicism as to how God chooses the Elect.

The first school of thought is that of Aquinas and Augustine which proposes that God chooses the Elect without any foresight as to any future merit or demerit.

The second school of thought is Molinists who propose that God's Election is based upon foreseen merits of the individual. This is proposed by theologians such as Suerez and others.

Catholics are permitted to hold either position. Protestants hold the first one and generally the topic of how God chooses rarely comes into play in Protestant apologetics.

Predestination of the Elect

From the beginning of time, God chooses us to be with him in glory. The logical outworking of this statement is that those who are predestined to glory cannot, not be in glory. In other words, by God choosing these people he must provide them with the graces to ensure that what he has chosen will be brought to completion. Catholics and Protestants agree with this proposition.

We often differ, however, in our belief that God wills all men to be saved:

1 Timothy 2:2-3 - "This is good and pleasing to God our savior, who wills everyone to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth".

Catholics believe that God gives all men sufficient grace for salvation. Therefore, everyone can potentially be one of the Elect, but not everyone makes it. Calvinists believe that God died only for the Elect and that there is a strict line between the Elect and the Reprobate.

The real hot spot comes from these two positions. Catholics believe, and the Bible teaches, that God calls or Elects us to grace. But, not everyone who is elected to grace is also elected to glory because people can be truly united to Christ and fall away.

Calvinists (and some Baptists) do not make this distinction. They would argue that all who are elected to grace are also elected to glory.

How are people reprobated?

The Catholic Church teaches that salvation is the free act of God. Damnation is the free act of men. Therefore, God is responsible for the salvation of men while individuals are responsible for their own fall.

Since sufficient grace is offered to all and not all are saved, it must be because individuals have rejected God's grace and died unrepentant. God allows these people to fall away, but he doesn't cause it since they have the ability and the gifts to succeed.

This runs counter to much of Protestant thought. Because Protestants believe in the Total Corruption of Man (that man does not have free will or that he cannot do any good even while in a state of grace), it follows that the damnation of some must be due to God's will. In other words, since we are saved by God's merciful sovereign selection apart from anything we do, others must be damned by God; that is damnation apart from anything we do since we are all damn-worthy by our nature.

Most Protestants will not draw out the logical conclusions of this - namely that God makes people sin. But Calvinists will.

This election to Glory and reprobation to damnation is called double predestination.

Predestination and Apologetics:

Much of the theology of predestination is built upon only a handful of passages and logical extrapolations from them. Indeed, the word Predestined is only used four times in the New Testament: Acts 4:28, Romans 8:29-30, 1 Corinthians 2:7, and Ephesians 1:3-12

It is impossible to define exactly what is meant by this word. Predestination seems to mean "fore-ordaining" or "pre-selecting."

It may be surprising to some that Protestants would put so much emphasis on something that is only used four times in the Scriptures. The fact is that in addition to these four uses, there are other related words such as calling, election and others. Here is where errors are made since those words are also used in senses other than the salvation or damnation of individual persons. As we will see in the next section, they can also apply to God's plan of salvation where nations, not individuals, are called and elected by God while others are destroyed. This confusion has led many people to become hardened double-predestinarians.

For now let's focus on these four uses in regards to whether they teach Election to grace and Election to Glory.

Acts 4:27-28 - "Indeed they gathered in this city against your holy servant Jesus whom you anointed, Herod and Pontius Pilate, together with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do what your hand and (your) will had long ago planned to take place."

This speech by Peter and John illustrate that God has ordained that all that would happen to Jesus would take place. This is an example of predestination of God's plan in salvation history rather than the salvation of individuals.

The passage from 1 Corinthians is similar to it"

"Rather, we speak God's wisdom, mysterious, hidden, which God predetermined before the ages for our glory, and which none of the rulers of this age knew; for if they had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

This "secret wisdom" is God's plan for our redemption, not the salvation or reprobation of individuals.

Ephesians 1:3-12: - "3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens, 4 **as he chose us in him,** before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before him. **In love** 5 **he destined us for adoption to himself through Jesus Christ,** in accord with the favor of his will, 6 for the praise of the glory of his grace that he granted us in the beloved. 7 **In him we have redemption by his blood, the forgiveness of transgressions, in accord with the riches of his grace** 8 **that he lavished upon us**. In all wisdom and insight, 9 he has made known to us the mystery of his will in accord with his favor that he set forth in him 10 as a plan for the fullness of times, to sum up all things in Christ, in heaven and on earth. 11 **In him we were also chosen, destined in accord with the purpose of the one who accomplishes all things according to the intention of his will,** 12 so that we might exist for the raise of His glory, we who first hoped in Christ."

This is election to grace. We have been chosen from the beginning of the world, in Christ, that we may be redeemed by his blood, our sins are forgiven and we are lavished with the riches of his grace. God is gloried in that we are saved. This biblical view is seen in the Church's rite of Election.

Romans 3:29-30: - "29 For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.30 And those he predestined he also called; and those he called he also justified; and those he justified he also glorified."

This verse primarily refers to those who are elected to glory and grace. We are "conformed to the image of his Son" when we are glorified. In 1 Corinthians 15:49 Pauls says: "Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the

man of heaven." And likewise in 1 John 3:2 says: "[I]t does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

This is an example of election to glory. Note that election to glory must also include election to grace since all who are in glory have been elected to grace. What needs to be proved is that all who are elected to grace are than elected to glory.

When we look at the related terms for predestination, we find them talking about election to grace and election to glory as two separate and distinct callings.

For example, 1 Peter 1:1-2: - "[1]Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the chosen sojourners of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,[2] in the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification by the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling with the blood of Jesus Christ: may grace and peace be yours in abundance."

This is clearly election to grace since to those to whom Peter writes has been in accord with the foreknowledge of God sanctified by the Spirit for obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus.

A very important text is found in Matthew 22:14.

"[1] Jesus again in reply spoke to them in parables, saying, [2] "The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son. [3] He dispatched his servants to summon **the invited guests** to the feast, **but they refused to come**. [4] A second time he sent other servants, saying, **'Tell those invited**: "Behold, I have prepared my banquet, my calves and fattened cattle are killed, and everything is ready; come to the feast."'[5] **Some ignored the invitation and went away**, one to his farm, another to his business.[6] The rest laid hold of his servants, mistreated them, and killed them.[7] The king was enraged and sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city.[8] Then he said to his servants, '**The feast is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy to come**. [9] Go out, therefore, into the main roads and **invite to the feast whomever you find**.'[10] The servants went out into the streets and gathered all they found, **bad and good alike**, and the hall was filled with guests.[11] But when the king came in to meet the guests he saw a man there not dressed in a wedding garment.[12] He said to him, 'My friend, how is it that you came in here without a wedding garment?' But he was reduced to silence.[13] Then the king said to his attendants, '**Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the darkness outside, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth**.'[14] **Many are invited, but few are chosen.**"

Here we have an interesting blend of election to God's plan of salvation (e.g. Jews and Gentiles) and the glorification and reprobation of individuals. Note that not all who are invited to the wedding feast are not chosen. That is some are called to grace and some of those called to grace are also chosen for glory.

Protestants argue that everyone who is called to grace is called to glory and they will often cite the following texts:

John 6:39: - "And this is the will of the one who sent me, that I should not lose anything of what he gave me, but that I should raise it (on) the last day."

Protestant Apologists claim that those who are elected to God's grace are those that are given to Jesus by the Father. Jesus states, therefore, that it is the Father's will that all who are given to him will be raised (i.e. Elected to Glory). A similiar link between Election to Grace and Glory is found in John 6:40:

John 6:40: - "For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life, and I shall raise him (on) the last day."

A stronger proof-text for the Protestant is found in John 6:44:

John 6:44: - "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draw him, and I will raise him on the last day."

Protestant apologists use this passage to show that everyone who comes to Jesus is Elected to Grace and that Jesus will infallibly raise those people on the last day. Therefore, all who are called to grace are also called to Glory.

These texts from John 6 are often linked with texts from John 10 where Jesus speaks of the calling of his sheep.

John 10:14: - "I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I will lay down my life for the sheep."

Every sheep that "knows" Jesus was "known" by him. Therefore, in this passage (Protestants argue) the Sheep are those who are Elected to Grace.

John 10:27-30 : - "My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish. No one can take them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one can take them out of the Father's hand. The Father and I are one."

Protestants then argue that the sheep (i.e. those who are elected to Grace) will follow Jesus and be given eternal life and "they shall never perish." Therefore, those who are Elected to Grace are Elected to Glory as well. There is no distinction.

Those Elected to Grace can never fail to achieve Glory because when one is Elected (Protestants argue) they are put in the Father's hand. Jesus states that the Father is greater than all and because of this it is impossible for anything to take them out of his hands.

Protestant apologists will then turn to Matthew 7:23 to illustrate the flipside of Election.

Matthew 7:22-23: - "Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name? Did we not drive out demons in your name? Did we not do mighty deeds in your name?' Then I will declare to them solemnly, 'I never knew you. Depart from me, you evildoers.'"

Protestants will state that these were false Christians who thought that they were Elect to Grace, but they were never predestined to Grace or Glory because Jesus states that "I never knew you."

Therefore, only those predestined to Glory are predestined to Grace. Matthew shows, Protestants argue, that if someone does not make it to Glory they never were predestined to Grace.

As you can see, the Protestant argument on Predestination runs parallel to the argument for Eternal Security; they both center on Election.

Things to Watch Out for in Discussions

1) Beware of arguments that state that since all those who are Elected to Glory were Elected to Grace, those who are Elected to Grace must also be Elected to Glory. It follows the same fallacious logic as: All dogs are animals. This is an animal, so it must be a dog.

For example, Romans 8 speaks of those who are Elected to Glory (those who are conformed to the image of his Son). It also speaks of them being called, justified, sanctified and glorified. Since this passage speaks only of those Elected to Glory, it cannot be inferred from this that everyone who is called and justified will be Glorified.

2) Beware of passages with specific meaning being broadened to be used for general meaning. For example, Matthew 7:23 is speaking about false Christians. They claims to do good deed, but they are really evildoers. We cannot infer from this, as many Protestants do, that all who are damned were false Christians. In our study of Eternal Security we found amply Biblical proof that there are true Christians who fall away and are damned (e.g. John 15).

3) Beware of text that are not speaking directly about the salvation or damnation of individuals, but rather the plan of God for his chosen people.

We have seen that in the banquet of the Lamb that the two ideas are sometimes merged. It is important to repeatedly ask the question, is this text saying that this particular individual is saved or damned? (See section on Chapter 6 of the Gospel of St. John under the Bread of Life Discourse above).

-In Brief-

1) The word "Predestination" is used only in four passages in the New Testament (i.e. Acts 4:28, Romans 8:29-30, 1 Corinthians 2:7, and Ephesians 1:3-12).

2) From these passages we see, election to grace and election to glory.

3) God does elect or call certain people to grace (that is to be justified).

4) God does elect or call certain people who have been called to grace to glory.

5) God does NOT predestine any people to Hell. Rather, he gives sufficient grace to all to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4). Those who are damned are condemned through their own fault.

6) Scripture does NOT teach that everyone who is called to grace is also called to glory. Matthew 22:14 – "Many are called (to the wedding feast), but few are chosen."

7) John 6:38-40 does not teach that those elected to grace cannot be lost.

8) John 10:14 and following teach that as long as you remain in Christ, you cannot be lost. But it is possible to remove yourself from the promises of Christ and lose your salvation.

Predestination and Romans 9

Of all the chapters of the New Testament, Romans 9 is the one that hooks most unsuspecting people into hard-core Calvinism.

The reason for this is because it is a lot easier to get something wrong than to get it right. This is especially true when interpreting, not only a two thousand year old document, but also interpreting one of the most complex minds of the ancient world - St. Paul.

One should pay heed to St. Peter's warning:

"And consider the patience of our Lord as salvation, as **our beloved brother Paul,** according to the wisdom given to him, also wrote to you, speaking of these things as **he does in all his letters**. **In them** there are **some things hard to understand** that the **ignorant and unstable distort to their own destruction**, just as they do the other scriptures" (2 Peter 3:15-16).

Many people fall into the trap of reading and interpreting Scripture as if it were a modern novel. Words are drawn from Paul as if he is addressing me today when in fact he is addressing the Judaisers two thousand years ago. And if one does not take this extremely important fact into consideration, they become as Peter says, "ignorant [Greek: unlearned] and unstable" distorting Paul "to their own destruction."

If one were to pick up a Bible and begin reading Romans 9 divorced from the chapters proceeding it and following it and ignoring its historical content, one would probably understand this chapter to be teaching the following:

Romans 9:8 - God has already chosen who will be with him in Heaven.

Romans 9:11 - Those who are predestined to Heaven are chosen not because of their works - good or evil, but purely upon God's capriciousness.

Romans 9:13 - God creates some individuals to be loved by Him and given eternal life and he creates other individuals to be hated by Him and damned to Hell.

Romans 9:14 - Our understanding of Justice has nothing to do with God. God can do anything he wants to do since he is the Almighty. He will have mercy on someone, if he wants and He will have wrath on someone, if he wants.

Romans 9:16 - There is nothing you can do to change God's mind as to whether you've been predestined to Heaven or Hell.

Romans 9:17 - God caused Pharaoh to be evil and fight against Moses in order to show his glory.

Romans 9:19-21 - No one can oppose the will of God since He has created us and therefore He has an absolute right to do with us whatever he feels like doing. Whatever he does is just (even if it seems to us to be unjust).

Romans 9:22 - Whether God predestines us to Heaven or Hell, all is done to manifest his glory.

Romans 9:25-27 - God can change his mind. The Jews were his people in the Old Testament and now God wants Jews and Gentiles in the covenant. God may change his mind in the future. Who knows.

Some of these points are theologically correct even if it isn't what Paul was teaching. For example, Catholics believe that God does predestine some to Heaven.

Perhaps the worst misinterpretation is that God predestines some to Hell - that is he causes people to sin so as to go to Hell. This belief that God predestines some to Heaven and others to Hell is called Double Predestination. The Church teaches that those who go to Hell do so through their own fault.

How then are we going to be able to demonstrate that Paul is not teaching a Calvinistic, almost tyrannical, view of God

who Double Predestines people? The answer is context, context and context.

During our section on Justification, we looked at Paul's arguments from chapter one through eight. We noted that Paul, being a well educated Jew arguing to other well educated Jews, could not possibly have quoted a text out of its original context. If Paul did this, the people he argued against would have jumped on it like a ton of bricks.

We then looked at each of his Old Testament quotations, studied them in their context and asked two questions: Does this context support the Protestant interpretation and, if not, what was Paul arguing.

We found out that Paul was engaging with an invisible opponent who was a Pharisee. His opponent believed that keeping the Mosaic law was that which made a person righteous (that is acceptable to God). Of course, these Jewish regulations (i.e. works of Law) functioned as boundary markers to delineate God's covenant people (the Jews) from everyone else (the Gentiles). Or as the Christian Judaizers said, "Unless you are circumcised according to the Mosaic practice, you cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1).

Paul takes apart the arguments of these Jews in chapters 1-8, but there is one very big question left unaddressed: "The Jews are God's Covenant people! How can the Christians now be the People of God?"

In Romans 9, Paul begins by conceding to the Jews that they have the covenants, the Patriarchs and the Law, but then he notes that not everyone who is an Israelite is a son of Jacob (Israel) nor are they children of Abraham because they are his descendents. Paul shows that sonship does not necessarily mean that they are inheritors of the promise. Abraham had Ishmael, Isaac had Esau and the Twelve Tribes of Israel broke in two. God's people are those to whom he has mercy upon. It is not dependent on whether you are a physical child of Abraham or if you keep the Law of Moses.

The quotations from the Old Testament in this chapter are complex, but it is understandable. It takes time to explain, but it may change a whole person's perspective on God and salvation.

Some things to keep in mind while working through Romans 9:

1. In the last section, we showed that Predestination (and election) can refer to three things (e.g. election to grace, election to glory and election of the people of God). Emphasis that Paul is concerned with nations, not individuals.

2. Emphasis that no where in this chapter does Paul mention salvation or damnation. These are things that are imported into this text by the reader. Paul never says that God will have mercy on whom he wills and he damns whom he wills. He says he will have mercy and compassion on whom he wills.

3. Pharaohs hardening did not necessarily impinge upon Pharaoh's salvation, but that he opposed the ultimate plan of God. Pharaoh may not be culpable- the text does not tell us.

4. Challenge to Protestant to explain how this text can mean what he says it means without making Paul quote text out of context.

Breakdown of Romans 9

1 I speak the truth in Christ, I do not lie; my conscience joins with the holy Spirit in bearing me witness
2 that I have great sorrow and constant anguish in my heart.
3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed and separated from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kin according to the flesh.

4 **They are Israelites**; theirs **the adoption**, the glory, **the covenants**, **the giving of the law,** the worship, and **the promises**;
5 **theirs the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, is the Messiah**. God who is over all be blessed forever.

6 But it is not that the word of God has failed. **For not all who are of Israel are Israel**,
7 **nor are they all children of Abraham because they are his descendants**;

but "It is through Isaac that descendants shall bear your name."
8 **This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as descendants.**
9 For this is the wording of the promise, "About this time I shall return and Sarah will have a son."

10 And not only that, but also when Rebecca had conceived children **by one husband**, our father Isaac —
11 before they had yet been born or had done anything, good or bad, in order that **God's elective plan might continue**,
12 not by works but by his call—she was told, **"The older shall serve the younger."**
13 As it is written:
"I loved Jacob
but hated Esau."

14 What then are we to say? Is there injustice on the part of God? Of course not!

This is Paul's Introduction to his next argument.

What is good about the Jews being God's chosen people was the adoption as God's first born sons; the covenants, the giving of the law with Moses, the Patriarchs from whom come, according to the flesh, the Messiah. Paul will use examples from the Patriarchs, the giving of the Law with Moses, the Kingdom and the remnant of the New Covenant.

Paul's Thesis: Not all who of Israel are of Israel and Not all Descendents of Abraham are his promised sons.

Problem: It is to Israel that God made his covenants and elected them as his chosen people or nation. Christian upstarts cannot claim primogeniture.

Ex.4:22 - *"So you shall say to Pharaoh: Thus says the LORD: Israel is my son, my first-born."*

Abraham - Ishmael and Isaac:

Genesis 21:12-13
"12 But God said to Abraham: "Do not be distressed **about the boy [Ishmael] or about your slave woman.** Heed the demands of Sarah, no matter what she is asking of you; **for it is through Isaac that descendants shall bear your name.** 13 As for the son of the slave woman, **I will make a great nation of him also,** since he too is your offspring."

Jacob (Israel) and Esau (Edom):

Genesis 25:23
"And he answered her: "**Two nations** are in your womb, **two peoples** are quarreling while still within you; But **one** [nation] shall surpass **the other** [nation] , and the older shall serve the younger."

Malachi 1:2-4
2 I have loved you, says the LORD; but you say, 'How have you loved us?'" 3 **Was not Esau Jacob's brother?** says the LORD: **yet I loved Jacob, but hated Esau; I made his mountains a waste, his heritage a desert** for jackals. 4 If **Edom says**, "We have been crushed but we will rebuild the ruins," Thus says the LORD of hosts: They indeed may build, but I will tear down, And they shall be called the land of guilt, **the people** with whom the LORD **is angry forever**.

[Genesis 36:1 - "1 These are the descendants of Esau (that is, Edom).".]

How can God elect Israel as His firstborn only to abandon it for Christianity?

[15] For he says to Moses:
"I will show **mercy** to whom I will,
I will take **pity** on whom I will."
[16] So it depends not upon a person's will or exertion, but upon God, who shows mercy.

Moses: Quotes Exodus 33:19.

Context: Exodus 32 is the "Golden Calf" episode. God was going to destroy Israel and raise up a nation (his Chosen People) out of Moses.

Exodus 32:10 - *"Let me alone, then, that my wrath may blaze up against them **to consume them**. Then I will **make of you a great nation.**"*

Moses reminds God his his promises and after the calf is destroyed, he places himself under a curse to save Israel.

Exodus 32:32 - *" If you would only forgive their sin! If you will not, then strike me out of the book that you have written."*

God promises to punish only those who were guilty and relents. In Chapter 33, God refuses to lead the People and encamp with them otherwise he would exterminate them (Exodus 33:3,5 and 7). God repeatedly calls Israel a "stiff necked people (Ex. 33:3,5; 34:9; Dt. 9:6,13

Moses entreats the Lord not to let him lead the people alone if he is God's intimate friend (Ex 33:12-13 - "**...I may continue to find favor with you. Then, too, this nation is, after all, your own people.**") God accepts. Moses continues:

Exodus 33:13-17
"'If you are not going yourself, do not make us go up from here. **For how can it be known that we, your people and I, have found favor with you,** except by your going with us? **Then we, your people and I, will be singled out from every other people on the earth.**" The LORD said to Moses, 'This request, too, which you have just made, I will carry out, **because you have found favor with me** and you are my intimate friend.'

As proof that God is Moses' intimate friend, God's glory passes by Moses and states: "**I who show favors to whom I will, I who grant mercy to whom I will.**" The following Chapters establishes the ceremonial law and the Deuteronomic code.

[17] For the scripture says to Pharaoh, "This is why I have raised you up, to show my power through you that my name may be proclaimed throughout the earth."
[18] Consequently, he has mercy upon whom he wills, **and he hardens whom he wills**. (Israel/Egypt)

Exodus 9:13-15
"**For by now I would have stretched out my hand and struck you** and your subjects with such pestilence **as would wipe you from the earth**. **But this is why I have spared you**: **to show you my power and to make my name resound** throughout the earth! Will you still block the way for my people by refusing to let them go?"

[19] You will say to me then, "Why (then) does He still find fault? For who can oppose his will?"

If God's election in salvation history determines who is his People, how can he find fault with those nations that he does not elect (e.g.. Ishmael, Edom, Egypt)? and/or if Israel is no different spiritually than Egypt after the golden calf, then how could God fault the Egyptians or Israel now in the first century?

20 But who indeed are you, a human being,
to talk back to God? Will what is made say
to its maker, "Why have you created me
so?"
21 Or does not the potter have a right over
the clay, t**o make out of the same lump**
one vessel for a noble purpose and another
for an ignoble one?

Isaiah 29:13-16
The Lord said: **Since this people draws near with words only and honors me with their lips alone,though their hearts are far from me, And their reverence for me has become routine observance of the precepts of men**, Therefore I will again deal with this people in surprising and wondrous fashion: The wisdom of its wise men shall perish and the understanding of its prudent men be hid. Woe to those who would hide their plans too deep for the LORD! Who work in the dark, saying, "Who sees us, or who knows us?" Your perversity is as though the potter were taken to be the clay: **As though what is made should say of its maker "He made me not!"** Or the vessel should say of the potter, "He does not understand."

Isaiah 8:9
"Let justice descend, O heavens, like dew from above, like gentle rain let the skies drop it down. **Let the earth open and salvation bud forth; let justice also spring up!** I, the LORD, have created this. **Woe to him who contends with his Maker;** a potsherd among potsherds of the earth! Dare the clay say to its modeler, "What are you doing?" or, "What you are making has no hands"?"

Jeremiah 18:5-12
"Then the word of the Lord came to me: Can I not do to you, house of Israel, as this potter has done? says the LORD. Indeed, like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, house of Israel. Sometimes **I threaten to uproot and tear down and destroy a nation or a kingdom**. But if **that nation** which I have threatened **turns from its evil**, **I also repent** of the evil which I threatened to do. Sometimes, again, I promise to **build up and plant a nation or a kingdom**. But if **that nation** does what is **evil** in my eyes, refusing to obey my voice, **I repent of the good with which I promised to bless it**. And now, tell this to the men of Judah and the citizens of Jerusalem: Thus says the LORD: Take care! I am fashioning evil against you and making a plan. Return, each of you, from his evil way; reform your ways and your deeds. But they will say, "No use! We will follow our own devices; each one of us will behave according to the stubbornness of his evil heart!"

Wisdom 15:6
" For truly the potter, laboriously working the soft earth, molds for our service each several article: Both the vessels that serve for clean purposes and their opposites, all alike; As to what shall be the use of each vessel of either class the worker in clay is the judge."

22 What if God, wishing **to show** his wrath
and make known his power, has endured
with much patience the vessels of wrath
made for destruction?
23 This was to make known the riches of his
glory to the vessels of mercy, which he has
prepared previously for glory,
24 namely, us whom he has called, not only
from the Jews but also from the Gentiles.

The vessels of wrath that God patiently edured is Egypt. The same word translated "to show" (ejndeivxasqai) is the ssame word used in Romans 9:17 for Egypt. God's patience and mercy manifested both his wrath and who is his vessels of mercy in Exodus. Just as it is through Moses that the vessels of glory was picked from the same lump of clay (Egyptians). Christians are taken from Israel (and also the gentiles.

<u>The Kingdoms of Israel and Judah</u>

Context: Hosiah is told to marry a harlot. She bares three children. The first is Jezreel - [because God will break the bow of Israel at Jezreel. The Second is Lo-ruhmah - [I will no longer have compassion]. God will no longer have compassion on the northern tribes, but will have compassion on Judah (Hos. 1.7). The third is Lo-ammi [not my people] because Israel is not my people and God is not their God (Hos. 1.9).

Hos. 1:10-11 (NASB) - "**Yet the number of the sons of Israel. Will be like the sand of the sea, Which cannot be measured or numbered; And it will come about that, in the place Where it is said to them, "You are not My people," It will be said to them, "*You are* the sons of the living God."**
And the sons of Judah and the sons of Israel will be gathered together, 11 And they will appoint for themselves one leader, And they will go up from the land.

25 As indeed He says in Hosea:
"Those who were not my people I will
call 'my people,' and her who was not
beloved I will call 'beloved.'
26 And in the very place where it was said
to them, 'You are not my people,' there
they shall be called children of the living
God."

27 And Isaiah cries out **concerning
Israel**, "Though the number of the
Israelites were like the sand of the sea,
only a remnant will be saved;
28 for decisively and quickly will the
Lord execute sentence upon the earth."

Isaiah 10:21-23
A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God. For though your people, O Israel, were like the sand of the sea, Only a remnant of them will return; their destruction is decreed as overwhelming justice demands. Yes, the destruction he has decreed, the Lord, the GOD of hosts, will carry out within the whole land.

[29] And as Isaiah predicted:
"Unless the Lord of hosts had left us
descendants, we would have become
like Sodom and have been made like
Gomorrah."

Isaiah 1:8-20
[8] And daughter Zion is left like a hut in a
vineyard, Like a shed in a melon patch, like
a city blockaded. [9] **Unless the LORD of
hosts had left us a scanty remnant, We
had become as Sodom, we should be like
Gomorrah.** [10] Hear the word of the LORD,
princes of Sodom! Listen to the instruction
of our God, **people of Gomorrah**! [11] What
care I for the number of your sacrifices?
says the LORD. I have had enough of
whole-burnt rams and fat of fatlings; **In
the blood of calves, lambs and goats I
find no pleasure**. [12] When you come in to
visit me, who asks these things of you?
[13] **Trample my courts no more!** Bring **no
more worthless offerings**; your incense is
loathsome to me. **New moon and Sabbath,
calling of assemblies, octaves with
wickedness:** these I cannot bear. [14] **Your
new moons and festivals I detest; they
weigh me down, I tire of the load.**
[15] When you spread out your hands, I close
my eyes to you; Though you pray the more,
I will not listen. Your hands are full of
blood! [16] Wash yourselves clean! **Put away
your misdeeds from before my eyes;
cease doing evil;** [17] **learn to do good. Make
justice your aim: redress the wronged,
hear the orphan's plea, defend the widow.**
[18] Come now, let us set things right, says the
LORD: Though your sins be like scarlet,
they may become white as snow; Though
they be crimson red, they may become
white as wool. [19] **If you are willing, and
obey, you shall eat the good things of the
land;** [20] **But if you refuse and resist, the
sword shall consume you: for the mouth
of the LORD has spoken!**

[30] **What then shall we say**? That Gentiles,
who did not pursue righteousness, have
achieved it, that is, righteousness that
comes from faith;
[31] but that **Israel**, **who pursued the law of
righteousness**, did not attain to that law?
[32] Why not? Because they did it not by
faith, but as if it could be done by works.
They stumbled over the stone that causes
stumbling,

Paul concludes his argument. Being members of the covenant community does not assure that you will be among the righteous. This clears the way for Paul to re-address his main point: God's People are not only those who are circumcised, follow the dietary regulations and the other precepts of Moses, but those who have Faith and are faithful to God's law of righteousness.

By rejecting Christ, they stumbled over the stone that causes stumbling and everyone who believes in this stone will not be put the shame.

[33] as it is written:
"Behold, I am laying a stone in Zion that
will make people stumble and a rock that
will make them fall, and whoever
believes in him shall not be put to
shame."

Chapter Six

Miscellaneous Issues

(Why do Catholics do that?)

Call No Man Father

There are a few things in the New Testament, when no effort is made to understand them as the original audience was meant to understand them that seems to patently contradict Catholicism. One of these items is Jesus' command to "call no man Father." Catholics commonly address priests as "Father" and the Pope is frequently called "Holy Father." Are Catholics contradicting Scripture?

First, let's look at the text in question. Matthew 23:5-12:

"[5] All their [the Pharisees'] works are performed to be seen. They widen their phylacteries and lengthen their tassels.[6] They love places of honor at banquets, seats of honor in synagogues, [7] greetings in marketplaces, and the salutation 'Rabbi.' [8] As for you, do not be called 'Rabbi.' You have but one teacher, and you are all brothers. [9] **Call no one on earth your father; you have but one Father in heaven**. [10] Do not be called 'Master'; you have but one master, the Messiah. [11] The greatest among you must be your servant. [12] Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted."

Did Jesus wish us to understand his words in a strict literal sense? Absolutely not. Protestants often invoke a principal called "Scripture interprets Scripture." By this, they mean that the meaning of an "unclear text" should be understood by other "more clear" texts in Scripture. If Jesus meant that all Christians are prohibited from called spiritual leaders "father" than we ought not find any Christians in Scripture using this term in this way.

For example:

Paul calls Abraham the "father of all of us" [i.e. all who believe]

Romans 4:16 – "For this reason, it depends on faith, so that it may be a gift, and the promise may be guaranteed to all his descendants, not to those who only adhere to the law but to those who follow the faith of **Abraham, who is the father of all of us**."

Likewise, James:

James 2:21 – "Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered his son Isaac upon the altar?"

Likewise, Isaac is called, by Paul, "our father."

Romans 9:10
"And not only that, but also when Rebecca had conceived children by one husband, **our father Isaac** "

Therefore, we cannot say that Jesus, in the strictest sense, prohibited any use of the term father for religious purposes. Protestants will commonly narrow their interpretation to mean, "do not address any spiritual leader, now living, as Father." This is a far cry from Jesus' simple statement, "Call no man Father." But even this use is not supported in the New Testament.

For example:

St. Peter mentions that Christians "invoke as father" earthly judges or perhaps even church leaders. He takes no offense at its use, but builds on it for his teaching.

1Peter 1:17 – "Now if you invoke as father him who judges impartially according to each one's works, conduct yourselves with reverence during the time of your sojourning…"

Those people who judge, according to St. Peter, is unclear. St. Stephen, however, is quite clear when he addresses the rabbis in the Sanhedrin:

Acts 7:1-2 - "Then the high priest asked, 'Is this so?' And he replied, "My brothers and fathers, listen…"
If Jesus meant His prohibition to be for Christian leaders, how much would Jesus have prohibited Jewish rabbis from being called rabbi? After all, they were the ones to whom Jesus originally directed His comments. Yet, St. Stephen shows no scruples in calling the rabbis of the Sanhedrin "brothers and fathers." Moreover, St. Paul does it in Acts:

Acts 22:1-2 – "'My brothers and fathers, listen to what I am about to say to you in my defense.' When they heard him addressing them in Hebrew they became all the more quiet. And he continued…"

Paul commands us to follow his examples (2 Timothy 3:10). Therefore, it is biblical to call religious leaders Father.

Also, First John may have used the same address when he says:

1 John 2:13-14 – "**I am writing to you, fathers**, because you know him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have conquered the evil one. I write to you, children, because you know the Father. **I write to you, fathers,** because you know him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong and the word of God remains in you, and you have conquered the evil one."

Throughout the First Letter of John, he addresses the Christian hearers of his letter as "children' (e.g. 1 John 2:1, 18, 3:7, 18, 4:4, 5:21). Yet, who are these "fathers" if not the elders or priests in the Church?

The Fatherhood of Preaching

Priests are called Father because in their ministry of preaching the gospel and winning converts they perform a fatherly act.

Paul writes:

1 Cor. 4:15-16 - "Even if you should have countless guides to Christ, yet you do not have many fathers, for I became your father [NASB – "I became your father" / KVJ (Greek) – "I have begotten you") in Christ Jesus through the gospel. Therefore, I urge you, be imitators of me."

Phil 2:22 – "But you know his worth, how as a child with a father he [Timothy] served along with me in the cause of the gospel."

Philemon 1:10 – "I urge you on behalf of my child Onesimus, whose father I have become in my imprisonment [Greek: "whom I begotten"] …"

How should Jesus' words be understood?

Jesus must be using a hyperbole. Webster's Dictionary states that a hyperbole is: "A figure of speech in which exaggeration is used for emphasis or effect, as in *I could sleep for a year* or *this book weighs a ton.* The Jews were fond of this form of speech and Jesus uses it on occasion. For example, Matthew 5:29 Jesus states, "If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body thrown into Gehenna." Likewise, Luke 14:26, "If any one comes to me without hating his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple." This cannot be taken literally since Jesus would be violating the commandment to honor your father and mother. Therefore, is using a hyperbole to convey a point. The same is true with Matthew 23.

It is clear from Matthew 23 that the titles of Rabbi, Father and Master were being used in a way that would make them on par with God. This is why Jesus follows each prohibition by reminding the Pharisees that there is one Father in Heaven and we are all brothers. If one addresses any person as teacher, father and master in the sense that God is not over them, they are condemned by Jesus' prohibition. However, it is very biblical for Christians to address priests as Father as long as it is understood that their fatherhood is something derived from God the Father. This is taught in Ephesians 3:14-15:

"For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family [Greek: fatherhood] in heaven and on earth is named…"

This is why Paul (and the other New Testament writers) feel free to address religious leaders (even Jewish religious leaders) as "Father".

Images and Idols

Is not the use of images condemned by the Bible when it says:

Exodus 20:3-5 - "[3] You shall not have other gods besides me. [4] **You shall not carve idols for yourselves in the shape of anything in the sky above or on the earth below or in the waters beneath the earth**; [5] you shall not bow down before them or worship them. For I, the LORD, your God, am a jealous God, inflicting punishment for their fathers' wickedness on the children of those who hate me, down to the third and fourth generation…"

Deuteronomy 5:7 – "[8] **You shall not carve idols for yourselves in the shape of anything in the sky above or on the earth below or in the waters beneath the earth;** [9] you shall not bow down before them or worship them. For I, the LORD, your God, am a jealous God, inflicting punishments for their fathers' wickedness on the children of those who hate me, down to the third and fourth generation"

Numbers 33:51-52 – "[51] Tell the Israelites: When you go across the Jordan into the land of Canaan, [52] drive out all the inhabitants of the land before you; **destroy all their stone figures and molten images**, and demolish all their high places."

Ezekiel 7:20 – "[20] In the beauty of their ornaments they put their pride: they made of **them their abominable images (their idols).** For this reason I make them refuse."

Deuteronomy 7:26 – "[26] **You shall not bring any abominable thing into your house**, lest you be doomed with it; loathe and abhor it utterly as a thing that is doomed."

Do Catholics and Orthodox violate the commandment of God by using statues, pictures, icons and the like in their places of worship and their homes? Many Protestants will say yes because they interpret the passages above as a strict prohibition for Christians to make any kind of image for any religious purpose. The Bible, however, does not make such a prohibition.

One must make a distinction between an image (icon) and an idol. An image or icon is a representation of something in God's creation (e.g., birds, plants, humans, stars, sun, angels et al.). An idol is a representation of something in God's creation that is worshipped as God or a god. The difference is in its purpose. Images are not worshipped or believed to be living things while Idols are images that are believed to be God or a god. Now, let's examine the Scripture more carefully. Scripture does not forbid images (even images that are used for religious purposes) otherwise God would not command people to make images.

For example:

God himself creates an image when making man:

Genesis 1:26-27 – "Then God said: "Let us **make man in our image**, **after our likeness**. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and the cattle, and over all the wild animals and all the creatures that crawl on the ground. [27] **God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him;** male and female he created them." (see also Genesis 9:6).

The Israelites were commanded by God to make images of angels and Almond blossoms over the Ark of the Covenant and in the Tabernacle (i.e. places of worship).

Exodus 25:18, 20 - [18] **Make two Cherubim of beaten gold** for the two ends of the propitiatory…[20] **The cherubim shall have their wings spread out above, covering the propitiatory with them**; they shall be turned toward each other, but with their faces looking toward the propitiatory."

Exodus 25:33 – "[33] On one branch there are to be three cups, **shaped like almond blossoms**, each with its knob and petals; on the opposite branch there are to be three cups, **shaped like almond blossoms**, each with its knob and petals; and so for the six branches that extend from the lamp stand."

Large Cherubim were also fashioned inside the inner sanctuary of the Jerusalem Temple:

1 Kings 6:24-28 – "[24] Each wing of a Cherub measured five cubits so that the space from wing tip to wing tip of each was ten cubits. [25] The cherubim were identical in size and shape, [26] and each was exactly ten cubits high. [27] The cherubim were placed in the inmost part of the temple, with their wings spread wide, so that one

wing of each cherub touched a side wall while the other wing, pointing toward the middle of the room, touched the corresponding wing of the second cherub. [28] The Cherubim, too, were overlaid with gold."

The walls of the inner sanctuary were also carved with images:

1 Kings 6:29, 32-35 - "[29] The walls on all sides of both the inner and the outer rooms had carved figures of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers,… [32] The two doors were of olive wood, with carved figures of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers. The doors were overlaid with gold, which was also molded to the cherubim and the palm trees. [33] The same was done at the entrance to the nave, where the doorposts of olive wood were rectangular. [34] The two doors were of fir wood; each door was banded by a metal strap, front and back, [35] and had carved cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers, over which gold was evenly applied."

Images of pomegranates encircle the columns of the Temple

1 King 7 18 – "Four hundred pomegranates were also cast; two hundred of them in a double row encircled the piece of network on each of the two capitals."

Images of oxen adorn the sea:

1 Kings 7:25 - "This rested on twelve oxen, three facing north, three facing west, three facing south, and three facing east, with their haunches all toward the center, where the sea was set upon them."

Likewise, panels were erected that had images of animals and angels:

1 Kings 7:29 – " On the panels between the frames there were lions, oxen, and cherubim; and on the frames likewise, above and below the lions and oxen, there were wreaths in relief."

The same is true for the supports and capitals of the Temple (1 Kings 7:29 and following). Had God prohibited all images, he would have never allowed the Temple to be constructed as such nor would he command the Ark of the Covenant and tabernacle to have images as well. The key is that these images were just that – images. They were used to lift the minds of the people up to God and glorify God in his creation. They were not worshipped.

Another interesting proof text concerns another image that God commanded to be made. The Jews were complaining to the Lord that they were being bitten by serpents in the desert and were becoming ill. God commanded Moses to make an image of a serpent and mount it on a pole so that whoever looks at it will be healed (see Numbers 21:7ff)

Note the following: (1) God commanded that an image of a serpent (possibly an angel since Seraphs were used to depict angels). (2) God told Moses to use this image to cure people and it worked. God cured all those who looked up at the image. This means that images in religious contexts are allowed. However, the story does not have a happy ending. The Jews many years later began to worship the bronze serpent and so it was destroyed (see 2 Kings 18:4). The licit image became an idol and was condemned.

Images after the Incarnation

If you look at the condemnation in the First Commandment (and the others), you can see that in all of these cases the images were worshipped as gods. No Catholic does that. Even the more revered image or icon is never treated as if it had special magical powers or that it could decide one's fate. And even if the individual did, then it would be condemned (see CCC 2112-2114 and 2132)

Why did God make these commands? Apart from the obvious He didn't want us to worship false gods. He knew that the Israelites, surrounded by idolatrous pagans, would be tempted to worship images instead of Him they imaged. Therefore, God purposefully did not show Israel his image or likeness. Read the following:

Deuteronomy 4:13-18 – "[14] **The LORD charged me at that time to teach you** the statutes and decrees which you are to observe over in the land you will occupy. [15] **"You saw no form at all on the day the LORD spoke to you at Horeb from the midst of the fire**. Be strictly on your guard, **therefore,** [16] **not to degrade yourselves by fashioning an idol to represent any figure**, whether it be the form (Greek: *eikona*) of a man or a woman, [17] of any animal on the earth or of any bird that flies in the sky, [18] of anything that crawls on the ground or of any fish in the waters under the earth.

However, there is a change in the New Testament. God becomes man and dwells with us (John 1:1, 14). God reveals his form in Jesus.

Colossians 1:15 – "**He is the image of the invisible God,** the firstborn of all creation."

Unlike the Jews on the mount how were not permitted to view the image and likeness of God out of fear that they would make idols, God has revealed his image. In

fact, the Greek word used in Col. 1:15 for image is *eikona* – the same word from which we get the word icon. Because of the Incarnation (and its revelation concerning the Trinity) we can make images of God. However, as we already noted, we are never permitted to worship these images as if they were gods.

Relics

Relics and their use are something that rarely come up in apologetic discourses since their use has diminished in recent years. Nevertheless, relics are something relatively easy for Protestants to understand since it is a devotion that is rooted in our nature.

Things that belonged to holy people are treated with respect because, in a sense, through them we come in contact with the memory of that person. I'd doubt that devout Baptists would treat the Bible used by Spurgeon (a highly regarded Baptist preacher of the past) as if it was no different than any other Bible. Even in the secular world, we find a parallel with relics. Sports fans treasure baseballs that were hit out of the park by a major leaguer. The same is true with autographed pictures of a movie star or some other object that had contact with a great person or event. With relics, Catholics take this natural inclination to treasure those things that were in contact with great people and sanctify it. We treasure those things that had contact with Christ or a great saint.

Relics not only aid us in being more holy by lifting our thought to the person they are from and thereby encouraging us to be like them, but they can also be instruments of grace. It is not uncommon that the relics of a great saint sometimes became the instruments through which God performs miracles. God does this on occasion so as to encourage Christians to be imitators of the prophet or saint that the relic belongs to. In a sense, it confirms their sanctity.

The Catholic Church divides relics into three classes. The first class is a part of a saint's body. The most direct Biblical evidence of relics in general and a first-class relic in particular is a story concerning the prophet Elisha (2 Kings 13:20-21):

"Elisha died and was buried. At the time, bands of Moabites used to raid the land each year. Once some people were burying a man, when suddenly they spied such a raiding band. So they cast the dead man into the grave of Elisha, and everyone went off. But when the man came in contact with the bones of Elisha, he came back to life and rose to his feet."

A second-class relic is something used during a saint's life, such as clothing. The Bible records an instance of Elijah's mantle parting the Jordan River (2 Kings 2:14):

"Wielding the mantle which had fallen from Elijah, he struck the water…. When Elisha struck the water it divided and he crossed over"

Third-class relics are objects that have been touched to a first-class relic. The Bible mentions this in Acts 19:11-12:

"So extraordinary were the mighty deeds God accomplished at the hands of Paul that when face cloths or aprons that touched his skin were applied to the sick, their diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them."

These are but a few instances found in the Bible that occurred to the Saints. But there were others that occurred to Jesus. For example, there was a woman who suffered from bleeding. She thought that if she could just touch Jesus' clothing she would be healed. She did and she was healed. Jesus told her that her faith has cured her. Jesus' garments became the instruments through which He enabled the woman to be healed (See Mark 5:28-34).

Church history is filled with examples of such miracles being performed by the relics of the saints. Moreover, from earliest times Christians took great care to preserve the remains of saints who were martyred.

The Rapture

The Rapture is a belief held by American Protestants that during the end of time (whether it be before, during or after a period of the great tribulation that would take place before the end of time) all true Christians will be taken up (raptured) into the clouds with Jesus. Those left behind (depending on what position you hold) will either follow the anti-Christ and be damned or be martyrs for Christ and go to Heaven.

I state that this is a belief of American Protestantism because only American Protestants believe this. Protestants in Europe never heard of the Rapture. This is because a man named John Nelson Darby propounded the idea of Rapture. Darby's thoughts were recorded in the footnotes of the Scofield Reference Bible, which circulated only the United States. As Protestants began to use the Scofield Bible (and follow its footnotes), people began to believe in the Rapture. So, historically, this is an entirely novel understanding of the end times even within Protestantism. More recently, a series of books have been published (along with a movie) called "Left Behind."

As a side note, the word "Rapture" is never used in the Bible for being caught up. It actually came from the Catholic Latin Vulgate, which rendered 1Thess. 4:17—"we will be caught up" as *rapiemur*.

Because of the sensational nature of end-times speculation, Catholics are sometimes taken up (pun intended) with the Rapture. In biblical terms, the whole doctrine of Rapture is based upon only two biblical texts:

1 Thessalonians 4:16–17, which states, "For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel's call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first; then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord."

This passage is not talking about an intermediate event that happens before the Resurrection, but rather it is talking about the Resurrection itself. Christ comes at the end of time and all the dead will rise in Christ (and all the living will be taken to His throne) and both will be judged.

Matthew 24:37-41 – "For as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. In (those) days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day that Noah entered the ark. They did not know until the flood came and carried them all away. So will it be (also) at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be out in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and one will be left."

What is often ignored by Protestant Fundamentalists is that this passage is primarily a prophesy about the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 A.D. and secondarily to the end of time. Jesus' disciples ask our Lord two questions in verse 3, "Tell us, when will this happen, and what sign will there be of your coming, and of the end of the age?" They asked these two questions after Jesus said in verse 2, "You see all these things (the temple buildings). Amen, I say to you, there will not be left here a stone upon another stone that will not be thrown down." The disciples thought that the destruction of the Temple would occur at the end of time. In reality, the Temple is a type of the world and its destruction was itself a foreshadowing of the end of time. Hence, when the destruction of the Temple was about to take place, it was like the days of Noah. The Christians were spared and the wicked were destroyed. Indeed, it is believed that not one Christian died in the siege of Jerusalem since they all fled to Palla heeding our Lord's warnings.

Historic Christianity only knows of two "comings" (or advents) of the Lord. The first happened at the Incarnation. The second happens at the end of time where, as we say in the Creed, "He will come again to judge the living and the dead." The Rapture theory envisions three advents or comings. Jesus visits earth before the end and then returns again for the Final Judgment. Needless to say, this is entirely unknown in the early Church and even in much of Protestantism as well.

Infant Baptism

Within Protestantism, there is a group that holds in what is called "believer's baptism" (e.g. only adults can be baptized). These groups are called "baptistic" because they believe that one must have an explicit faith in Christ in order to be saved AND baptized. They challenge the practice of Catholics (and non-baptistic Protestant churches) that baptizes babies. Their objection is based upon two lines of argument: (1) Baptism is a symbol that one is saved and we are saved by faith alone. Since babies cannot have faith, they cannot be saved and baptized and (2) the New Testament says nothing about baptizing infants.

Reading the Bible in a way that it was not meant to be read skews the question of infant baptism. Rank and file Protestants (and less educated Catholics) pick up the Bible and read it as if it was a contemporary work. They look at the Bible as a kind of blue print for how the church is supposed to look today. But this is all an illusion. The New Testament is more like a snapshot than a blueprint. Like a photograph, it shows Christianity as it was and potentially how it may be. But the Church of the New Testament no longer exists. Inspired apostles no longer walk the earth. Christianity is no longer a sub-set of Judaism. Much of the problems with paganism (e.g. whether a Christian can eat meat from a pagan sacrifice) not longer exists. All this is, of course, ignored by "bible Christians" who approach the Bible with problems that didn't present itself to the church until after the New Testament was penned and make their determination whatever evidence they see fit. This is especially true with infant baptism.

The New Testament era Church didn't have a pressing need to answer the question of whether infants can be baptized. The main concern was evangelizing adults (obviously). When adults were converted, then their spouse and children generally followed. It wasn't until the second generation of Christianity that Christians started to have babies and the question of baptism come about. We should be surprised to find in the New Testament, practically nothing about infants because evangelizing adults was much more prominent. What we do find in the New Testament is that when an adult is converted his whole household was baptized. For example:

Act 16:14-15 – "One of them, a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth, from the city of Thyatira, a worshiper of God, listened, and the Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what Paul was saying. After she and her household had been baptized.."

Acts 16:30-32 – "Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you and your household will be saved." So they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to everyone in his house. He took them in at that hour of the night and bathed their wounds; then he and all his family were also baptized at once."

1 Corinthians 1:16 "(I baptized the household of Stephanas also; beyond that I do not know whether I baptized anyone."

1 Corinthians 16:15 – "I urge you, brothers—you know that the household of Stephanas is the first-fruits of Achaia and that they have devoted themselves to the service of the holy ones— "

Therefore, we do find what we expect to find - whole households being baptized. Households generally include children, but there is nothing in these texts that explicitly mentions them.

Arguments from silence

If the absence of infants being baptized is proof that they cannot be baptized then the absence of a prohibition can be proof that it is permitted. Remember that the Jewish people believed that circumcision was the sign of the covenant with God. It symbolized regeneration by cutting off a piece of flesh. Scripture teaches that God commanded infants to be circumcised on the eighth day:

Leviticus 12:3 - "On the eighth day, the flesh of the boy's foreskin shall be circumcised,"

John the Baptist was circumcised as an infant in accord with this dictate (Luke 1:59) as were the Patriarchs (Acts 7:8). Paul boasted that he was circumcised as an infant on the eighth day (Phil. 3:5). The eighth day is also the day of the Resurrection. It is the first day of the week. Peter seems to have understood the significance of the eighth day when he speaks of Noah when *eight* souls were saved through water. Therefore, the Jews had a long history of including infants in the covenant. They were commanded to do so by God. If the New

Testament prohibits the inclusion of infants in the New Covenant, where is it where infants are explicitly excluded? Moreover, could it possibly be that Jews were better off under the Old Covenant than the Covenant of Christ since their infants received some spiritual unity with the people of God through circumcision? Of course, not. This Peter announces with the promise:

Acts 2:33-37 - "Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and they asked Peter and the other apostles, "What are we to do, my brothers?" Peter (said) to them, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the holy Spirit. **For the promise is made to you and to your children and to all those far off, whomever the Lord our God will call.**"

The Jews would have naturally understood in these words that infants likewise could be members of the New Covenant through Baptism.

Even stronger proof can be found in the fact that Paul states that baptism is a "spiritual circumcision."

Col. 2:9-12 – "For in him dwells the whole fullness of the deity bodily, and *you share in this fullness in him,* who is the head of every principality and power. *In him you were also circumcised* with a circumcision not administered by hand, by stripping off the carnal body, ***with the circumcision of Christ. You were buried with him in baptism*****,** in which you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead."

If the parallel holds, infants should also receive baptism as their spiritual circumcision.

Infant baptism poses two difficulties for Protestants. First, it seems to be justification without faith. Second, baptism seems to be a "work" that saves.

To answer the first, there are several examples in the New Testament of people who received some spiritual benefit via the faith of another. For example:

Matthew 8:8, 13, "The centurion said in reply, 'Lord, I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof; only say the word and my servant will be healed'… And Jesus said to the centurion, 'You may go; as you have believed, let it be done for you.' And at that very hour (his) servant was healed."

Matthew 9:2 – "And there people brought to him a paralytic lying on a stretcher. When Jesus saw *their* faith, he said to the paralytic, "Courage, child, your sins are forgiven."

Mark 2:3-5 - "[3] They came bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. Unable to get near Jesus because of the crowd, they opened up the roof above him. After they had broken through, they let down the mat on which the paralytic was lying. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Child, your sins are forgiven."

Luke 7:3-5 "They came bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. Unable to get near Jesus because of the crowd, they opened up the roof above him. After they had broken through, they let down the mat on which the paralytic was lying. When Jesus saw **their** faith, he said to the paralytic, "Child, your sins are forgiven."

Matt 15:28 – "Then Jesus said to her in reply, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed from that hour."

1 Cor. 7:14 – "For the unbelieving husband is made holy through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy through the brother. Otherwise your children would be unclean, whereas in fact they are holy."

James 5:14-15 "Is anyone among you sick? He should ***summon the presbyters of the church*****,** ***and they should pray over him*** and anoint (him) with oil in the name of the Lord, ***and the prayer of faith*** will save the sick person, and the Lord will raise him up. If he has committed any sins, he will be forgiven.

God can produce supernatural effects through the faith of a third person. Therefore, biblically speaking, God can regenerate infants based on the faith of the parents or Church. It is important to add that baptism is a gift. The child could grow up and reject the gift that he or she was given in baptism. In that case, baptism has no benefit for him.

In regards to baptism being a work. Baptism is not anymore a work than faith. After all, Jesus calls faith a work when the crowd asked him, "What must we do to work the work of God?" Jesus answers: "Believe!' (John 6:28-29). Therefore, faith is a work. Like it or not, there is something that we do in justification through the grace of God. "But," as some Protestants sometimes respond, "baptism is just water and words. Faith saves us, not baptism." That's not what the Bible teaches. 1 Peter 3:21 teaches:

"This prefigured ***baptism*** [the flood of Noah], ***which saves you now.*** It is not a removal of dirt from the body but an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

Protestant apologists, such as James McCarthy, state that this is the most difficult text in Scripture to understand. Indeed! It would be difficult if you do not believe baptism is the instrument by which God incorporates us into Christ.

Acts 1:5:
"…for John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the holy Spirit."

Acts 2:38-39:
Peter (said) to them, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is made to you and to your children and to all those far off, whomever the Lord our God will call."

Acts 22:16:
"Now, why delay? Get up and have yourself baptized and your sins washed away, calling upon his name."

Romans 6:1-5:
"Or are you unaware that we who were **baptized** into Christ Jesus were **baptized** into his death? We were indeed buried with him **through baptism** into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life. For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection."

1 Corinthians 12:13:
"For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit. Now the body is not a single part, but many…"

Galatians 3:26-29:
"For through faith you are all children of God in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendant, heirs according to the promise" (compare that to circumcision).

Purgatory

It may be surprising, but one of the easiest doctrines for Protestants to understand is Purgatory. Purgatory deals mainly with sanctification, which is an area where both Catholics and Protestants come close to agreement. However, when the Protestant Reformation began, by in large, there existed abuses concerning Purgatory and Indulgences.

As with all apologetic topics, we ought to understand what is Purgatory before we attempt to explain or defend it. Purgatory is a state or place where those who die in the state of grace are cleansed from venial sins and / or the temporal effects of forgiven mortal sins. This purification involves both joy and suffering and those in purgatory can be helped by acts of charity by those on earth (e.g. Masses, prayers, fasting, et al.).

Let's unpack this definition. First, is Purgatory a state or place? The exact nature of what Purgatory is somewhat ambiguous. Whether it is an actual place or a temporary condition is not defined. One may find indulgences that speak of days, months and maybe even years. This does not have to do with time in Purgatory, but about satisfying the penance given by priests after confession. Second, Purgatory is only for those who die in a state of grace. It is only for those going to Heaven. Purgatory is not, like something in Mormon teaching, a second chance. Because all those in Purgatory know that they are Heaven-bound there is much joy as well as suffering. Third, Purgatory is a remedy for the temporal effects of sin. When we sin, we offend God and we, in a sense, short-circuit the process of our own sanctification. In Confession, we are reconciled to God. In the penance given in confession, we repair the lack of sanctification. Purgatory deals with the latter part of sanctification, not forgiveness. Fourth, Purgatory involves suffering. We are unable to describe accurately the precise nature of this suffering since it is performed upon the soul and not the body, but there is suffering involved. We will explain why this is necessary later on. Fifth, the souls in Purgatory can be aided by our actions. The souls in Purgatory can be helped through our suffrages since they are still members of the mystical body of Christ and prayers are effective regardless if you are here on earth or in Heaven.

Purgatory and Protestants

As stated earlier, I found that Protestants quite readily accept the notion of Purgatory (if not embrace the idea) once it is explained in a manner that they will understand. Every faith has its own lingo and often we speak to others using different words, but meaning essentially the same thing. The same is true here.

Purgatory deals largely with sanctification and the Protestant notion of sanctification is quite close (although not identical) to Catholicism. Let's take a few moments to understand how Protestants conceive of the process of sanctification.

We have already noted in the previous section that, by in large, Protestantism makes a sharp distinction between Justification (being made right with God) and Sanctification. (being made holy). They are related, but utterly distinct. For Catholicism, both are really two aspects of the same thing. To be just is to be holy and to be holy is to be just. Because Protestants make this distinction, they generally divide sanctification into two parts – positional sanctification and actual sanctification.

Positional sanctification is the *state* of holiness that is given to the believer when he or she is first justified. It is not, according to most Protestants, what makes them justified, but it is the result of justification. This state cannot be altered and it is required for entrance into Heaven. Actual sanctification is a *process* that begins when one is justified and continues throughout ones life. It involves what is commonly called discipleship that is picking up one's cross daily and doing good works. Positional sanctification is a holiness that is given. Actual sanctification is something that we must do. Positional sanctification is required for Heaven. Actual sanctification is sort of required. We will discuss this in detail later.

There is a kind of parallel in Catholic theology. When we are baptized (and confirmed) our soul receives what theologians call an Indelible Mark or Sacramental Character. This means that the character of our soul has changed or transformed. It now has capacities and capabilities that it did not possess before. It also means that we cannot lose this status nor can it be repeated. Once baptized (and confirmed) you cannot be re-baptized or confirmed. Catholics also speak of sanctification, which is a lifelong process of growth in holiness.

When discussing Purgatory with a Protestant, first ask him or her whether they understand Positional and Actual Sanctification. If they do, tell them that Purgatory is for those Positional sanctified, but not completely Actually Sanctified. This will make perfect sense to them. If they state that there is no need for a person to complete the process of Actual Sanctified before entering Heaven, then it is important to bring up this text.

Hebrews 12:14 – "Strive for peace with everyone, and for that holiness without which no one will see the Lord."

This text teaches that there is a level of holiness that must be completed in order to enter Heaven (i.e. see the Lord). This cannot mean Positional Sanctification since (1) Paul is writing to Christians (and they therefore were already were Positionally Sanctified) (2) Both verse 14 and the surrounding context shows that this is sanctification that requires personal effort, which must be understood as Actual Sanctification. Therefore, the process of Actual Sanctification must be complete to enter Heaven.

<u>Once you establish this point</u>, appeal to Revelation 21:27:

Revelation 21:27 – "but nothing unclean will enter it [the Heavenly Jerusalem], nor any (one) who does abominable things or tells lies."

The writer of Revelation is speaking of Christian defilement not Jewish uncleanness. Jesus defines what is involved in Christian defilement:

Matthew 15:18-20 – "But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile. For from the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, unchastity, theft, false witness, blasphemy. These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile."

Again, this means perfect Actual Sanctification.

It has been my experience that Protestants already have a working understand of Purgatory, although it is a bit primitive and undeveloped. They may say that after their death they will face Jesus and be shown all the things that they did in ones life. They will be confronted with their sins and feel horrible. Then Jesus will let them into Heaven. This is, in a sense, a rudimentary understanding of Purgatory. The first steps to Heaven isn't unending bliss, but a confrontation with their sins followed by some sort of reparation (i.e. they will "feel horrible").

Working on this level is far more fruitful than direct proof texts for Purgatory because you are laying a foundation of understand that direct proof texts on Purgatory can rest on. Next, it is important to explain why Purgatory is necessary. Again, you ought to build this upon the doctrine of sanctification.

When we become baptized Christians, God sets in motion the process of sanctification. We do not make ourselves holy, but rather we cooperate by God's grace in the work of sanctification. Remember what we learned in our section on Justification. Without Christ we can do nothing (John 15:5). According to the Second Council of Orange, we cannot even think of any good thing that pertains to our salvation apart from God's grace (see appendix B in the back). Therefore, our sanctification is God's work in us. Protestants will readily agree. When we sin (mortally), we stop this process of sanctification. Even when our sins are forgiven by God, we still are further behind in sanctification than we ought to be. At the end of our lives, most of us will be less holy than if we completely cooperated with God and did perfect penance. God, therefore, performs that which we lacked in Purgatory. He, without our cooperation, completely sanctifies us. Just as sanctification involves suffering in this life, it will involve suffering in Purgatory as well.

Although Paul is using and blending several different ideas, he also speaks of a purgatorial state:

1 Corinthians 3:9-16 – "For we are God's co-workers; you are God's field, God's building. According to the grace of God given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But each one must be careful how he builds upon it, for no one can lay a foundation other than the one that is there, namely, Jesus Christ. **If anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw, the work of each will come to light, for the Day will disclose it. It will be revealed through fire, and the fire (itself) will test the quality of each one's work**. If the work stands that someone built upon the foundation, that person will receive a wage. **But if someone's work is burned up, that one will suffer loss; the person will be saved, but only as through fire.** Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?"

Paul is talking both in regards to others watching after the churches he started and our building up

ourselves in holiness. Not all our works are gold, some are wood, hay and straw. The Day (i.e. the Day of the Lord or Judgment Day) will test the quality of these works. Notice that those that have work that is burned-up will "suffer loss" yet he will be saved "as through fire."

Purgatory and the Canon

One of the most difficult doctrines for Protestants to defend is the canon of Scripture. There is a proof text in Scripture that is undeniably taught. It is found in Second Maccabees 12:40-46, which reads:

"But under the tunic of each of the dead they found amulets sacred to the idols of Jamnia, which the law forbids the Jews to wear. So it was clear to all that this was why these men had been slain. They all therefore praised the ways of the Lord, the just judge who brings to light the things that are hidden. **Turning to supplication, they prayed that the sinful deed might be fully blotted out.** The noble Judas warned the soldiers to keep themselves free from sin, for they had seen with their own eyes what had happened because of the sin of those who had fallen**. He then took up a collection** among all his soldiers, amounting to two thousand silver drachmas, **which he sent to Jerusalem to provide for an expiatory sacrifice. In doing this he acted in a very excellent and noble way, inasmuch as he had the resurrection of the dead in view**; for if he were not expecting the fallen to rise again, it would have been useless and foolish to pray for them in death. **But if he did this with a view to the splendid reward that awaits those who had gone to rest in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Thus he made atonement for the dead that they might be freed from this sin**."

If these soldiers were in Heaven – No prayer and sacrifice would be needed since they are in glory.

If these soldiers were in Hell – No prayer or sacrifice could suffice to free them. They would still be in torment.

Therefore, these soldiers must have been in a place or state that was neither Heaven nor Hell, but that they were in need or prayers and sacrifices to be freed from this sin. The implication is that, once freed from this sin, they would be in happiness. Second Maccabees, therefore, proves the existence of Purgatory and approves of prayers and sacrifices for the dead as a "holy and pious thought."

When Martin Luther was confronted with this interpretation by Johann Eck, he did not (nor could he) accept despite its obvious meaning. Instead, he attacked the Book of Maccabees as "not in the canon" and "having weight with the faithful, but [it was] of no avail for the obstinate." From that moment on, Protestantism could not accept Maccabees as Scripture in its fullest sense because to do so would prove that Protestantism is not biblical since Maccabees teaches Purgatory.

Nevertheless, there is a place in the New Testament where St. Paul appears to be praying for a certain Onesiphorus who appears to have died. Paul writes:

2 Timothy 1:16-18

May the Lord grant mercy to the family of Onesiphorus because he often gave me new heart and was not ashamed of my chains. But when he came to Rome, he promptly searched for me and found me**. May the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that day.** And you know very well the services he rendered in Ephesus.

We will learn more about prayers for the dead in the later section on the Intercession of the Saints. For now, it is important to remember that prayers for the dead imply Purgatory and that these prayers are effective because those who die in Christ are still part of Christ's mystical body.

-In Brief-

a) Purgatory is a state or place where just souls are purified from the temporal punishments due to sins (i.e. forgiven mortal sins or unforgiven venial sins).

b) Prayers for the dead imply purgatory – since prayers would not help the damned nor are needed in Heaven.

c) 2 Maccabees 12:46 teaches that prayers and sacrifices for the dead are a "holy and wholesome thought." Maccabees was rejected by Luther and eventually taken out of Protestant Bibles.

d) The Protestant doctrine of Positional Sanctification teaches that when one is made just, he or she is sanctified in a manner that can never be removed.

e) The Protestant doctrine of Actual Sanctification teaches that one is made holy, after justification, by good works and effort.

f) Hebrews 12:14 – teaches that Actual Sanctification is required to enter heaven.

g) Revelation 22 teaches that "nothing unclean" shall enter Heaven, yet many die without perfect actual sanctification.

h) 1 Corinthian 3:11-17 is a complex passage that teaches that there will be a purification at the day of the Lord and we will be saved, but "only as through fire."

Chapter Seven

Apologetics

(Why and How?)

What Is Apologetics?

What is apologetics? Most people believe apologetics is the art of saying your sorry for being Catholic. This, however, is not the case. People have confusion the ancient word *apologetic* and the modern word *apologize.*

The word *apologetics* comes from the Greek word *apologia,* which means "to defend." An apologist, therefore, is one who defends someone or something. The study of Catholic Apologetics is the study of how one can defend the Catholic Faith.

Although Catholic apologetics involves answering objections, this in and of itself is not its goal. The goal of apologetics is to *open the door* or *clear the path* for conversion.

Not everybody is open to a spiritual conversion. Many times, they harbor misunderstandings and prejudices concerning Our Lord and His Church.

Apologetics is the removal of intellectual obstacles that prevent someone from accepting Christ and His Church.

The first step in learning what it takes to be a Catholic apologist is to get a firm grip on exactly what apologetics is and what it is not. It is common for people to waste a lot of time and effort trying tactics that cannot work or may even backfire and drive people further away from Christ and His Church.

The best definition of what Catholic apologetics is and what it does bears repeating: It is the removal of intellectual obstacles that block the path to evangelism or conversion. The key word here is intellectual.

Intellectual obstacles involve faulty reasoning or misunderstandings. For example, if someone refuses to believe the Catholic Church is the true Church because it teaches that we should worship Mary as a goddess they are burdened with an intellectual obstacle. Once this misunderstanding is cleared up (or the intellectual obstacle is removed) that person will be one step closer towards evangelism.

The tools that can be used to remove intellectual obstacles are logic, philosophy, common sense, Scripture, history, sharing personal experiences, appealing to official Church teaching and prayer. By using these tools, an apologist can help clear up or remove stumbling blocks that prevent one from wholeheartedly considering the truth of Catholicism.

Not every obstacle that impedes evangelism is intellectual. Sometimes people attack the Catholic Faith for other reasons. For example, someone may be anti-Catholic and present all sorts of objections against the Faith because they have been divorced and remarried. What is really obstructing the path to evangelism, in this case, is not anything intellectual, rather it is moral and an unwillingness to change one's life-style.

Sometimes the obstacle that is encountered is emotional. It is not uncommon to find people who have been hurt by Catholic parents, Catholic teachers or religious and have developed a very strong revulsion to the Faith. For example, someone may have grown up in a Catholic family where the Faith was rigidly imposed upon the children. The objector may say something like, "Don't try to push your religious views on me! I've had my parents shove all that religious stuff down my throat since I was six." The obstacle may not be the "religious stuff" per se, but the objector's relationship

with their parents that is the real obstacle. The objector is just projecting their feelings about their parents onto the Church.

Another common obstacle is *personal preference*. Deep seeded prejudices like racism, sexism, nationalism and even social snobbery may become a sub-intellectual obstacle to the Catholic Faith.

Apologetics, by itself, cannot remove these obstacles any more than one could determine the color of a piece of paper by its weight alone or the shape of a piece of chocolate by its taste alone. Reason, history, Scripture and personal experience can be useful, but it is not very effective at removing nonintellectual obstacles. In fact, pressing someone with apologetics can in some cases push people further away from the Church.

The chart below gives some helpful advice as to possible actions that may be taken to help a person with non-intellectual obstacles.

Once you gain more experience in the field of apologetics you will develop an awareness as to where a person's obstacles lie and how to deal with it. For now, it is important to know what type of obstacles may impede progress towards the fullness of truth and what are the limits of apologetics in general.

Study the chart below and reread this section. Answer the questions below.

Types of Obstacles

	Intellectual Obstacle	Moral Obstacle	Emotional Obstacle	Personal Preference
Characteristics	Problems with doctrine and practice	Fear that lifestyle will change	Emotionally injured by Catholic	Social custom or pressure
Effectiveness of Apologetics	Very Effective	Less Effective	Not Effective	Less Effective
Best Action	Address objections	Focus on moral difficulty, attempt to strengthen Faith in other areas	Don't argue except to show example of how the actions of some Catholics differ from the beliefs of the Church. Above all LISTEN!	Learn what types of pressures are involved and try to work around them. Use evangelism to show the attractiveness of the faith.

1) What is apologetics? 2) What type of obstacles can apologetics remove?

3) If someone was abused by their religious education teacher do they have an intellectual obstacle? Can apologetics help them? 4) If a Moslem believer refuses to listen to your explanation, what is the most likely obstacle that is preventing him from seriously considering the Christian Faith? 5) Is apologetics totally useless if one does not have an intellectual obstacle?

The Big Three...

Catechism -
What We Believe

Apologetics -
Why We Believe

Evangelism -
In Whom We Believe

Besides apologetics, there are two other disciplines that a well-rounded apologist ought to know as well. These disciples are catechetics and evangelism. Although apologetic disciplines, catechetics and evangelism are different and distinct disciplines they are also interrelated and necessary for a person's conversion.

First, what is catechetics? Catechetics is the instruction of the content of our Faith, which includes a description of who God is and how we ought to live. In other words, it tells us what we believe as Catholics.

The primary way is done is through a catechism whether it be the official Catechism of the Catholic Church or a scaled down version for children.

Apologetics is a subcategory of catechetics. It also instructs people about the Faith. Instead of focusing primarily on what we believe as Catholics, apologetics focuses on why we believe what we believe. For example, in catechetics we learn what is the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. In apologetics, we describe why we believe the Immaculate Conception is biblical, historical and in accord with reason.

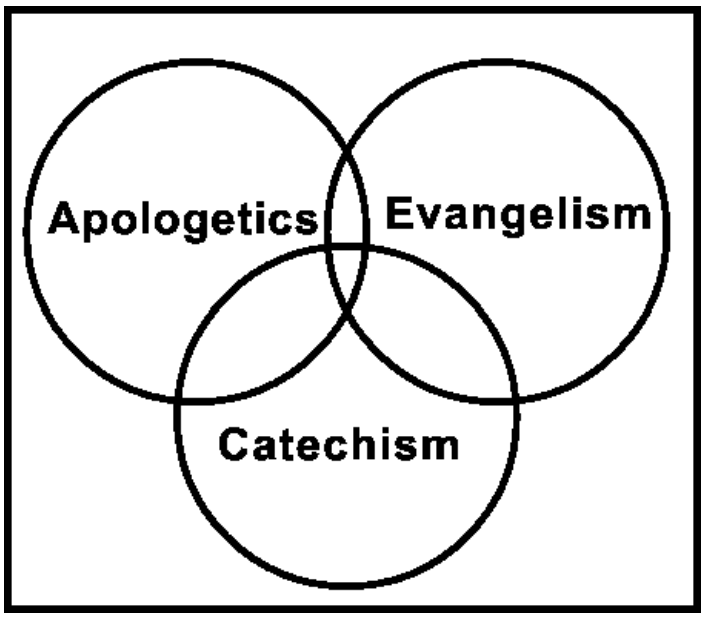
Evangelism is primarily an introduction to the person in whom we believe. Through this instruction, the non-believer is attracted to Christ and begins the conversion process to be with Him and be more like Him.

Since Jesus no longer walks the streets and byways of our world, evangelization relies primarily on the Body of Christ - His Church. Through the example of a holy life and one's personal testimony about what God has done in ones life, the non-believer is introduced to the love of God through the believer.

How they connect

As you can see, all three of these discipline are quite different in that they perform a different task. Learning what you believe is not the same as knowing why you believe it just as being introduced to someone is not the same as knowing who that person is. Yet, all three of these are essential to the fulfillment of the other two.

Apologetics is a deepening of catechetics. If all one learns is what we believe without knowing why we believe, the whole process of learning about the Faith is somewhat superficial or perhaps artificial.



Apologetics without catechetics is even worse. 90-95% of all intellectual obstacles an apologist encounters centers around a misunderstanding of the Catholic Faith. As Archbishop Fulton Sheen once eloquently wrote:

"There are not a hundred people in the United States who hate the Catholic Church. There are millions, however, who hate what they wrongly believe to be the Catholic Church -- which is, of course, quite a different thing. These millions can hardly be blamed for hating Catholics because Catholics 'abhor statues': because they 'put the Blessed Mother on the same level with God': because the Pope 'is a Fascist': because the 'Church is the defender of Capitalism.' If the Church taught or believed any one of these things it should be hated, but the fact is that the Church does not believe nor teach any one of them. It follows then that the hatred of the millions is directed against error and not against truth. As a matter of fact, if we Catholics believed all the untruths and lies which were said against the Church, we probably would hate the Church a thousand times more than they do."1

Just as a detective needs to first study a genuine one hundred dollar bill in order to accurately spot a counterfeit, the apologist ought to accurately know what the Church teaches so that he or she can spot when a misunderstanding occurs. Therefore, apologetics and catechetics are to some extent interrelated.

What about apologetics and evangelism? We already saw in our definition of apologetics that it is in a sense a prerequisite for evangelism. It removes intellectual obstacles that prevent someone from being open to evangelism.

Catechetics also plays an important role in evangelism. Evangelism introduces Christ to the non-believer and it share's Christ's love with them. However, how can one love someone they do not know? If one's personal testimony has kindled a desire to know and love Christ more deeply in the unbeliever, they need to be introduced to who and what Jesus is, what He did for us and what He desires us to do. This is catechetics. Eventually, the more one knows about Christ, the more they can love Him, and the more they love Him; the more they want to know more about Him.

A good analogy to understand the inter-connectedness of these three disciplines is a sailing ship. Picture a sailing ship tied to a port and the ship needs to make anchor at a distant home port. What needs to occur for this ship to make it home?

First, the ropes that bind it to the port need to be removed. This is apologetics because it is the removal of obstacles that prevents evangelism. If these ropes are not removed the ship will never set sail.
Second, the ship needs to hoist its sails. The sails are evangelism which moves a person closer to Christ. Even if the ropes are removed, a ship without a sail will not make it home.

Thirdly, even without the ropes and the raised sails, the ship may not make it to the home port. Why? It needs to be guided by a rudder. The rudder is catechetics. Without a sturdy rudder (and a knowledgeable captain to guide it), the ship may indeed set sail, but it could easily sail in the wrong direction.

Just as all three things need to be in operation for our ship to reach its destination, the three disciplines of apologetics, evangelism and catechetics all play a role in the process of conversion. A well rounded apologist ought to be able to do all three and be able to detect what the person you are talking with needs.

[1] Radio Replies, Rumble and Carthy, (TAN Books), volume 1, Preface, IX

The Scope of Apologetics

Now that we have looked at what is apologetics and its relationship to evangelization and catechesis let's shift gears and look at what it takes to believe it.

There is more to apologetics than simply answering Protestant objections. Apologetics covers a whole variety of beliefs and objections from simple to complex. Let's take for example the Catholic doctrine of the intercession of the saints in Heaven. Take a few moments and fill out the list provided to the right of this paragraph of all the doctrines that are presupposed in the idea that saints in Heaven intercede for us.

As you can see, there is a whole spectrum of beliefs that are presupposed in this single doctrine. Some beliefs are very fundamental and center around the existence of God and his nature or attributes (e.g. that God exists and that God is transcendent so that we can pray for him).

Other presupposed beliefs are that those saints in Heaven are there because they are united to Christ and therefore their prayers are effective or powerful. This, of course, assumes that Christ is what He claimed to be - true God and true man. No one would make it into Heaven following a blasphemer or a lunatic.

Another group of presuppositions are doctrines that are disputed by certain groups of Christians. For example, do the saints in Heaven pray for us? How can the saints in Heaven mediate prayers when Christ is our sole mediator?
Each of these groups are separate areas of study in apologetics.

The first group that contained the most fundamental claims about whether God exists and His attributes is called *Theistic Apologetics*. The word *Theistic* comes from the Greek word *Theos*, which means *God*. This is where we get the word *Theo*logy which means the study of God.

The second group of presuppositions concerning Christ involved things that would be discussed between a Christian and a non-Christian such as a Buddhist, Jew, Moslem, Hindu et al. This category is called *Christian Apologetics* since it involves discussing what makes Christianity unique among all the other world religions and particularly why the claims of Christ are true. This category is sometimes called *Natural Apologetics*.

What Does It Take To Believe In The Communion of Saints?

List what is required to be believed in order to hold that saints in Heaven intercede for us to God.

What is presupposed about God?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What is presupposed about the nature of man?

_____

_____

_____

What is presupposed that makes the prayers of the saints different?

_____

_____

_____

The last group of beliefs surrounds doctrines that are not held by all Christians. This category is called *Catholic Apologetics*. The most prominent aspect of *Catholic Apologetics* concerns addressing those objections common to Protestantism.

These are the three main categories of apologetics. For the sake of completeness, I also added two more categories that are not typically treated in apologetic textbooks, but they are certainly part of the field of apologetics. The first field is that of Epistemology. *Epistemology* is a fancy word for a branch in philosophy that studies how we know things. In *Theistic Apologetics*, we can give proofs for the existence of God by observing nature. By discerning creation, we can learn that there must be a creator. Many people today, however, would deny that we can really know anything with certainty. You may have heard the phrase, “There is a truth for you and a truth for me.” Many times this phrase indicates that this person no longer believes that their senses are trustworthy. Epistemology may help prepare the way for proving God’s existence and his attributes.

The second, nonstandard, field of apologetics is *pseudo-Christian Apologetics*. This is an area of apologetics that focuses in on the unique doctrines of certain pseudo-Christian religions, sects or cults.

One of the most fundamental rules of apologetics is that you need to make your case for a particular belief based on an authority that is accepted by all. It is of little use quoting the Scriptures to someone who does not believe God exists to prove God’s existence. Why? Because if God does not exist, then the Scriptures are merely someone’s personal opinion. You need to appeal to a source that a believer and an atheist holds to be authoritative. In this case, it would be reason, logic, philosophy and basic observations about nature. Just like a man pulling another man out of quicksand by both parties gripping the same rope, apologetics involves appealing to the same authoritative source.

Type	Area of Concern	Common Objections	Tools Used
(Epistomology)	How do we know?	"There's a truth for you and a truth for me."	Philosophy, Experience
Theistic Apologetics	God and His Attributes, Miracles, Revelation	"God does not exist."	Philosophy, Experience
Christian (Natural) Apologetics	The uniqueness of Christianity and the claims of Christ, the reliablity of the Gospels.	"Jesus was just one of many moral sages."	Philosophy, Experience, History Scripture - primarily as a historical source
Catholic Apologetics	Catholic / Protestant Apologetics	"Did Jesus appoint Peter as pope?"	Philosophy, Experience, History, Scripture
Pseudo-Christian Apologetics	Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, New Age, et al.	"Was Joseph Smith a prophet?"	Philosophy, Experience, History, Scripture, Specialized Study

For Christian or Natural Apologetics, the common authority may not be so much reason and philosophy as history and the Gospels being used as historical records of the life and deeds of Jesus.

In Catholic Apologetics, since it is directed at believing Christians, one can appeal to all those authorities mentioned above plus Sacred Scripture as inspired documents.

It's not about Winning Arguments

Is apologetics all about arguments? If we were all like the robotic Commander Data on the Star Ship Enterprise, perhaps apologetics would be all about putting together solid arguments. All we would have to do is put together a solid irrefutable "proof" for our Faith and the person would believe and that would be it.

But coming to the intellectual acceptance that some is true is only part of supernatural Faith. It takes God's supernatural grace to lift our minds not only to accept what He has revealed as true, but to give our amen (I believe). It is one thing to say "I know that God is one" and to have the supernatural virtue of Faith to say, "I believe that God is one." The first is mere intellectual knowledge. It is something, as the quote from James 2:19 illustrates, that even the demons believe. But these demons do not have the supernatural Faith that makes possible supernatural Hope and Charity, which are also necessary for salvation.

> ***"You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder."***
>
> ***James 2:19***

What God has revealed, while it does not go against our reason, it goes far beyond what we can grasp by reason alone. This is why the Vatican I declared:

> "If anyone says that the assent to Christian faith is not free, but is necessarily produced by arguments of human reason; or that the grace of God is necessary only for living faith which works by charity: let him be anathema."

Arguments and proofs are helpful, but they by themselves are not sufficient to bring about supernatural Faith because Faith is a gift of God.

One of the most sobering magisterial teachings on this subject comes to us by way of the canon of the Council of Second Orange. This little known council was convened to deal with the teachings of the Pelagian heresy. The Pelagians taught Original Sin was not a privation of Sanctifying grace, but really a bad example set by the sin of Adam and Eve. If one wished to become a saint, the Pelagians taught, it required only human effort and not God's supernatural grace. Second Orange detailed exactly how dependent we human beings are upon God and his grace for our salvation. Canon 7 is of particular interest since it deals with the question of Faith.

> If anyone affirms that we can form any right opinion or make any right choice which relates to the salvation of eternal life, as is expedient for us, or that we can be saved, that is, assent to the preaching of the gospel through our natural powers without the illumination and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who makes all men gladly assent to and believe in the truth, he is led astray by a heretical spirit, and does not understand the voice of God who says in the Gospel, "For apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5), and the word of the Apostle,
> "Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God" (2 Cor. 3:5)."

These two texts of Scripture cited by Second Orange are of great importance. First, John 15.5 is where Our Lord speaks about the vine and the branches. Unless a branch abide in the Vine (Who is Christ) that branch cannot do anything sufficient for salvation. Jesus does not say, "without me you can not do much" or "without me you can do some things with a lot

of effort." Instead, he says that we can do *nothing* apart from His grace.

This means that the work of conversion is not dependent upon spiffy arguments or compelling logical arguments, it is the work of God.

The fact of the matter is that God doesn't need apologists to clear the way to evangelism. He can do this all on his own.

Even though St. Peter commands all Christians to be able to give an explanation (apology) for the hope that is in you, it wasn't Peter's arguments that brought Saul the Pharisee into the fold it was God's grace. Other examples of God infusing the virtue of supernatural Faith can be given as well.

But Second Orange does not leave us here. Christ says "without me you can do nothing," but he does not command us to do nothing. Rather, he fills us with his life and grace. He enlightens our minds and fills our hearts so that we know things as he knows and loves things as He loves. By this he calls us to be co-laborers with him or as the second quote from Orange notes: ""Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God" (2 Cor. 3:5)."

The Catholic apologist is therefore confronted with two very important truths. The first truth is our utter dependence on God as seen not only in John 15:5, but also 1 Corinthians 3 where Paul says:

"I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. **So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything**, but God who causes the growth." (1 Cor. 3:6-7).

The second truth is that the endeavor of apologetics and evangelism is nothing other than our cooperation with God in His work. As Paul says, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." (Phil. 4:15)

Also 2 Corinthians 5:18, 20 – "Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation… Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."

> It is through the sacraments and the exercise of the virtues that the sacred nature and organic structure of the priestly community is brought into operation. Incorporated in the Church through baptism, the faithful are destined by the baptismal character for the worship of the Christian religion; reborn as sons of God they must confess before men the faith which they have received from God through the Church. They are more perfectly bound to the Church by the sacrament of Confirmation, and the Holy Spirit endows them with special strength so that they are more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith, both by word and by deed, as true witnesses of Christ.
>
> (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Lumen Gentium, I, 12)

This is why Vatican II links the call to defend and share the Faith with the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. By being incorporated into the Church, the mystical body of Christ, the Holy Spirit endows us with a special strength so that we are more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith. Of course, God never commands that which he does not give the ability to fulfill. Therefore, through these two sacraments, we receive the ability to cooperate in the Church's mission to spread and defend the Catholic faith.

The Role of Prayer in Apologetics

The role of prayer in apologetics is perhaps one of the most important and one of the most neglected aspects of this discipline. If we are God's "co-workers" in the mission of apologetics and evangelism, does it not follow that prayer ought to be at the center of our endeavors?

The three areas that I believe prayer is the most beneficial for the apologist is the acknowledgment of ones dependency on God, the ability to transform ones motives or convictions to be united to Christ's will and the ability to see conversions, not as the product of clever arguments, but the answer to prayer.

Why Pray?

Isn't it true that God knows what you need even before you ask it? Moreover, isn't prayer itself a product of God's grace? So, why pray for someone with whom you will be dialoging?

As St. Thomas Aquinas points out:

"We need to pray to God, not in order to make known to Him our needs or desires but that we ourselves may be reminded of the necessity of having recourse to God's help in these matters." (Summa Theologica, II-II, 83, 2, Reply Obj. 1).

If without Christ I can do nothing (John 15:5) and "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:15), does it not follow that at the beginning of every apologetic encounter I ought to have recourse to God for help?

This brings up the second and perhaps most important role of prayer in apologetics - the ability to keep one's heart in union with Christ. Perhaps the greatest "sin" one can commit in apologetics is to treat the person like a project . That is to turn someone made in the image and likeness of God and who may be called by His grace to salvation like a science project. Sadly, this is a very common practice among Catholic apologists. If one's motivation in learning apologetics is to win arguments, build self-esteem or become an intellectual bully, you need to check your motives.

The primary motive for doing apologetics is to be out of genuine love and concern for the other individual. Why should we be concerned? Because God is concerned and wishes that they too will come to knowledge in the fullness of the truth (2 Timothy 2:4).

One of the best ways to keep an apologetic dialogue from becoming angry or heated is to keep your motives in check. Are you truly arguing out of concern and love for this person or are you arguing to win? It has been said that one can win an argument and loss somebody to the Church. This is very true.

Apologetics is the endeavor of removing intellectual obstacles, but if you're interested in winning arguments and proving that you're right, you have become an obstacle. And, this obstacle is something you can't remove without some serious repentance. Remember what Scott Hahn once said, "the best climate to do apologetics is in low heat and high humility."

Motivation is the key to becoming an effective apologist. If apologetics is all about arguments and not growing in the spiritual life (i.e. getting closer to Christ) than your career as an apologist will come to a spectacular end in the not too distant future. I have seen it with Catholics and non-Catholics alike.

Prayer transforms our heart to be united to Christ's sacred heart. This is why we are commanded to pray for our enemies because God does not wish to destroy them but to bring them to repentance. The same thought can be seen in 1 Peter 3:15 where Peter commands us to be able to give a defense for the hope that is in us. Afterwards, he continues:

> "Do not be afraid or terrified with fear of them, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope, but do it with gentleness and reverence, keeping your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who defame your good conduct in Christ may themselves be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that be the will of God, than for doing evil. For Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the sake of the unrighteous..."
>
> (1 Peter 3:14-18).

> "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what recompense will you have? Do not the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brothers only, what is unusual about that? Do not the pagans do the same? So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect."
>
> Matthew 5:43-48

Prayer ought to proceed (when possible), permeate and follow up every apologetic discussion.

Prayer before Apologetic Encounters

Since it is not always possible to know whether you are going to share or defend the Faith in advance, it is good to include in your morning prayer some mention of preparing yourself and the heart of whomever you may

talk to for the eyes to see and hears to hear whatever God wants them to hear..

If you are not currently dialoguing with anyone and you wish too, ask God in prayer, to open an opportunity to talk to someone about the Faith.

Prayer during Apologetic Dialogue

Of course, it is very difficult to silently pray during an apologetic dialogue. You are usually too busy thinking and listening to do that. But is important to maintain a prayerful attitude especially if you begin to feel angry or agitated. A quick prayer for help can go a long way towards defusing a potentially angry exchange. You can always ask the person to pray with you before you begin your discussion. This act alone communicates a lot about your character and what the faith means to you.

Prayer after an Apologetic Dialogue

It is not uncommon after you have had an apologetic dialogue to reflect on all the things that you *could* have said or that you wished that you had brought up. You may even find yourself talking to yourself during the car ride home. Remember what was said earlier, we are only co-workers in this endeavor. "I planted and Apollos watered, but God caused the growth." Be assured that whatever you said, if it was done in love, is something that God can use.

Just as prayer before an apologetic dialogue can help check your motives and desires to be in conformity with God's will, prayer afterwards can do the same.

Pray for those people with whom you have discussed the Faith. Pray for their well being and blessings. Make sure that your concern for this person doesn't end after the discussion is over. Keep them and their families in prayer. Any evangelist worth their salt will tell you that follow-up is key to evangelization. Any apologist worth their salt will continue to keep their non-Catholic friends in prayer.

The Fruits of Apologetic Dialogues

If you are looking for a person to recant their errors before you and accept the Catholic Faith, you are going to have a long wait. This type of "doorstep conversion" is very rare and they are usually the result of God's grace working through the labor of dozens of people before the conversion. Usually, the person who witnesses a "doorstep conversion" just so happens to be at the end of a very long journey.

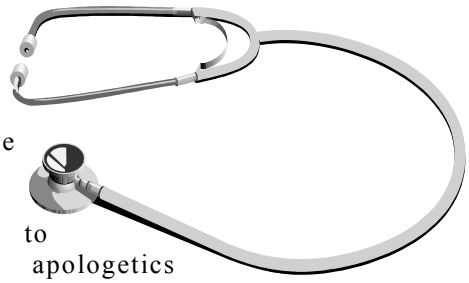
It is my conviction that every apologetic dialogue does *some* good. It may make an anti-Catholic into a little less anti-Catholic person. It may transform a anti-Catholic to a non-Catholic who thinks that Catholicism may not be all that bad. At the very least, it provides a witness that the Catholic Church can be defended and that Catholics do have *something* to say on the matter. Of course, every apologetic dialogue helps the Catholic apologist learn more about the Faith and if it is done well, helps him grow in holiness.

Prayer: Before, During and After

Prayers Ought To Precede Apologetic Encounters

- So that God will bring someone for whom we may be of help.
- So that God will give us the words (if any) that He would like us to say.
- So that God will prepare the person's heart for any seeds that we may plant
- So that God will cause the growth of what has been planted.
- Prayer is the antidote of treating people like projects
- Apologetic Encounters Ought To Be Conducted In A Prayerful Attitude
- So that the apologist is focused on helping the other person rather than winning arguments.
- Prayers Ought To Follow Apologetic Encounters
- So that we recognize that our contribution to the apologetic dialogue was dependent upon God grace and not solely our own wits and ability.
- So that God bring whatever was said in the dialogue to a fruitful conclusion.
- So that our concern for a person does not end after we are done talking.

Diagnosis & Treatment



So far, we have used several analogies to describe apologetics such as a farmer, a co-worker, a logician. This section is best explained by the analogy taken from medicine.

The Church is not so much a country club for saints, but rather a refuge for sinners. It is, if you will, a hospital where sinners go to be made well. The head of this hospital is Christ, the divine physician and the doctors are his priests. The medicine or treatment, if one wishes to extend this analogy, is God grace as mediated through the sacraments.

What then are apologists? Where do they fit in this picture? To my mind, apologists are medics who go out into the battle zone to bring back the wounded. Our job is not to cure a person in the field, but to patch them up so that they can make their way safely back to the hospital.

This analogy is useful in two ways. First, it puts into perspective our relationship to the Church. We are not priests or bishops. With rare exceptions, we do not minister sacraments (except for baptism under specific and grave circumstances). But as the Scripture and Vatican II explains, we are priests by our baptism and we do have the responsibility, the duty and the grace to go into the world and witness to Christ in word and deed. The second way this analogy is useful is that it highlights aspects of apologetics that is usually ignored in the manuals. That is the importance of diagnosis and treatment.

When a medic is out on the battlefield, he or she does not give the same medicine or treatment to all the injured. First, the medic must do a quick diagnosis of the problem before deciding whether to put on a neck brace or to give a shot. The same is true for the apologist.

Apologetics is the endeavor of removing intellectual obstacles that may impede evangelization. Often, a person may not have one, but several obstacles that need to be addressed. It is also not uncommon to find that deep underneath a whole host of objects may lie a key obstacle that is the real problem and that key obstacle may or may not be treatable through apologetics alone.

A good apologist will always be observing and listening for clues as to what this key obstacle may be and how it would be best addressed. If this is not done, you may find yourself addressing every topic under the sun and not coming to an understanding or you may waste your time dealing with a host of intellectual obstacles only to find that the real problem is not intellectually based at all.

Things to look for...

Diagnosis is not an exact science and the suggestions that I make here ought to be taken as a general guide. It is only through experience that you can hone your observation skills to make quick and accurate assessments.

General Demeanor

Demeanor	Honesty	Education	Coherence	Could Be...
Hostile	Honest	Well Versed	Coherent or Incoherent?	Honest, but hostiile non-Catholic
Hostile	Honest	Not Well Versed	Coherent or Incoherent?	
Hostile	Dishonest	Well Versed	Coherent or Incoherent?	Professional Evangelist
Hostile	Dishonest	Not Well Versed	Coherent or Incoherent?	Someone who only wants to "witness"
Friendly	Dishonest	Well Versed	Coherent or Incoherent?	Professional Evangelist
Friendly	Dishonest	Not Well Versed	Coherent or Incoherent?	Someone
Friendly	Honest	Well Versed	Coherent or Incoherent?	Honest Questioner
Friendly	Honest	Not Well Versed	Coherent or Incoherent?	

The first and perhaps most telling thing to look out for is the person's demeanor. Are they calm, smiling, pleasant? Do they appear angry, hurt, aggressive?

Different obstacles usually produce different demeanors. For example, let's say a person is opposed to Catholicism because they wished to get married out of the Church. Chances are that the person will likely be angry when he discusses Catholicism especially in regards to its teachings on marriage. This will be a clue for you that marriage may be the key obstacle to address. Intellectual obstacles produce what I call "righteous anger" or "zeal." As we read from Fulton Sheen earlier, most anti-Catholics hate what they mistakenly believe the Catholic Church to be. It is out of a love for Christ and truth that these people hate what they understand as Catholicism. Likewise, as Sheen observes, if these things were true Catholics would hate them even more. If anger is focused on a misunderstanding, remove the misunderstand and you will remove the hatred or hostility.

Therefore, a hostile demeanor is not always a bad thing. It could stem from "righteous anger" or "zeal" which is a good, healthy response.

Intellectual Honesty

Is this person truly considering what you have to say or are they only interested in arguing? There are a couple of signs that a person is having an honest discussion with you. For example, when you correct a misunderstanding, they will not continue to make the same mistake after the correcting. Likewise, they will interact with the evidence that you give them. Also, they will show signs of appreciation or relief when misunderstandings are corrected.

A dishonest arguer is kind of like a scorned lover. The real root of the problem is that he or she was hurt by their former love and to justify their feelings they will produce a list of things that they didn't like about them. No matter how much you try to dissuade these objections, they are not interested in listening.

Another indication of an honest discussion is the number and kind of objections that are given. Is there an endless list of objections or only a few? Is there some overall logic to these objections or are they completely unrelated? If a person is throwing out an endless rabble of unrelated objections, it *may* be that they are not interested in dialogue, but only running Catholicism down.

Education

Is the arguer well-versed or not well versed? Are the objections their own or are they being recited from memory? If they appeal to Scripture, are they jumping from one verse to another and refusing to spend time looking at one particular passage? Are they using technical language? Do they show any proficiency in Hebrew or Greek? Do they quote any authorities, dictionaries or commentaries?

The level of sophistication may indicate whether you are talking to a rank amateur or perhaps a trained anti-Catholic apologist or evangelist.

Coherence

Generally, people will have an objection and a standard response. It is rare that you will find a person with more than two lines of defense on any particular topic. The first object is well thought out and it is logical. Once that objection is breached, there is a usually a second object that is not as strong but still well thought out and coherent. However, once this is breached, you may find that suddenly the discussion on the topic become erratic, illogical or incoherent. This is because the person really hasn't thought the problem through that far. They will either change the subject or offer an answer that will not make sense. This is standard: coherent objection, coherent response; incoherent response.

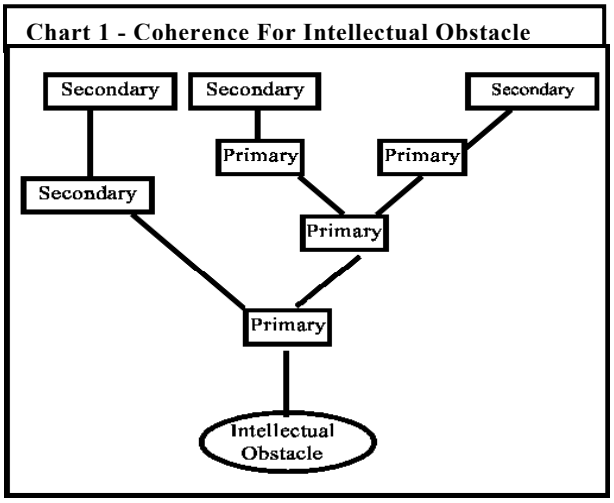
However, if your discussion begins with incoherence, then you may have a problem. There is a good chance that at its root it is a non-intellectual problem, which could be moral, emotional or personal preference.

Making A Diagnosis

Some first-time apologists are intimidated at the thought of diagnosing a problem. But if you think about it, you will see that all these

characteristics are the logical aftermath of a particular type of obstacle.

Let's take as an example the general demeanor of a person. If the obstacles involves some person who is hurt, one would expect to find an aggressive or spiteful demeanor. If it is an



intellectual obstacle, then chances are that their demeanor will be more calm.

Education indicates whether you are dealing with someone who has studied or has been trained to attack the Church. Non-intellectual obstacles tend to produce not-so-well thought out apologies than intellectual one.

Coherence is also a good indicator. Look at the two charts to the right. Chart 1 shows the typical relationship from a key intellectual obstacle to all the secondary arguments. Note that all the secondary arguments more or less coincide with the key obstacle. Chart 2 shows what may be a typical relationship from the key moral obstacle to all the secondary arguments. In this instance, the secondary arguments bare little or no relationship to one another other than they are objections to the Faith.

The diagnosis that you draw from these characteristics will help direct you on how best to dialogue with this person.

Selecting a Treatment

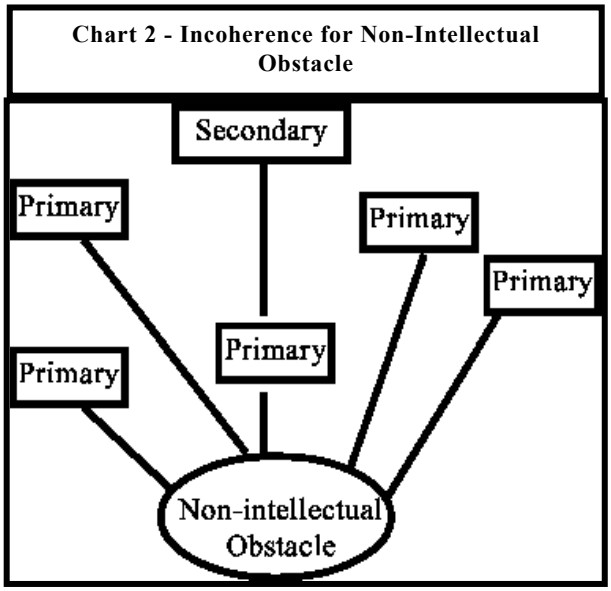
The following are rough profiles of people that you are most likely to encounter in an apologetic dialogue.

Trained Evangelist

Demeanor: Somewhat Hostile
Honesty: Dishonest
Education: Well Versed
Coherence: Incoherent

Diagnosis: The trained evangelist is there to witness to you and not to honestly grapple with what you have to say. He or she will likely pepper you with objections. The relationship between these objections depends on the objector's level of sophistication. Fundamentalist tend to be incoherent while evangelicals tend towards coherence.

Treatment: First, answer their objections to the best of your ability. Try to pose questions that are "outside the box" like "What would you say if I could present evidence from those



who personally knew the apostles that taught X?" Second, make sure that your answer is as educated as your objector. For example, if the objector is using technical terminology then use technical terminology back. If he or she is using this terminology incorrectly, bring that to their attention. Finally, be aware of your audience. For example, if this discussion is taking place in a group setting, the evangelist may be using the occasion to witness, not so much to you, but his audience. Therefore, make sure that you answer as many of the objections posed as possible focusing most of your attention on the subjects that you feel most confident in discussing. By doing this, you will show the audience that Catholicism

does have answers and perhaps this objector may not know as much as he thinks he knows. Whatever you do, do not do something that you will regret later. If the objector is hostile, do not return his hostility. Be firm, but do not become angry or condescending. This way you will win the sympathy of the audience and they may be more willing to listen to what you have to say.

The Wounded Objector

Demeanor: Hostile
Honesty: Dishonest
Education: Not Well Versed
Coherence: Incoherent

Diagnosis: All the characteristics above point to a non-intellectual obstacle. Like the trained evangelist, the "wounded" objector is not interested in discussion. However, instead of using the occasion to witness, he or she is using various objections to justify their feelings towards the Church. It is also common that they will pose a large number of objections some of which are not wholly rational objections, but emotional diatribes.

Treatment: The best thing to do is to compassionately listen. Clearing up misunderstandings may help to some degree, but its root is a non-intellectual obstacle. Prayer and friendship is usually the best course of action. Eventually, by God's grace, they will begin to be more open to discussion.

The Honest Objector

Demeanor: Somewhat Hostile
Honesty: Honest
Education: Well Versed / Not Well Versed
Coherence: More Coherent than Incoherent

Diagnosis: The honest objector is one who has one or two key misunderstandings about Catholicism that prevents them from embracing the Faith.

Treatment: Focus in on the objector's key obstacles. You will likely find yourself doing more instruction or catechetics than straight out apologetics. Give complete answers and encourage further discussion at a later date.

The Honest Questioner

Demeanor: Friendly
Honesty: Honest
Education: Not Well Versed
Coherence: Likely Incoherent

Diagnosis: Chances are this is simply a person who has one or two questions about the Faith. The person may be a Catholic or a lapse Catholic who is unclear on a few points of Catholic doctrine. There is no real sign of hostility and the person will likely have only one or two unrelated questions.

Treatment: The apologist ought to try to address each point as simply and concisely as possible. I don't know how many times I have seen a learned apologist bore the honest questioner to tears providing a lengthy apologetic on a simple question in which the questioner was lost after the first minute and stopped listening shortly thereafter.

While in this case it is good to give more information than less (the added information may help spur the questioner on to further thought on the subject), one ought to beware of being too long winded.

It is always important to encourage such people to continue to look deeper into the Faith. It may be a good idea to share a little about your own experience in becoming a more engaged Catholic and encourage them to do likewise.

The Mentally Unstable Objector

Demeanor: Hostile
Honesty: Dishonest
Education: Not Well Versed
Coherence: Very Incoherent

Diagnosis: For this type, you will notice that the person's appearance may be unkept, their emotions change radically and their objections are so incoherent that it is difficult to make sense of them. For example, they may include doctrinal objections, moral objections, conspiracy theories and the like. If you try to answer an objection, you will find that you are completely ignored or you make them more agitated.

Treatment: The mentally unstable objector's key obstacle is not intellectual but

psychological. The best course of action is to not engage in dialogue, but charity.

Practice Makes Perfect...

You ability to assess where a person is coming from and what their key obstacle comes through practice and experience.

Now it is your turn to try your hand at diagnosing an objector. Let's run through a couple scenarios in class and see if you can determine (1) Whether this person has an intellectual or non-intellectual obstacle, (2) What appears to be that obstacle, (3) What is the best way to approach them.

Apologetic Postures

Just as there are different kinds of objectors, there are different ways one can engage in an apologetic dialogue.

There are four different forms in which a dialogue can take: the head to head, side by side, back peddling and what is called "knocking the shine off a testimony" approach. Each of these approaches are called *apologetic postures* and each of these postures have their own strengths and weaknesses.

In this section, we will examine each posture, its pros and cons and under what circumstances is it best to use a given posture in dialogue.

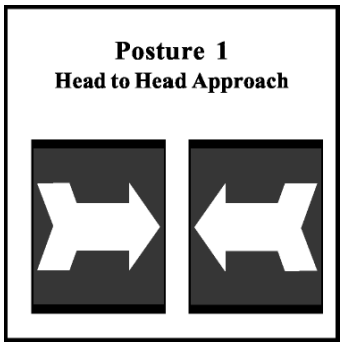
The first and most common posture is the *head to head* approach. This is the posture used during a debate setting where a person will raise an objection. The other person will answer the objection and pose another objection and the objector will respond and so on.

In many ways the *head to head* approach resembles a tennis match. Each person is trying to whiz past his opponent an objection that cannot be answered. Like a tennis match, the *head to head* approach is orientated towards scoring points and winning the match by defeating the opponent.

The *head to head posture* produces a number of pros and cons. On the pro's side, the *head to head* approach is quick moving. It doesn't take a lot of time to complete and it can be done in one sitting. Also, by its nature, it is easy to cover a wide assortment of objections. The objector may raise an objection against the papacy. You may answer this objection and fire an objection against the use of the Bible alone. The objector may answer this and raise an objection about Mary. Before long you covered a wide range of material. When the "ball is in your court," you have the ability to steer the conversation into areas that you are familiar with, which is also a plus. The *head to head* approach is also helpful in demonstrating that the Catholic Faith *can* be defended and that there *are* answers to these objections. This is most certainly a big advantage over the other approaches.

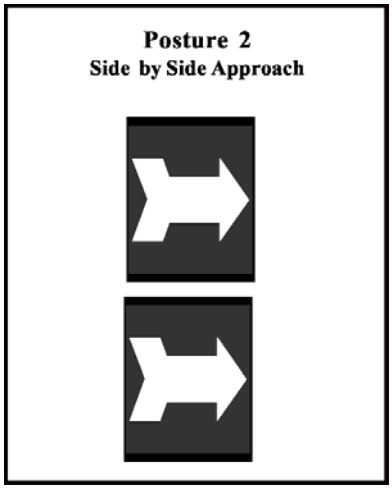
Unfortunately, this approach also carries with it a number of negatives as well. The first and biggest negative is the nature of the posture itself. Your objector's attention (and yours as well) is not so much directed at what is being said as what objection you will be firing next at your opponent. Depending on the circumstances where this approach is used, it is very common for both parties to walk away from the dialogue without gaining a better appreciation of the other person's side. The combative nature of the dialogue sometimes gets in the way. Another negative is that it does not encourage further discussion on a particular issue. Unless an apologist goes out

of one's way to schedule some sort of further discussion, the opportunity is over once the dialogue has finished.



Another difficulty with this posture is that it is difficult to maintain a discussion on only one topic. The Catholic Faith is integrated and interconnected. Under the best circumstances, it is difficult to discuss one aspect of the Faith without also addressing other related doctrines. Just as the *Head to Head* posture is useful for covering a wide range of topics in a single discussion, it is also difficult to keep the objector's attention on a single topic. To do so, with this posture, requires a conscience effort on the apologist's part to keep the discussion centered on the area that you wish to focus in on.

The Side by Side Posture



The Side By Side Posture is very different from the Head to Head approach. Instead of shooting objections at your opponent, you receive the objection and invite the objector to "come along side you" and research the objection together. The following dialogue will illustrate how this posture is assumed by the Catholic apologist.

Annie Anti-Catholic: "How can you believe in the Immaculate Conception when it flatly contradicts the teachings of the Bible?"

Cathy Catholic: "Before you begin, why don't you jot down on a piece of paper the references that you want me to consider and I'll jot down a few for you then the next time we meet we can share what we've found in our research and critique each other's position."

Annie Anti-Catholic: "Why do you want to do that?"

Cathy Catholic: "Annie, I hold both you (and the Scriptures) in such high regard, that I truly want to prayerfully consider whether what you have to say on this subject is true. The best way to do this is if you come along side me and help me do the research. Who knows! Maybe, there are some things that we both can learn from in this project?"

Annie Anti-Catholic: "Sound good to me."
From that you point on, both of you present evidence for or against a position and critique each other's evidence.

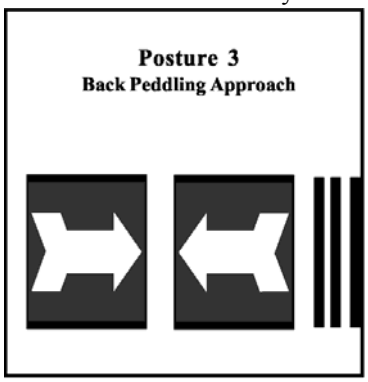
As you can probably tell, there are a number of positive aspects to this posture. First, it is almost impossible for the discussion to become heated since both of you are not trying to "win" the discussion. Rather, the focus of the dialogue is taken off what response you are going to shoot at your opponent, but what does the evidence tell us. It take the momentum of the objector's zeal away from trying to convert you to examining whether or not their objections are valid. It also removes the danger of blustering ones way through a discussion so that your opponent won't corner you. With this approach, if you or your opponent are unable to come up with an answer you can always put it on the shelf until next time.

Second, it shows that you have genuine concern for this person and what they have to say. Most people, if they are treated with respect, will in turn treat you with respect and this is of the utmost importance if you going to have an honest and sincere dialogue.

Third, the Side By Side posture allows both sides to have their say and to keep the discussion focused on only one topic. It also allows you to look into this topic more deeply that any other posture. You also have the added bonus of being able to bring to the floor books and tapes that you have listened to or to consult with other apologists for help if and when you need it.

There are a few negatives to the Side by Side approach that needs to be considered. First, the success of this approach depends upon the

zeal and the sincerity of your objector. In a way, the Side by Side posture is calling their bluff. They believe that objection "X" disproves Catholicism, but are they willing to sit down and see if it really does? Some will do this and others will not.



Another drawback occurs when an audience is observing your invitation for further study. To their eyes, it looks like you are being taken in by this person's objections since you do not answer him on the spot. If you are well known as an apologist, this posture may be misinterpreted by the audience as a signal that you don't have an answer and that his objection is likely true. You should either wait until you have a private moment with the objector and invite him for further dialogue or choose another posture.

The Side by Side approach is slow and time consuming. It requires both parties to take the time to meet again whether it be in person or on the phone or by email or the Internet. The Side by Side approach is most effective face to face since the dialogue is based on a mutual concern for one another. The other medium of dialogue (phone, email et al.) reduces this benefit.

Sometimes, apologetic dialogues are one time events. Therefore, the Side by Side approach is not applicable.

The Back Peddling Approach

Some objectors are not interested in dialogue because they believe that they have the truth and that there is nothing they can learn from you. This type of attitude is very prominent among people who believe themselves to be part of a chosen elect such as strict Calvinists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons and others.

Evangelists with this worldview will often engage in a Head to Head dialogue since it enables them to shoot out what they believe to be unanswerable objections without truly considering your counter arguments. If after a while you do not appear to be accepting what they are presenting, they will consign you to the reprobate and not waste their time with you since you "oppose the truth." How can an apologist have a meaningful dialogue with such a person? The Back Peddling posture is particularly effective in these circumstances. But what is the Back Peddling posture?

Since opposition to what is being said is a sign that you are not receptive to the truth and therefore n ot worthy of further dialogue, the Back Peddling approach feigns receptivity. Instead of offering answers to their objections, but offer questions. Let's look at the following dialogue as an example of the Back Peddling approach.

Type of Media	Benefits	Things to look out for:
Face to Face	Best way to most fully communicate what you have to say and how you want it to be said.	Time consuming. Difficult to present research material without intimidating the other person.
Phone Conversation	Convenient Able to hear the person's emotions and responses	Can be expensive. Limited by time.
Internet Messaging or Chat Rooms	Able to cut and paste texts.	Need to reduce the conversation to sound bites. Very difficult to tell the demeanor of a person making it easier to misunderstand one another. Need to be online at the same time.
Emails	You can provide lengthy responses. Easy to present resource material.	Very easy to skim over material without reading, especially if it is lengthy.

Johnny Jehovah's Witness:

"Jesus was not Jehovah God, but he was merely "godlike." Nowhere in Scripture is there a reference to Jesus as God." Cathy Catholic: "Hmm. What then did St. Thomas say to Jesus in John 20:28? It seems to me that he was calling Jesus God. Wasn't he?"

Johnny Jehovah's Witness: "Oh, this is a common error. Thomas wasn't calling Jesus 'God,' but he was making an exclamation saying, "My lord and my God, it is you Jesus."

Cathy Catholic: [knowing that this was going to be the standard response to this objection asks] "I see. But wouldn't this be using Jehovah God's name in vain? He would be swearing, wouldn't he?"

Johnny Jehovah's Witness: "Well, I guess so."

Cathy Catholic: "Well, if Thomas just blasphemed before Jesus, why didn't Jesus rebuke him?"

Johnny Jehovah's Witness: " I don't know. I'll have to ask my elder. I'm sure they he will know."

Notice how Cathy Catholic used the Back Peddling posture to make a point with her Jehovah's Witness friend. Had she posed the John 20:28 argument as an objection, the Witness would have either blustered through the argument or changed the subject. Instead, by feigning that she needed instruction in the matter she was able to lead Johnny to the realization that he really didn't have a viable answer to Cathy's innocent question. Hopefully, once Johnny's elder is unable to provide a good answer, he may realize that there may be more to Christ's divinity than he has been taught.

The Back Peddling approach is also effective against people who style themselves as knowing everything there is to know about a subject.

The Back Peddling posture is really a combination of the Head to Head posture (in that it has a objection / response aspect to it) and the Side by Side posture (in that it encourages the objector to mutually look at his or her's objection).

Back Peddling is not something that can be done without preparation. It requires a knowledge of objections likely to be offered and where a person will likely take the conversation after the first objection has been breached. In some cases this type of research is rather easily done (e.g. pseudo-Christian cults such as the JWs, Mormons, et al.). These groups all receive standard training and pretty much use the same objections across the board. Non-Catholic Christian religions (e.g. Calvinists, Fundamentalist et al.) are more difficult. However, if you know a particular doctrine or area of study well, you can pretty much achieve the same results with these groups.

The key to a successful use of this posture is confidence. If you know the material and you know what your objector believes, this can be a very valuable tool in opening up a dialogue where it would otherwise be impossible.

Knocking The Shine Off A Testimony

Perhaps the most dangerous and little used posture is called, for lack of a better title, "Knocking The Shine Off A Testimony."

Before we explain what this means, we ought to first explain what type of person may be helped by this posture.

Some mind-science religions (e.g. New Age, Christian Science) and pseudo-Christian religions (e.g. Mormons) base their beliefs solely upon their own internal convictions or testimony that what they believe is true. Sometime this tendency can be so strong that people will believe the most absurd things because they hold to an inner witness that is verifiable only to themselves. This conviction or testimony is reinforced daily by themselves and re-reinforced by a tightly knit social structure of the cult or sect that they belong to. In some cases, even the Back Peddling approach fails because whatever you say (even if you show them in black and white that the teachings of this cult or sect is wrong) they will not for a moment consider the evidence. Why? If they even hypothetically question their beliefs, they would be seen as doubting

their testimony and only the reprobate (those who are not elected into Heaven or Paradise) would doubt their testimony. Like a dirty CD that keeps repeating the same phrase of music, whenever a doubt appears on the objector's radar screen, the person reverts back to his or her's own testimony. How do you get the person to stop reverting to their own inner testimony? You need to knock the shine of it.

With the "knocking the shine of a testimony" posture, you need to be as firm, aggressive and with as much conviction as possible tell this person that whatever they personally feel about something is not hard evidence that it is true. In other words, you have to talk some sense into them and even rattle them to get them to listen. You may even put forward as strongly as possible your own personal convictions that your religion is true and that both testimonies contradict each other. Theoretically, once you've undermined their dependence on their testimony, they will be open to honestly looking at the evidence.

This particular posture is given here more for the sake of completeness than as a recommended posture. This being that it is usually more destructive than helpful.

Many of the religious groups or sects that may require this type of posture often have a martyrdom complex built into their worldview. This complex believes that one of the things that confirms that they are in the true religion is that people will persecute them. The more people yell at them, slam the doors in their faces or ridicule their beliefs, the more they believe that they must be among the chosen elect. Hence, this fourth approach may serve to drive them deeper into their belief system than they already are.

If you listen or read conversion stories from those who have left these groups, rarely do you find anyone crediting this type of approach as key to their decision to leave their former sect or cult. Usually, it is when they encountered Christians who knew their Faith and showed them true Christian love that made the difference. Why? According to their old worldview, those who did not accept their particular group's teachings were going to be damned by God. But, when confronted with a person who opposed their group AND truly lived the Christian life in charity, the former cult member had to make the following conclusion: God is going to damn this person who loves God and who is living the Christian life in an exemplary manner while I (who is sinful and not living the life I ought to live) will be saved. How could God do that to this person? They also begin to develope a desire to have what these holy people have and they begin to critically examine their beliefs.

Therefore, this last posture cannot be recommended. If you do run across a person where you think this fourth posture would be useful, you ought to consult a counter-cult expert as to what method to use.

When To Use A Given Posture

Each apologetic posture has its own benefits and drawbacks. The trick is to use which ever posture you think is suitable for the job. The following page includes three real life scenarios. Read the scenarios and answer the following questions.

Technically, there are no right or wrong answers since all four postures could be used in pretty much every case. The question is which posture is best suited for the given scenario.

SCENARIO 1 - The Loud Party Guest

You are invited to a party that is thrown by your best friend. You over hear someone at the other end of the room explaining how they were once Catholic and now they are saved from this counterfeit Catholic Church.

You ask you best friend who this person is and he (she) responds that they may be a friend of another friend. Seeing that this person has gathered a small group together, you walk up to listen in on the conversation. You find out that the objector is currently a member of a local Baptist Church.

You politely introduce yourself and explain that you are a Catholic and you had the exact opposite experience when you have researched your Faith.

Questions:

1) Is this likely a one time meeting or is it likely that it could continue over a long period of time?

(2) What impact will the other people observing your conversation have which posture you will choose?

(3) Will the objector's worldview have an impact on which posture you decide to use?

(4) Does this person appear to be sincere in this convictions or is he just blowing off steam? How did you reach this conclusion?

5) Which posture or postures do you think would be most effective in this situation?
a) Head to Head
b) Side by Side
c) Back Peddling
d) Knocking the Shine Off his Testimony
e) None of the above.

SCENARIO 2 - The Unexpected Visitor

You are in the living room watching TV when you hear a knock at your door. Thinking that it is one of your neighbors you find two nicely dressed people standing before you. They ask, "We are conducting a survey in your neighborhood and we have been asking your neighbors the following question: Do you think that the world situations are getting better or worse?"

While they are talking, you note that one of them is carrying copies of the "Watchtower" and "Awake!" magazines. They are Jehovah's Witnesses. Since you have already done some research in the teachings of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, you play along and give your answer. After a few moments, you notice that it has begun to rain and you invite them in for some lemonade. They accept and come in out of the rain.

Questions:

1) What is the likely worldview of these people?
2) Would you expect all Jehovah's Witnesses to have exactly the same worldview or could it vary in degrees? Why?

3) What impact would tipping your hand that you have done research into the beliefs of the JW's have on the posture you will choose?

5) Which posture or postures do you think would be most effective in this situation?
a) Head to Head
b) Side by Side
c) Back Peddling
d) Knocking the Shine Off his Testimony
e) None of the above.

SCENARIO 3 - The Fallen Family Member

During a family Christmas party, someone suggested that everyone attend the midnight Mass at their local Church. Your second cousin announces to the family that they cannot go to Mass because they are no longer Catholic. It turns out that a few years ago your second cousin was approached by a door-to-door missionary who explained to him that Catholics violate the prescripts of the Bible by teaching that salvation is earned through works and not by faith alone.

Being from a good strong Catholic family, everyone is shocked. "How could he have turned his back on the Faith. Someone has got to talk sense into him." Then all eyes turns to the corner of the room where you are quietly reading your new apologetic book. The task is now up to you.

Questions:

1) Is this likely a one time meeting or is it likely that it could continue over a long period of time?

2) What impact will the other people be observing your conversation be on which posture you will choose?

3) What does your second cousin's public declaration tell us about his convictions? How does this impact your apologetic posture?

4) Does the fact that the objector is a family member pose any unique obstacles?

5) Which posture or postures do you think would be most effective in this situation?

How to Research an Apologetic Topic

Now that we have discussed what apologetics is and how to approach different objectors, we ought to switch gears and look at how to conduct research on an apologetic topic.

In this section, we will discuss where to start your research, how to develop arguments and how to find extra source material when you need it.

All the apologetic research that you will do from this moment on will follow this basic pattern.

Ok. Now that you know the basics in how to do apologetics, it is time to learn apologetic material. One of the most common objections to learning apologetics is, "But I don't know enough to share my Faith." The idea behind this objection is that one needs to know everything there is about the Faith before one can do apologetics. Nothing could be further from the truth. If we need to know *everything* about the Faith, there would be only a few ninety-year-old apologists in the world. You don't need to know *everything*. Rather, you need to know *something* about the Faith and then share that *something* with as many people as possible. When you become handy with that something and it's all becoming a bit boring, learn *something else.* Eventually, you will become competent in a certain area. Next, try researching another area of apologetics. On and on it goes.

Where to start...

The first thing you need to do is select a particular controverted doctrine or teaching that interests you. Maybe you have a deep devotion to the Virgin Mary and you'd like to learn more about defending the Immaculate Conception or her title of Mother of God. Does the Papacy interest you? Perhaps you'd like to begin your study with the selection of Peter by Christ to be the head of the Apostles or maybe the doctrine of Infallibility. If moral issues interest you, study the Church's teaching against artificial contraception, or abortion or the nature of mortal sins. The possibilities are endless, but the key is to find a topic that *interests* you. Take a few moments in prayer to discern a topic and begin your study.

For the purposes of demonstration, we will select as our research project the religious use of statues. Is their use Biblical or idolatrous?

Since most apologetic objections are based on a misunderstanding it is important to begin your research by learning what the Catholic Church does in fact teach about a given topic.

Step 1 - What Does The Church Teach?

Before the advent of the new Catechism of the Catholic Church, this first step in research was more difficult. The Catechism has made life a bit easier. For this reason alone, every Catholic apologist ought to own a copy of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The *Catechism* is an official summary of the Catholic Faith. It will give you an accurate explanation of the doctrines of the Church and it will also point you to other resources for further research.

Since we are going to investigate the use of statues and whether it is idolatrous to use them, we will flip to the back of the *Catechism* called the *Subject Index*. Look up the subject of statues. Did you find it? Nope. Let's try "Icons." Yes, there is a subject entry for Icons. Next to the subject their are a series of numbers (see figure 1). These are paragraph numbers. The indices of the *Catechism* does not direct you to page numbers, but rather paragraph numbers. Each paragraph in the *Catechism* is numbered in the margins. Take a blank piece of paper and jot down the numbers under the subject of "Icons." As your eyes travel over this page, you also notice the entry for "Idolatry." This is a

Figure 1 - Subject Index / Catechism of the Catholic Church

Hypostasis; hypostatic union:
252, 464-69
see also: Trinity

Icon: 1159
Significance: 1160-61,*2141*

Idolatry: 2213, 1852, 2112-14

Ignorance
and imputablitity of an act: 1735

Impurity: 1852

Figure 2 - The Catechism of the Catholic Church

Holy images

1159 The sacred image, the liturgical icon, principally represents Christ. It cannot represent the invisible and incomprehensible God, but the incarnation of the Son of God has ushered in a new "economy" of images:

> Previously God, who has neither a body nor a face, absolutely could not be represented by an image. But now that he has made himself visible in the flesh and has lived with men, I can make an image of what I have seen of God . . . and contemplate the glory of the Lord, his face unveiled.[27]

1160 Christian iconography expresses in images the same Gospel message that Scripture communicates by words. Image and word illuminate each other:

> We declare that we preserve intact all the written and unwritten traditions of the Church which have been entrusted to us. One of these traditions consists in the production of representational artwork, which accords with the history of the preaching of the Gospel. For it confirms that the incarnation of the Word of God was real and not imaginary, and to our benefit as well, for realities that illustrate each other undoubtedly reflect each other's meaning.[28]

1161 All the signs in the liturgical celebrations are related to Christ: as are sacred images of the holy Mother of God and of the saints as well. They truly signify Christ, who is glorified in them. They make manifest the "cloud of witnesses"[29] who continue to participate in the salvation of the world and to whom we are united, above all in sacramental celebrations. Through their icons, it is man "in the image of God," finally transfigured "into his likeness,"[30] who is revealed to our faith. So too are the angels, who also are recapitulated in Christ:

> Following the divinely inspired teaching of our holy Fathers and the tradition of the Catholic Church (for we know that this tradition comes from the Holy Spirit who dwells in her) we rightly define with full certainty and correctness that, like the figure of the precious and life-giving cross, venerable and holy images of our Lord and God and Savior, Jesus Christ, our inviolate Lady, the holy Mother of God, and the venerated angels, all the saints and the just, whether painted or made of mosaic or another suitable material, are to be exhibited in the holy churches of God, on sacred vessels and vestments, walls and panels, in houses and on streets.[31]

common charge against the use of statues. You may wish to jot down these numbers as well.

Flip to paragraph number 1159 on page 299 of the *Catechism*. Read paragraphs 1159 - 1161 for a nice summary of the Catholic teaching on the use of images or icons. Look up the other paragraph numbers for the subject of idolatry to round out your knowledge.

You have just completed the bare minimum of your first step in apologetic research. If you would like a little fuller explanation of the Church's teaching look up the footnote numbers from the paragraphs quoted. The first quote, according to footnote 27, is taken from St. John Damascene, *De imag*. 1,16: PG 96:1245-1248. Apparently, St. John Damascene (an early Father of the Church) wrote a treatise on the use of images! Jot down this reference for future reading. In fact jot down all the footnotes in this section**: Council of Nicaea II (787); COD 111; Hebrew 12:1, Romans 8:29; 1 John 3:2, Council of Nicaea II (787): DS 600.-**

Continuing with our first step in researching what the Church officially teaches we expand our research to include those texts quoted by the Catechism. Check your notes to see which texts you need to look up (see Figure 3), but where can you find this information?

First, St. John Damascene is an early father of the Church. If you have access to the writings of the early Church fathers, look up the writings of St. John Damascene. If you do not have this set, I suggest surfing the web. Most of the writings of the fathers are available free of charge. Go to a major search engine and type in John Damascene. When you find a site that has his writings, look up this treatise and take the time to read it. I guarantee that it will be a wonderful learning experience.

You may notice that after the reference to the citation there are usually some additional codes. For example, after John Damascene there is PG 96:1245-1248. This (and the other reference that follow the text) is a reference to a standard work that includes this text. The PG stands for a collection of writings from Damascene in their original Greek. They are found in Volume 96, column number 1245-1248. If you are a beginner, don't worry about these references. There will be plenty of time later to become familiar with them.

Figure 3 - Expanding your research

St. John Damascene, De imag. 1,16: PG 96:1245 -1248. Council of Nicaea II (787); COD 111; Hebrew 12:1,Romans 8:29; 1 John 3:2, Council of Nicaea II (787): DS 600.

What Is An Early Church Father?

An early Church Father is one of whom St. Vincent of Lerin wrote as "though in diverse times and places, yet persevering in time communion and faith of the one Catholic Church, have been approved teachers." (Com. 3,8).

They are teachers and witnesses of the ancient Christian faith. Those fathers who are counted among this collection share three things in common:

1) They hold to orthodox teachings and doctrine.
2) Sanctity or holiness of life
3) The antiquity of their writings span from the time of the apostles to that of Damascene (roughly 787 AD).

Although they are witnesses to the ancient faith, it is possible for some of them to have fallen into heresy at one point in their lives or to have errored on some doctrinal point that had not yet been defined by the Church. For this reason, the most authoritative statements or writings of a father are those which were confirmed by the Catholic Church of their day as being authentic expressions of the Faith. As the Catholic Encyclopedia states:

The criteria by which we judge whether a writer is a "Father" or not are:

1) Citation by a general council, or
1) in public Acts of Popes addressed to the Church or concerning Faith;
2) encomium in the Roman Martyrology as "sanctitate et doctrina insignis";
3) public reading in Churches in early centuries;
4) citations, with praise, as an authority as to the Faith by some of the more celebrated Fathers.

Second, where do you find the decrees of the Council of Nicaea II? You can always check the web for this information. A book that may be helpful to have on hand is the *Sources of Catholic Dogma* translated and edited by Heinrich Denzinger. You may notice after the reference to the Council of Nicaea II (787) is the number DS 600. This refers to the paragraph number in Denzinger's source book.

A second helpful resource is the old *Catechism of the Council of Trent* sometimes called *The Roman Catechism*. The Council of Trent met to address those doctrines and practices that were rejected by Protestants. Trent's Catechism is helpful in that it will often address common misunderstandings that still persist among non-Catholics. The old catechism is available online, it is also still in print through TAN Books and Publishers. This section of the Catechism of the Council of Trent is included in the appendix page 38-39. Notice how both catechisms use Scripture and the fathers. Look up these references since they are fundamental texts to understanding this teaching.

Another helpful resource is a compendium of quotes from the early fathers called The Faith of the Early Fathers. Edited by William A. Jurgens and published by Liturgical Press. This is a three volume work that spans the earliest Christian writings all the way to the last of the early Church Fathers.

Once you are done look at the primary source material on what the Church teaches (e.g. the Catechism of the Catholic Church, The Documents of Vatican II, et al.) you will find it helpful to also look into secondary source material as well. Secondary source material is non-official books written by scholars upon a certain topic.

One secondary source that is popular among Catholic apologists is a book called Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma written by Ludwig Ott (published by TAN books). This book is basically an outline of the doctrines of the Faith. Each entry usually consists of a statement or definition of the doctrine, who (if any) denied it, where (if any) the Church officially addressed this doctrine, what Scriptures can be brought to bear on this issue and a listing of the early fathers who also spoke on this issue. It is a wonderful resource to have, but it does have it drawbacks. For example, Ott frequently quotes Church definitions in their original Latin, so if you do not know how to read Latin, this will not be helpful. However, he does reference where the quote came from and it is usually possible to find the passage translated into English in other sources. A second drawback for the beginner is that Ott is not up-to-date in that his list of references do not include Vatican II or the encyclicals of later Popes. Despite these drawbacks, the Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma is a book certainly worth having on your apologetic bookshelf.

Another handy second source is Fr. John Hardon's *Catholic Catechism*. Written before the promulgation of the new official *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Fr. Hardon's work is a solid explanation of the Catholic faith. This Catechism may prove to be helpful when you need additional instruction in a particular area of study.

Remember, you can go as lightly or as deeply as you wish in your research. You can stop your research without ever looking up the footnotes in the Catechism or reading secondary sources. The important thing is that you correctly understand what the Church teaches and why it teaches it.

Once you are comfortable with the subject matter, it is time to move on the next step. You need to learn how anti-Catholics interact with this teaching and how to respond to their charge.

Step 2 - Researching Apologetic Resources

Since the topic of the religious use of images is part of the area of Catholic Apologetics, you need to consult apologetic works that deal with the issue at hand.

Two works that are generally useful for this type of research is Karl Keating's *Catholicism and Fundamentalism* and Gary Michuta's *The Gospel According to James McCarthy*. Both of these books take on two of the most popular anti-Catholic works (*Roman Catholicism* and *The Gospel According to Rome* respectively). They both are helpful resources in understanding what are the likely arguments that will be made on a subject and how to respond.

Another helpful resource is a three volume set of questions and answers called, Radio Replies. These volumes contain hundreds of objections that are answered in a very concise (and sometimes pointed) way. If you'd like a quick ready answer, these books may suffice. The only problem is that they were written in the 1930's and many of the objections posed back than are no longer of issue now. Also, the Scripture references are made in roman numerals and the book names are not modern (e.g. Sirach is called Ecclesiasticus, Ezra is called Esdras, et al.).

If these general reference works are not helpful, you may with to consult books written specifically on the topic. Whole apologetic works have been written on single topics such as Peter and the Papacy, Justification by Faith, Scripture Alone and so on. For our topic, there is a book written by Patrick Madrid called, *Any Friend of God Is A Friend of Mine* (Basilica Press).

After you have consulted your bookshelf you may wish to also surf the web for material, but BEWARE. Anybody can put anything on server and publish it on the web. If you are going to use the internet for this stage of research, I suggest that you stick with those sites that you trust the most. The following are my favorite resources:

Biblical Defense of Catholicism (David Armstrong)
http://ic.net/~erasmus/RAZHOME.HTM

Catholic Answers (Karl Keating)
http://www.catholic.com

New Advent
http://www.newadvent.org

Eternal Word Television Network
http://www.ewtn.com

Bible Christian Society (John Martignoni)
http://www.biblechristiansociety.com/index.html

and of course Thy Faith, Inc. (Gary Michuta)
http://www.thyfaith.com

The links supplied on these sites may also prove to be helpful in your apologetic research.

In addition to material available in books and the web, there are also materials available on CD, audio and video cassettes as well.

Once you have found an article that treats your apologetic topics, it is important to note which biblical references are being used and how they are being used in the argument. Become familiar with the texts that are cited by anti-Catholics and those quoted in response by Catholics. Become familiar with the surrounding context of these passage. Examining the surrounding context will not only help you become more familar with the text quoted, but it will also help you in memorization and locating this passage later.

It is important at this stage to select which apology or argument that makes the most sense and seems to be the most compelling to you. Perhaps it is the argument based on Colossians 1:15 that Christ is the image [ikon] of the invisible God and that with the Incarnation Christ has ushered in a new age or economy where we can make images. Perhaps it is the simple fact that ikons, statues and images are not the *object* of our worship, they are only reminders to help us remember Christ and God's work of grace throughout history like the Council of Nicaea II proposed. Perhaps it is fact that God prohibited images to be made for worship, while God Himself commanded religious images to be made in the Jerusalem Temple. Perhaps, the idea that statues or images are no different than the pictures in your non-Catholic friend's wallet and that they don't violate the First Commandment anymore than your friend's pictures do.

Whatever argument or arguments that you choose, you need to make them your own. Don't try to just quote arguments. Practice accurately restating the argument in your own words and using your own analogies. Don't be afraid to practice your response out loud in the privacy of your bedroom or while you are driving your car. If someone looks at you funny, turn on the radio and pretend that you are singing.

One method that I recommend using to make an argument your own is to ask a friend to pretend that they are anti-Catholic and engage you in argument. This is called a mock debate or dialogue. Your friend doesn't need to be up on Scripture or typical anti-Catholic arguments all they need to do is interact with you. Sometimes, uneducated friends can point out some weak spots in your reasoning or flaws in your analogies.

You know that you have reached the completion of this stage of research when you feel that these arguments are your own and not something that you read in a book. You need to feel confident that you can, not only present a compelling answer to this objection, but that the material you are about to share is interesting and maybe even fun.

Step 3 - Consult with your lifeline

If you see a person drowning, you don't jump in the water to save them because you might be pulled by the undertow as well and you may drown. You first need to secure a lifeline around your waste before you jump in. That way, if the water's undertow is too strong for you to swim someone may pull you back to safety.

Apologetic Research

- Pick a topic that interests you.
- Consult primary documents of the Church to see what the Church teaches on this issue and why. If you would like to go in depth, look up secondary source material as well.
- Consult standard apologetic works on this subject to see what objections will likely be made and how to respond to them.
- Choose which apology makes the most sense and appears to be the most compelling then make it your own.
- Get a lifeline
- Jump in.

The same is true for apologetics. Sometimes even the most experienced apologist is faced with an objection that they may not have an answer for they find themselves argued out onto a limb that is slowly breaking. This is why a lifeline is important. You need to have a person who is well seasoned in apologetics (or who has access to those who are well seasoned) that you can talk to if you get into trouble. Most apologists are more than glad to help and if they do not know the answer to a problem, they will point you to some resource or person who does.

Contact your lifeline and ask them to engage you in a mock dialogue. Ask them to critique what you have to say. Sometimes changing a word or an expression can transform a good argument to a great apology for the Faith. A good lifeline will help you avoid argumentative dead ends and tricks that anti-Catholics will use to turn the tables on unsuspecting apologists.

Step 4 - Go out and share...

With your lifeline firmly wrapped around your waste, it is time to jump in! Beginning apologists always ask: "How do I start a conversation with someone on this topic?" The answer is quite simple. If you know this topic and you are excited to share this topic with someone, you will find your conversation naturally turning towards your (in this case) the use of icons. It's natural!

Think of it this way. Remember the time that you first fell in love. You were so in love with this person that you just couldn't help thinking about him or her. Before you knew it, you were telling your parents and friends (and maybe even complete strangers) about your newly found beloved. It may of even reached the point where people were avoiding you because "all you want to talk about is him [or her]." Many times, the people that you spoke to about your new found love began to share your feelings and wanted to also meet her [him]. The same is true with apologetics. If you have found a line of research to be insightful, chances are you will be eager to share your new insight with others. Don't worry about fabricating some sort of stunt to start a conversation, it ought to happen naturally. Also, don't be surprised if the

people you talk to also want to read what you have read.

Tips on How To Dialogue

Always have a copy of Scripture on hand in a translation that you are familiar with. It is always better to read from a copy of Scripture rather than citing passages from memory. You may be familiar with the passage, but your objector may not. Without a text in front of him or her, they may feel that you are making the passage up or that you are using a doctored translation.

Whenever you wish to use a passage in your argument it is always better to have the objector read the passage for you rather than you read it yourself. By reading the passage, the objector's attention is focused on the text being cited and not what argument he or she is going to respond to you.

Whenever possible, try to give the objector some sort of material for further study. It could be a religious tract or a Bible Proofmark or audio tape of a conversion story or an apology on the topic you have just discussed. The person who receives this material may not read or listen to it. In fact, it may end up being thrown in the back of his or her dresser drawer. What will happen is that weeks, months or maybe even years later, that person will be cleaning that drawer and run across the tract or tape and actually read or listen to it and it may have an impact. Another scenario is that they give the material to someone else who will listen or read it with benefit.

If you are going to give material, there are a few things that you need to keep in mind.

First, I always suggest giving something of value. A cheap photocopied paper is easy to throw away and forget about. A color booklet or magazine is much harder to pitch. The best is an audio or even a videotape. Although they are more expensive, you will receive the benefit of it staying in their possession longer than something of lesser value.

Second, always put some sort of contact information. This contact information may be your own name and phone number, the name of your church or the contact information of an apologetic apostolate. After reading, listening or viewing your material, the person may feel the urge to interact with someone on this material or perhaps they may be intrigued and may wish to be more material on the subject. In either case, you need to make it as easy as possible to contact someone who can help this person learn more about the Faith.

Never forget to follow up! If you know the person that you forwarded the materials to, contact them a week or two later and see whether they had a chance to review the material. If you are going to meet with them face to face, be sure to bring another copy of whatever you gave them. That way, if they say that they have "lost" your material you can give them a fresh copy.

Sharpening your Critical Thinking Skills

Since Catholic doctrine is true, it is impossible for someone to pose a true and valid argument to prove that it is false. Therefore, any argument that claims to do so must somewhere or somehow fall short of its goals.

This is why is it important for a well - rounded apologist to be able to think critically. Critical thinking does not mean being mean or criticizing someone or something. Rather, it is the discipline of clearly thinking through problems and arguments so as to ensure that the conclusions are well founded.

Although an apologist does not need to be a logian (after all none of the Twelve Apostles were schooled in logic) is can be a valuable tool to help people sort out tangled and incorrect reasoning.

This section will give a very brief and simple introduction to what makes up an argument, how an argument fail to prove its conclusion and how to identify and correct commonly committed logical fallacies.

What is an argument? An argument is an attempt to provide a reason or basis for a given conclusion. Arguments do this through a series of steps or premises that when put together point towards a conclusion. Each step consists of a statement of fact. For example, the following declarative sentences could function as premises in an argument:

All dogs have four legs.
The sun is bright.
John is a priest.
Jane drove to work today.
All sin offends God.

The most basic arguments consist of at least two premises and a conclusion. For example:

Primary Premise:	All dogs have four legs.
Secondary Premise:	Corky is a dog.
Conclusion:	Corky has four legs.

Notice how, even if you have never seen her, you know that Corky must have four legs. By moving through these two premises, the conclusion must follow.

Looking back at the example, note how each premise functions in this argument. The first or primary premise lays out a general rule or proposition: All dogs have four legs. This is followed by the second or secondary premises that applies the general rule or principle given in the first or primary premise to a specific case: Corky is a dog. The conclusion is simply a restatement of the first two premises: All dogs [namely Corky] has four legs.

Testing Arguments

Let's pretend that you need to build a wooden ladder to get to the top of your house. There

are two things that need to be incorporated into your ladder in order to make it safe. The first is that you need the right type of wood. If your ladder is made with the wrong type of wood, it will not hold your weight and it will collapse underneath you. The second thing that your ladder needs is to be designed well. If all the rungs of the ladder are located at the bottom, you will not be able to climb it. Likewise, if the rungs are not correctly distributed, the ladder will be flimsy and it will not be able to support your weight. Both good materials and good design are necessary to construct a good ladder.

A similar thing is true for arguments. Good arguments need to be made up of good material and good design otherwise they will not prove their conclusions. But what do we mean by saying that a good argument must be made of good material?

The material of an argument are its premises. If all the premises are true, then the argument is strong. If one or more of the premises are not true or not accurate, the whole argument suffers and the conclusion either is not proved or the argument provides only a weak proof for its conclusion.

Let's take as an example the following argument.

Problem #1

Primary Premise:
All computers are brown

Secondary Premise:
This laptop is a computer

Conclusion:
This laptop is brown.

Are all the premises true? Obviously, the first premise is not true. All computers are not brown. Most computers have colors other than brown. But look what this false premise does to the rest of the problem. Even if the secondary premise is true, the conclusion is not necessary true. This argument is called a false argument.

Let's look at the second example and see whether you can determine whether all the premises are true:

Primary Premise:
The whole is always greater than the part.

Secondary Premise:
A wheel is a part of a car.

Conclusion:
The car is greater than its wheel.

Are all the premises true? Is this a true or a false argument? Let's take a crack at problem #3.

Problem #2

Primary Premise:
All books have pages.

Secondary Premise:
This magazine is a book.

Conclusion:
This magazine has pages.

Are all the premises true? Is this a true or a false argument? Strangely enough, the conclusion of this argument is true. Magazines do have pages, but the argument doesn't demonstrate this because the secondary premise is not true: magazines are not books.

Let's look at one more example:

Primary Premise:
I never won anything in my life

Secondary Premise:
After I picked up my luck rabbit's foot, I won.

Conclusion:
Therefore, my lucky rabbit's foot caused may change in fortune!

Are all the premises true? Well, they certainly could be. But does the conclusion necessarily follow? Did the argument prove that the rabbit's foot caused a sudden change in luck? If not why?

In this example, all the premises are true, but the conclusion is not proven because it has a faulty design. The argument assumes that anything that comes after something must be its cause. This type of reasoning is unsound. It

commits the fallacy of "Post Hoc Ergo Propter Hoc" (Latin: After this therefore because of this).

Going back to your ladder analogy. The argument has good material, but its design prevents it from making a good argument. These type of arguments are called "invalid" because they have a defect in their structure.

Look at the following example and see if you can spot whether it is a valid or invalid argument:

Primary Premise:
Elves never lie.

Secondary Premise:
We know this because an Elf told us so.

Conclusion:

Since Elves never lie, what he said must be true. Elves never lie.

Is this a valid or invalid argument? Can you spot any problems in its reasoning?

If you can't don't worry. This argument commits the fallacy of "begging the question," which will be treated next in this section.

Spotting false and invalid arguments can be helpful especially if you encounter an objection that is not specifically treated in an apologetic manual or textbook. By using the techniques briefly described in these pages, you may be able to spot the flaw in another person's argument or help strengthen your own arguments if it is needed.

Be sure to have these two principles down before continuing to the next page of this booklet.

Begging the Question

Simply put, a logical fallacy is a defect in an argument- whether in its argumentative structure or in its contents. When an argument is based on a logical fallacy, it never proves its case (or perhaps it proves the wrong case). Catholics interested in defending his or her faith ought to be able to detect and disarm these logical faux pas.

Don't be fooled! It's not always easy to spot these little buggers- that is what makes them so dangerous! But with a little knowledge and practice, one can sharpen his ability to sniff out a "red herring" or straighten out a circular argument in no time.

In this article, we are going to examine a very common fallacy known as the "begging of the question" (its formal name is *petitio principii).* This fallacy occurs when the argument's starting premise is true only if the conclusion is true. For example, if I were trying to prove that my friend Rusty is a truthful man in a way that would beg the question, I would argue in the following way:

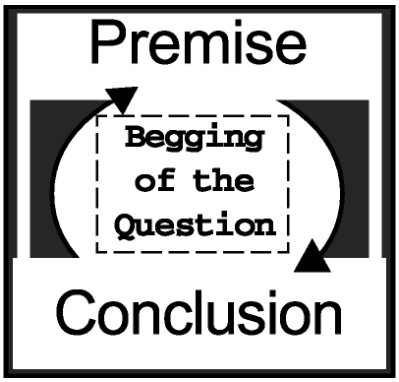
Premise: Rusty is a truthful man.

Reason: Because he told me so.

Conclusion: Therefore, Rusty must be truthful because truthful men don't lie!

The whole argument hinges on the truth of the statement that a truthful man would not lie. At first this seems reasonable, but how do we know that Rusty is a truthful man? Rusty told us so and being a truthful man he would not lie. But the whole purpose of this argument is to prove that Rusty is a truthful man! The argument holds only if we accept at the beginning what we are trying to prove. And around and around we go . . .

In the arena of apologetics, the begging of the question occurs most often when non-Catholics discuss which books are to be included in Sacred Scripture. A good illustration of the "begging of the question" is a statement made



by Dr. Bruce M. Metzger in his book "*An Introduction to the Apocrypha*" where he states:

> *"The central aim of the Protestant Reformers was the examination and correction of current ecclesiastical practices and doctrines in light of the Bible. In the controversies which emerged they soon perceived the need to be certain which books were authoritative for the establishment of doctrine and which were not. It appears that Luther was first led to disparage the books of the Apocrypha when his opponents appealed to the passage in them as proof of the doctrine of Purgatory and of the prayers and Masses for the dead (II Macc. 12:43-45)." p.181*

What Dr. Metzger has essentially said is that:

Premise: The Reformers wished to judge doctrine by the Bible.

Problem: But which books belong to the Bible that will judge all doctrine?

Conclusion: Luther disparaged the "Apocrypha" because of doctrine.

Well, which is it Luther? Does doctrine judge the Bible or does the Bible judge doctrine? If the doctrine of Purgatory is false then Maccabees cannot be inspired, but how does Luther know if the doctrine of Purgatory is true or false except by an appeal to Scripture? And, if the book of second Maccabees is Scripture then Purgatory must be true.
Something similar can be seen in the following statement. See if you can spot the problem with this argument.

> *"Truly 'born again' Christians can read the Scripture and recognize the voice of God therein."*

One ought to ask the question, "How does one know that they are truly "born again?" They may respond that they know by the Sacred Scripture. But how do we know what is Scripture except by being first "truly" born again!

Another way one can beg the question is by defining the conclusion at the beginning of the argument. This is a favorite ploy used by a prominent anti-Catholic. A typical argument goes as follows:

Anti-Catholic: The Bible defines Justification as the transition which occurs when a sinner becomes righteous before God.

Catholic apologist: But what about the other parts in Scripture where justification is spoken of as a process which includes works?

Anti-Catholic: Those passages have nothing to do with justification. Look at the context! None of those passages speak of a sinner becoming righteous!

Here we have a case of justification being "defined" by Scripture (i.e. a sinner becomes righteous), but when other Scriptures are presented contrary to the definition- the meaning of Scripture is "defined" by the definition.

The following are examples of the "begging of the question." See if you can spot the logical fallacy!

Problem #1

> "The Bible asserts that God exists and the Bible is the inspired and inerrant Word of God. Therefore, we ought to believe in the existence of God!"

Break this argument down into its premises and its conclusion. Does this argument beg the question? If so, why?

Problem #2

> "The belief in God is universal, for everybody believes in God."

Break this down into its premises and its conclusion. Are you having trouble? You should because it doesn't have a conclusion. Really, it's not an argument at all. It is a restatement of an observation. It is really saying, "Everybody believes in God because Everybody believes in God." Problem #2 proves nothing.

Let's take a crack at the next problem.

Problem #3

> "Immorality committed by Catholics is the result of a false system of beliefs. For all such immorality is rooted in false doctrine of Catholicism, as Catholic's immorality demonstrates beyond all reasonable doubt."

Break the argument down into it premises and its conclusion. Is this a true or a false argument? Is this a valid or an invalid argument? Does it commit the fallacy of "Begging the Question?" If so, why?

Problem #4

> "The Book of Mormon says that if it is inspired one will receive an internal witness of the Holy Ghost. I read the book and received a burning sensation in my heart. Therefore, the Book of Mormon is inspired!"

Break the argument down into its premises and its conclusion. Is it a true or a false argument? Is it a valid or invalid argument? Does it "Beg the Question?"

Problem #5

> "What separates "Christians" from "non-Christians" you ask? Well, there is a consensus among Christians that you must believe in the Trinity. Jehovah's Witnesses disagree with this, but they are not part of the consensus since they are not Christian."

Break this argument down into its premises and conclusion. Is the conclusion demonstrated by it premises? Why?

Once you are comfortable with this fallacy, turn to the next page and try your hand at another type of common fallacy.

Ad Hominem Argument

In this next fallacy, we will address another very common fallacy. Unlike the "Begging of the Question," it doesn't affect the form or structure of the argument, but rather its basis of reasoning. This fallacy is called the "Ad Hominem" fallacy.

The persuasiveness of a given argument depends largely upon a cogent, clear and logical demonstration of your case. Although this is how arguments should run, in theory, the practice does not always follow. Sometimes, one can be just as persuasive (if not more persuasive) giving a fallacious argument as a true and valid one. In other words, the argument "sounds" like it made its case while in reality it did nothing of the sort. One fallacy which leaves such an impression is the "Argumentum ad Hominem" or "the argument to the man."

What is an "Ad Hominem" argument? The "Ad hominem" argument occurs when ones remarks are directed toward deriding or degrading an opponent rather than addressing the opponent's position. This fallacy shoots down the arguer rather than the argument.

When used effectively, the "Ad Hominem" argument can be extremely persuasive even though it never addresses the issue. For this reason, this fallacy is most often employed in front of an audience (such as in a public debate). The following are a few examples of an "Ad Hominem" argument.

> *"The courts should allow assisted suicide to be legalized since it is only religious fanatics that oppose such a proposition."*

Notice that this argument only labels (or libels) the opponents of assisted suicide and never proposes a case as to why it ought to be legalized. A position is not determined to be "right" or "wrong" by the strength or weakness of the proponent's or opponent's character.

> *"We ought to reject all claims of non-Biblical revelation whether it be Joseph Smith's 'Book of Mormon,' Christian Science's revelations of Mary Baker Eddy, or Roman Catholic Tradition."*

Here the Catholic position is rejected out of hand because it is (unfairly) lumped with two non-Christian cults. The objector needs to first prove that both cults are worthy of rejection and then demonstrate that the Catholic position is of the same ilk (which it is not). Here is another example,

> *"There is no truth in Bacon's philosophy because he betrayed his friends and defrauded the government."*

This is an "Ad Hominem" attack because the question as to whether or not Bacon's philosophy is sound can be determined without reference to his character. This argument has brought forth irrelevant evidence and commits an "Ad Hominem" fallacy.

It should be noted that addressing a person's character so as to impeach his testimony is perfectly legal when his or her general trustworthiness is required. In cases where a person's character, reputation or general trustworthiness is not relevant to the argument, an attack on one's character will result in an "Ad Hominem" argument.

Here are three practice statements. See if you can spot the "Ad Hominem."

"Joseph Smith's claim to be a witness to God's revelation cannot be true since he was a con man."
"Anti-Abortion law ought to be defeated since it is supported by Christian radicals."
"The teaching of the Summa Theologica is a bunch of rubbish since it was written by a Romanist monk."

The False Dichotomy & Bifurcation

Either/or

Two other fallacies that you ought to be familiar with are "false dichotomy" and "bifurcation." The names may not seem familiar, but I'm sure everyone has run into these erroneous ways of thinking.

Both fallacies share one thing in common - they both want to split a position into two separate opposing views when the position doesn't necessarily require such a radical division. Let's get more specific. The fallacy of "the false dichotomy" places an argument into an "either / or" position when it could very easily be a "both/and" position. For example, Protestants will often propound that salvation is either by faith alone or by human works. But such an assertion doesn't necessarily have to be true. Couldn't salvation be through a working faith? The sharp division between faith and works may not be necessary and the party (by denying this possibility) may be guilty of creating a "false dichotomy."

Let's take another example of the "false dichotomy." It is sometimes posed that honoring saints is wrong because we ought to glorify God alone. This objector would be committing a false dichotomy because he places honoring saints and honoring God into different, opposing or competing camps. It's either honoring God or honoring something else. The problem with this line of thinking is that it fails to recognize the possibility that honoring saint's may be another way of honoring God. By honoring saints, Catholics are honoring God's work in the saints life. Again, it is not necessarily an "either/or" proposition, it can fit rather nicely into the "both / and" category.

This doesn't mean that the "either/or" position is always wrong. Certainly, there are many instances where two notions may be opposed to one another. This fallacy, however, tries to separate something which is not meant to be separated.

Bifurcation

The fallacy of bifurcation differs in that it doesn't oppose two potentially friendly notions against each other, rather it denies all middle points which can exist between two extremes.

Take for example the phrase, "Unless you are perfectly holy and sinless, you are only a wretched sinner." This bifurcation fails to appreciate that the gap between holy and unholy is filled with many degrees of holiness. Therefore, not being perfectly holy does not necessarily mean that you are a wretched sinner.

Answers to Ad Hominem Examples

1) *"Joseph Smith's claim to be a witness to God's revelation cannot be true since he was a con man."*

Answer: Valid Argument. The trustworthiness of Joseph Smith's claims rest upon his character. If it can be demonstrated that Smith's personal character was such that he could have perpetrated a fraud then the purported revelations themselves can be dismissed.

2) "Anti-Abortion law ought to be defeated since it is supported by Christian radicals."

Answer: Ad Hominem Argument. The objector does not investigate the law on its own merits, but rather attacks its supporters. This argument differs from the one above in that the character of the law's support is irrelevant as to whether it is a good law or a bad law.

3) *"The teaching of the Summa Theologica is a bunch of rubbish since it was written by a Romanist monk."*

Answer: Ad Hominem Argument. The value of the Summa ought to be based upon the merits of the work itself and not the author.

False Dichotomy / Bifurcation Continued…

Here is another example of bifurcation:

"Unless we become civilized, our nation will become a hoard of barbarians."

This phrase seems to say that there are no degrees of civility that exist between the civil and uncivil. If the objector wished to avoid bifurcating, he or she should have said,

"Unless we become more civilized, our nation will become more like barbarians."

Let's work through some examples and see if you can spot where a false dichotomy or bifurcation is used.

Problem #1

"I am saved by God's grace and not by Baptism."

Is this statement a "False Dichotomy" or "Bifurcation?" What is the solution to this fallacy?

Problem #2

"Our obedience is due to God alone, not some Pope in Rome."

Is this statement a "False Dichotomy" or "Bifurcation?" What is the solution to this fallacy?

Problem #3

"If people don't use contraceptives, the world will over-populate and the human race will vanish."

Is this statement a "False Dichotomy" or "Bifurcation?" What is the solution to this fallacy?

Problem #4

"The Pope declared that papal infallibility is true. Therefore, since the Pope cannot be mistaken in this declaration. He must be infallible."

What is wrong with this argument? What are the premises and the conclusions? Is the argument true, false, valid or invalid?

Complete the following questions on your own.

1) What is the difference between a "False Dichotomy" and "Bifurcation?"

_____

_____

_____

2) What is the fallacy of "Begging the Question?

_____

_____

_____

3) What is an Ad Hominum Argument?

_____

_____

_____

The Accident & the Converse Accident

The Accident

The Accident! Aren't all logical fallacies committed by accident? Well, not really! But don't let the name confuse you. In this installment of "Finding the Fallacy" we will examine the "Fallacy of Accident" and the "Fallacy of Converse Accident."

The best explanation of this fallacy can be found in "An Introduction To Critical Thinking," by W.H. Werkmeister. He explains that the fallacy of Accident "...arises when one accepts a generalization as if it were true universally and without exception, when, as a matter of fact, exceptions do occur under specific or 'accidental' circumstances. In other words, what is true in a general way may not be true under all conditions and circumstances. To take it to be true even under exceptional circumstances is to commit the fallacy of accident."

THE ACCIDENT

"People do not find diamonds buried in their backyards."
[GENERAL RULE]

THEREFORE

"You will never find a diamond buried in your backyard"
[EXCEPTIONS TO THE RULE DENIED]

This fallacy is quite frequently committed by those opposed to the Catholic doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary. Those who do not believe this doctrine typically appeal to Romans 3:23: "[A]ll have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God" and argue that this Scripture verse is a general rule for all human beings with no exceptions. Thus, the Virgin Mary must have sinned.

However, there are special cases or exceptions to this rule. For example, children in the womb do not sin, nor do children who

are younger than the age of accountability. Of course, the best example is Our Lord Jesus himself, the God-man, who was fully human and yet did not sin.
There are a few danger areas to consider to prevent an accidental fallacy of Accident. First, there are general or universal rules which do not permit exceptions. A good example of this is the rule that twice two equals four. There is no room for an exception whereby twice two could equal something other than four.

A second difficulty is that his fallacy occurs when a person does not take the time to carefully qualify their statements. Many times people assume that there are special cases when exceptions are allowed, but they (for brevity sake) don't take the time to properly qualify it. Instead, they just state it as a general rule.

To avoid committing this fallacy, take the time to qualify a rule whenever it is possible or at least mention the possibility of exceptions. Do not commit the fallacy of the Accident, if you will excuse the pun, accidentally.

If your objector committed this fallacy, have them flush out the exceptions themselves. Sometimes this can be a real eye opener to someone who has repeatedly used this argument without ever closely examining it.

To make matters more confusing, there is a fallacy related to the fallacy of the *Accident* called the *Converse Accident*. Like Bifurcation and a False Dichotomy, it is important not to confuse these two fallacies even though they have similar names and meanings.

To avoid this problem, I suggest reviewing this page until you feel comfortable with the concept before starting on the Converse Accident.

The Converse Accident

As you have probably guessed, the "Fallacy of the Converse Accident" is just the opposite of the "Fallacy of the Accident". This fallacy occurs when an exceptional situation is presented as a general rule and is committed much more frequently than the fallacy of the Accident. Good arguments take time to develop and those who don't take the time needed for good arguments often resort to hasty generalizations. These hasty generalizations are known as fallacies of Converse Accident.

THE CONVERSE ACCIDENT

"The nuns at school were very strict."
[EXCEPTION]

THEREFORE

"All nuns are very strict."
[EXCEPTION MADE TO THE GENERAL RULE]

Now, let's examine two examples of this fallacy:

"Since preacher X committed terrible sins, all preachers must be sinners."

"I went to Mass and it didn't feed me spiritually. I went to Mass again the next day and I felt the same way. Therefore, Mass will never feed me spiritually."

As you can see, a conclusion based on such hasty generalizations is quite invalid, not to mention, silly! Like the fallacy of *Accident*, a fallacy of *Converse Accident* can also be drawn from Scripture.

The best example from Scripture is the story of the Good Thief on the cross. Non-Catholic apologists often argue that the story of the Good Thief proves that a person need only confess their faith in Jesus in order to be saved. Thus, there is no need of confession, baptism, repentance or subsequent good works.

Of course, they neglect to consider that the Good Thief was in a truly exceptional circumstance and that his confession to Christ would be considered a "death bed" conversion. Thus, it would be wrong to use such a unique circumstance to establish a universal rule for all other Christians. Determine whether the following statements commit the fallacy of the accident or converse accident.

Let's work through some arguments to see whether they commit the fallacy of the accident or the converse accident.

Problem #1

"Ann, Bill and Mary all believe Mary is a goddess. Therefore, all Catholics are idolaters."

Is this an Accident or a Converse Accident? Why? How would you respond to someone who gave you this argument?

Problem #2

"I know four people who won a lot of money on lottery tickets. Therefore, this is a great way to make money."

Does this argument commit the fallacy of the Accident or the Converse Accident? Why?

Problem #3

"So called miracles happen so rarely that I don't believe anyone can truly witness a miracle."

Does this argument commit the fallacy of the Accident, Converse Accident or is it perfectly valid? Why?

Problem #4

"No where in nature do you find substances changing when their outward appearances stay the same. Therefore, the doctrine of Transubstantiation cannot be possibly happen."

Does this argument commit the fallacy of the Accident or the Converse Accident? Why?

The Review…

The following questions are a review of topics covered in this chapter. Please read and answer these questions in preparation for the practicum at the end of this section.

1) What is apologetics?

2) What type of obstacles can apologetics remove?

3) Outside of intellectual obstacles, what else can block the path to evangelism?

4) Can apologetics be of any use for non-intellectual obstacles?

5) Apologetics is related to what or two disciplines?

6) Which discipline is most closely related to apologetics?

7) Which discipline involves learning the contents of the Faith?

8) Which discipline involves introducing someone to the person of Christ through a testimony of how God has worked in your life?

9) Is Catholic / Protestant apologetics the only area of apologetics?

10) What is theistic apologetics concerned with?

11) What type of persons would you likely to engage in Christian apologetics.

12) When you are talking to an atheist, what authority should you rely upon?

13) What authorities should be used when discussing the Faith with a Moslem?

14) Without Christ, what can we do?

15) Is it possible to argue the truth of Christ's presence in the Eucharist without the aid of God's grace?

16) How do the sacraments of Baptism and Confession tie in with apologetics?

17) Why do we pray?

18) What are the benefits of praying before, during and after an apologetic encounter?

19) Why should a good apologist diagnose the arguments of the person you are talking too?

20) What is a key objection?

21) How can you spot a trained evangelist? How does this effect your apologetic approach?

22) How can you spot a Wounded Objector? How does this effect your apologetic approach?

23) How can you spot a Honest Questioner and how does this person differ from the Honest Objector.

24) How can you spot a Mentally Unstable Objector? How do you handle him or her?

25) Name the four different apologetic postures.

26) Which apologetic posture resembles a verbal tennis match?

27) Which apologetic posture encourages repeated meetings as well as a sharing of information as equals?

28) Which apologetic posture works best when the objector believes that you have nothing worth listening to since he (or she) is in the truth?

29) What is "Knocking the Shine off Someone's Testimony?" Is it a recommended posture and why?

30) What is the first, second and third steps of apologetic research?

31) What two things are needed to make a true and valid argument?

32) What is begging the question?

33) What is Ad Hominem fallacy

34) What is Bifurcation and a False Dichotomy?

35) What is the fallacy of the Accident and Converse Accident?

Appendix A

Canons of the Council of Trent - On the First Commandment

What They Forbid
The (negative) part of this [First] Commandment is comprised in these words: Thou shalt not have strange gods before me. This the Lawgiver subjoins, not because it is not sufficiently expressed in the affirmative part of the precept, which means: Thou shalt worship me, the only God, for if He is God, He is the only God; but on account of the blindness of many who of old professed to worship the true God and yet adored a multitude of gods. Of these there were many even among the Hebrews, whom Elias reproached with having halted between two sides, and also among the Samaritans, who worshipped the God of Israel and the gods of the nations.

Importance of This Commandment
After this it should be added that this is the first and principal Commandment, not only in order, but also in its nature, dignity and excellence. God is entitled to infinitely greater love and obedience from us than any lord or king. He created us, He governs us, He nurtured us even in the womb, brought us into the world, and still supplies us with all the necessaries of life and maintenance.

Sins against This Commandment
Against this Commandment all those sin who have not faith. hope and charity. such sinners are very numerous, for they include all who fall into heresy, who reject what holy mother the Church proposes for our belief, who give credit to dreams, fortune telling, and such illusions; those who, despairing of salvation, trust not in the goodness of God; and those who rely solely on wealth, or health and strength of body. But these matters are developed more at length in treatises on sins and vices.

Veneration and Invocation of Angels And Saints Not Forbidden By This Commandment
In explanation of this Commandment it should be accurately taught that the veneration and invocation of holy Angels and of the blessed who now enjoy the glory of heaven, and likewise the honor which the Catholic Church has always paid even to the bodies and ashes of the Saints, are not forbidden by this Commandment. If a king ordered that no one else should set himself up as king, or accept the honors due to the royal person, who would be so foolish as to infer that the sovereign was unwilling that suitable honor and respect should be paid to his magistrates? Now although Christians follow the example set by the Saints of the Old Law, and are said to adore the Angels, yet they do not give to Angels that honor which is due to God alone.
And if we sometimes read that Angels refused to be worshipped by men, we are to know that they did so because the worship which they refused to accept was the honor due to God alone.

It Is Lawful To Honor and Invoke the Angels
The Holy Spirit who says: Honor and glory to God alone, commands us also to honor our parents and elders; and the holy men who adored one God only are also said in Scripture to have adored, that is, supplicated and venerated kings. If then kings, by whose agency God governs the world, are so highly honored, shall it be deemed unlawful to honor those angelic spirits whom God has been pleased to constitute His ministers, whose services He makes use of not only in the government of His Church, but also of the universe, by whose aid, although we see them not, we are every day delivered from the greatest dangers of soul and body ? Are they not worthy of far greater honor, since their dignity so far surpasses that of kings?

Add to this their love towards us, which, as we easily see from Scripture, prompts them to pour out their prayers for those countries over which they are placed, as well as for us whose guardians they are, and whose prayers and tears they present before the throne of God Hence our Lord admonishes us in the Gospel not to offend the little ones because their

angels in heaven always see the face of their Father who is in heaven.

Their Intercession, therefore, we ought to invoke, because they always see tile face of God, and are constituted by Him the willing advocates of our salvation. The Scriptures bear witness to such invocation. Jacob entreated the Angel with whom he wrestled to bless him; nay, he even compelled him, declaring that he would not let him go until he had blessed him. And not only did he invoke the blessing of the Angel whom he saw, but also of him whom he saw not. The angel, said he, who delivers me from all evils, bless these boys.

It Is Lawful To Honor and Invoke the Saints

From all this we may conclude that to honor the Saints who have slept in the Lord, to invoke them, and to venerate their sacred relics and ashes, far from diminishing, tends considerably to increase the glory of God, in proportion as man's hope is thus animated and fortified, and he himself encouraged to imitate the Saints.

This is a practice which is also supported by the authority' of the second Council of Nice, the Councils of Gangra, and of Trent, and by the testimony of the Fathers. In order, however, that the pastor may be the better prepared to meet the objections of those who deny this doctrine, he should consult particularly St. Jerome against Vigilantius and St. Damascene. To the teaching of these Fathers should be added as a consideration of prime importance that the practice was received from the Apostles, and has always been retained and preserved in the Church of God.

But who can desire a stronger or more convincing proof than that which is supplied by the admirable praises given in Scripture to the Saints? For there are not wanting eulogies which God Himself pronounced on some of the Saints. If, then, Holy Writ celebrates their praises, why should not men show them singular honor ?

A stronger claim which the Saints have to be honored and invoked is that they constantly pray for our salvation and obtain for us by their merits and influence many blessings from God. If there is joy in heaven over the conversion of one sinner, will not the citizens of heaven assist those who repent? When they are invoked, will they not obtain for us the pardon of sins, and the grace of God ?

Objections Answered

Should it be said, as some say, that the patronage of the Saints is unnecessary, because God hears our prayers without the intervention of a mediator, this impious assertion is easily met by the observation of St. Augustine: There are many things which God does not grant without a mediator and intercessor. This is confirmed by the well-known examples of Abimelech and the friends of Job who were pardoned only through the prayers of Abraham and of Job

Should it be alleged that to recur to the patronage and intercession of the Saints argues want or weakness of faith, what will (the objectors) answer regarding the centurion whose faith was highly eulogised by the Lord God Himself, despite the fact that he had sent to the Redeemer the ancients of the Jews, to intercede for his sick servant?

True, there is but one Mediator, Christ the Lord, who alone has reconciled us to the heavenly Father through His blood, and who, having obtained eternal redemption, and having entered once into the holies, ceases not to intercede for us. But it by no means follows that it is therefore unlawful to have recourse to the intercession of the Saints. If, because we have one Mediator Jesus Christ, it were unlawful to ask the intercession of the Saints, the Apostle would never have recommended himself with so much earnestness to the prayers of his brethren on earth. For the prayers of the living would lessen the glory and dignity of Christ's Mediatorship not less than the intercession of the Saints in heaven.

The Honor and Invocation of Saints Is Approved By Miracles

But who would not be convinced of the honor due the Saints and of the help they give us by the wonders wrought at their tombs? Diseased eyes, hands, and other members are restored to health; the dead are raised to life, and demons are expelled from the bodies of men ! These are facts which St. Ambrose and St. Augustine, most unexceptionable witnesses, declare in their writings, not that they heard,

as many did, nor that they read, as did many very reliable men, but that they saw.

But why multiply proofs? If the clothes, the handkerchiefs, and even the very shadows of the Saints, while yet on earth, banished disease and restored health, who will have the hardihood to deny that God can still work the same wonders by the holy ashes, the bones and other relics of the Saints ? Of this we have a proof in the restoration to life of the dead body which was accidentally let down into the grave of Eliseus, and which, on touching the body (of the Prophet), was instantly restored to life.

"Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth: thou shalt not adore them nor serve them"

Some, supposing these words which come next in order to constitute a distinct precept, reduce the ninth and tenth Commandments to one. St. Augustine, on the contrary, considering the last two to be distinct Commandments, makes the words just quoted a part of the first Commandment. His division is much approved in the Church, and hence we willingly adopt it. Furthermore, a very good reason for this arrangement at once suggests itself. It was fitting that to the first Commandment should be added the rewards or punishments entailed by each one of the Commandments.

The Above Words Do Not Forbid All Images

Let no one think that this Commandment entirely forbids the arts of painting, engraving or sculpture. The Scriptures inform us that God Himself commanded to be made images of Cherubim, and also the brazen serpent. The interpretation, therefore, at which we must arrive, is that images are prohibited only inasmuch as they are used as deities to receive adoration, and so to injure the true worship of God.

They Forbid Idols and Representations of the Deity

As far as this Commandment is concerned, it is clear that there are two chief ways in which God's majesty can be seriously outraged. The first way is by worshipping idols and images as God, or believing that they possess any divinity or virtue entitling them to our worship, by praying to, or reposing confidence in them, as the Gentiles did, who placed their hopes in idols, and whose idolatry the Scriptures frequently condemn. The other way is by attempting to form a representation of the Deity, as if He were visible to mortal eyes, or could be reproduced by colours or figures. Who, says Damascene, can represent God, invisible, as He is, incorporeal, uncircumscribed by limits, and incapable of being reproduced under any shape. This subject is treated more at large in the second Council of Nice. Rightly, then, did the Apostles say (of the Gentiles): They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into a likeness of birds, and of four-footed beasts, and of creeping things; for they worshipped all these things as God, seeing that they made the images of these things to represent Him. Hence the Israelites, when they exclaimed before the image of the calf: These are thy gods, Israel, that have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, are denounced as idolaters, because they changed their glory into the likeness of a calf that eateth grass.

When, therefore, the Lord had forbidden the worship of strange gods, He also forbade the making of an image of the Deity from brass or other materials, in order thus utterly to do away with idolatry. It is this that Isaias declares when he asks: To whom then have you likened God, or what image will you make for hill? That this is the meaning of the prohibition contained in the Commandment is proved, not only from the writings of the holy Fathers, who, as may be seen in the seventh General Council, give to it this interpretation: but is also clearly declared in these words of Deuteronomy, by which Moses sought to withdraw the people from the worship of idols: You saw not, he says, any similitude in the day that the Lord spoke to you in Horeb, from the midst of the fire. These words this wisest of legislators spoke, lest through error of any sort, they should make an image of the Deity, and transfer to any thing created, the honor due to God.

They Do Not Forbid Representations of the Divine Persons and Angels

To represent the Persons of the Holy Trinity by certain forms under which they appeared in the Old and New Testaments no one should deem contrary to religion or the law of God. For who can be so ignorant as to believe that

such forms are representations of the Deity? Their forms, as the pastor should teach, which only express some attribute or action ascribed to God. Thus when from the description of Daniel God is painted as the Ancient of days, seated on a throne, with the books opened before hint, the eternity of God is represented and also the infinite wisdom, by which He sees and judges all the thoughts and actions of men.'

Angels, also, are represented under human form and with wings to give us to understand that they are actuated by benevolent feelings towards mankind, and are always prepared to execute the Lord's commands; for they are all ministering spirits, sent to minister for them who shall receive the inheritance of salvation.
What attributes of the Holy Ghost are represented under the forms of a dove, and of tongues of fire, in the Gospel and in the Acts of the Apostles, is a matter too well known to require lengthy explanation.

They Do Not Forbid Images Of Christ And The Saints

But to make and honor the images of Christ our Lord, of His holy and virginal Mother, and of the Saints, all of whom were clothed with human nature and appeared in human form, is not only not forbidden by this Commandment, but has always been deemed a holy practice and a most sure indication of gratitude. This position is confirmed by the monuments of the Apostolic age, the General Councils of the Church, and the writings of so many among the Fathers, eminent alike for sanctity and learning, all of whom are of one accord upon the subject.

Usefulness of Sacred Images

But the pastor should not content himself with showing that it is lawful to have images in churches, and to pay them honor and respect, since this respect is referred to their prototypes. He should also show that the uninterrupted observance of this practice down to the present day has been attended with great advantage to the faithful, as may be seen in the work of Damascene on images, and in the seventh General Council, the second of Nice.
But as the enemy of mankind, by his wiles and deceits, seeks to pervert even the most holy institutions, should the faithful happen at all to offend in this particular, the pastor, in accordance with the decree of the Council of Trent's should use every exertion in his power to correct such an abuse, and, if necessary, explain the decree itself to the people.

He will also inform the unlettered and those who may be ignorant of the use of images, that they are intended to instruct in the history of the Old and New Testaments, and to revive from time to time their memory; that thus, moved by the contemplation of heavenly things, we may be the more ardently inflamed to adore and love God Himself. He should, also, point out that the images of the Saints are placed in churches, not only to be honored, but also that they may admonish us by their examples to imitate their lives and virtues.

"I am the Lord thy God, mighty, jealous, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, to the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments."

In this concluding clause of this Commandment two things occur which demand careful exposition. The first is, that while, on account of the enormous guilt incurred by the violation of the first Commandment, and the propensity of man towards its violation, the punishment is properly indicated in this place, it is also attached to all the other Commandments.

Every law enforces its observance by rewards and punishments; and hence the frequent and numerous promises of God in Sacred Scripture. To omit those that we meet almost on every page of the Old Testament, it is written in the Gospel: If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments; and again: He that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; and also: Every tree that doth not yield good fruit shall be cut down and cast into the fire; Whosoever is angry with his brother shall be guilty of the judgment; If you will not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive you your offences.

Appendix B

THE COUNCIL OF ORANGE

The Council of Orange was an outgrowth of the controversy between Augustine and Pelagius. This controversy had to do with degree to which a human being is responsible for his or her own salvation, and the role of the grace of God in bringing about salvation. The Pelagians held that human beings are born in a state of innocence, i.e., that there is no such thing as a sinful nature or original sin.

As a result of this view, they held that a state of sinless perfection was achievable in this life. The Council of Orange dealt with the Semi-Pelagian doctrine that the human race, though fallen and possessed of a sinful nature, is still "good" enough to able to lay hold of the grace of God through an act of unredeemed human will. As you read the Canons of the Council of Orange, you will be able to see where John Calvin derived his views of the total depravity of the human race.

THE CANONS OF THE COUNCIL OF ORANGE (529 AD)

CANON 1. If anyone denies that it is the whole man, that is, both body and soul, that was "changed for the worse" through the offense of Adam's sin, but believes that the freedom of the soul remains unimpaired and that only the body is subject to corruption, he is deceived by the error of Pelagius and contradicts the scripture which says, "The soul that sins shall die" (Ezek. 18:20); and, "Do you not know that if you yield yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are the slaves of the one whom you obey?" (Rom. 6:126); and, "For whatever overcomes a man, to that he is enslaved" (2 Pet. 2:19).

CANON 2. If anyone asserts that Adam's sin affected him alone and not his descendants also, or at least if he declares that it is only the death of the body which is the punishment for sin, and not also that sin, which is the death of the soul, passed through one man to the whole human race, he does injustice to God and contradicts the Apostle, who says, "Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned" (Rom. 5:12).

CANON 3. If anyone says that the grace of God can be conferred as a result of human prayer, but that it is not grace itself which makes us pray to God, he contradicts the prophet Isaiah, or the Apostle who says the same thing, "I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me" (Rom 10:20, quoting Isa. 65:1).

CANON 4. If anyone maintains that God awaits our will to be cleansed from sin, but does not confess that even our will to be cleansed comes to us through the infusion and working of the Holy Spirit, he resists the Holy Spirit himself who says through Solomon, "The will is prepared by the Lord" (Prov. 8:35, LXX), and the salutary word of the Apostle, "For God is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13).

CANON 5. If anyone says that not only the increase of faith but also its beginning and the very desire for faith, by which we believe in Him who justifies the ungodly and comes to

the regeneration of holy baptism -- if anyone says that this belongs to us by nature and not by a gift of grace, that is, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit amending our will and turning it from unbelief to faith and from godlessness to godliness, it is proof that he is opposed to the teaching of the Apostles, for blessed Paul says, "And I am sure that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6). And again, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). For those who state that the faith by which we believe in God is natural make all who are separated from the Church of Christ by definition in some measure believers.

CANON 6. If anyone says that God has mercy upon us when, apart from His grace, we believe, will, desire, strive, labor, pray, watch, study, seek, ask, or knock, but does not confess that it is by the infusion and inspiration of the Holy Spirit within us that we have the faith, the will, or the strength to do all these things as we ought; or if anyone makes the assistance of grace depend on the humility or obedience of man and does not agree that it is a gift of grace itself that we are obedient and humble, he contradicts the Apostle who says, "What have you that you did not receive?" (1 Cor. 4:7), and, "But by the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Cor. 15:10).

CANON 7. If anyone affirms that we can form any right opinion or make any right choice which relates to the salvation of eternal life, as is expedient for us, or that we can be saved, that is, assent to the preaching of the gospel through our natural powers without the illumination and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who makes all men gladly assent to and believe in the truth, he is led astray by a heretical spirit, and does not understand the voice of God who says in the Gospel, "For apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5), and the word of the Apostle, "Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God" (2 Cor. 3:5).

CANON 8. If anyone maintains that some are able to come to the grace of baptism by mercy but others through free will, which has manifestly been corrupted in all those who have been born after the transgression of the first man, it is proof that he has no place in the true faith. For he denies that the free will of all men has been weakened through the sin of the first man, or at least holds that it has been affected in such a way that they have still the ability to seek the mystery of eternal salvation by themselves without the revelation of God. The Lord himself shows how contradictory this is by declaring that no one is able to come to him "unless the Father who sent me draws him" (John 6:44), as he also says to Peter, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 16:17), and as the Apostle says, "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:3).

CANON 9. Concerning the succor of God. It is a mark of divine favor when we are of a right purpose and keep our feet from hypocrisy and unrighteousness; for as often as we do good, God is at work in us and with us, in order that we may do so.

CANON 10. Concerning the succor of God. The succor of God is to be ever sought by the regenerate and converted also, so that they may be able to come to a successful end or persevere in good works.

CANON 11. Concerning the duty to pray. None would make any true prayer to the Lord had he not received from him the object of his prayer, as it is written, "Of thy own have we

given thee" (1 Chron. 29:14).

CANON 12. Of what sort we are whom God loves. God loves us for what we shall be by his gift, and not by our own deserving.

CANON 13. Concerning the restoration of free will. The freedom of will that was destroyed in the first man can be restored only by the grace of baptism, for what is lost can be returned only by the one who was able to give it. Hence the Truth itself declares: "So if the Son makes you free, you
will be free indeed" (John 8:36).

CANON 14. No mean wretch is freed from his sorrowful state, however great it may be, save the one who is anticipated by the mercy of God, as the Psalmist says, "Let thy compassion come speedily to meet us" (Ps. 79:8), and again, "My God in his steadfast love will meet me" (Ps. 59:10).

CANON 15. Adam was changed, but for the worse, through his own iniquity from what God made him. Through the grace of God the believer is changed, but for the better, from what his iniquity has done for him. The one, therefore, was the change brought about by the first sinner; the other, according to the Psalmist, is the change of the right hand of the Most High (Ps. 77:10).

CANON 16. No man shall be honored by his seeming attainment, as though it were not a gift, or suppose that he has received it because a missive from without stated it in writing or in speech. For the Apostle speaks thus, "For if justification were through the law, then Christ died to no purpose" (Gal. 2:21); and "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men" (Eph. 4:8, quoting Ps. 68:18). It is from this source that any man has what he does; but whoever denies that he has it from this source either does not truly have it, or else "even what he has will be taken away" (Matt. 25:29).

CANON 17. Concerning Christian courage. The courage of the Gentiles is produced by simple greed, but the courage of Christians by the love of God which "has been poured into our hearts" not by freedom of will from our own side but "through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us" (Rom. 5:5).

CANON 18. That grace is not preceded by merit. Recompense is due to good works if they are performed; but grace, to which we have no claim, precedes them, to enable them to be done.

CANON 19. That a man can be saved only when God shows mercy. Human nature, even though it remained in that sound state in which it was created, could be no means save itself, without the assistance of the Creator; hence since man cannot safeguard his salvation without the grace of God, which is a gift, how will he be able to restore what he has lost without the grace of God?

CANON 20. That a man can do no good without God. God does much that is good in a man that the man does not do; but a man does nothing good for which God is not responsible, so as to let him do it.

CANON 21. Concerning nature and grace. As the Apostle most truly says to those who would be justified by the law and have fallen from grace, "If justification were through the law, then Christ died to no purpose" (Gal. 2:21), so it is most truly declared to those who imagine that grace, which faith in Christ advocates and lays hold of, is nature: "If justification were through nature, then Christ died to no purpose." Now there was indeed the law, but it did not justify, and there was indeed nature, but it did not justify. Not in vain did Christ therefore die, so that the law might be fulfilled by him who said, "I have

come not to abolish them <the law and prophets> but to fulfill them" (Matt. 5:17), and that the nature which had been destroyed by Adam might be restored by him who said that he had come "to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10).

CANON 22. Concerning those things that belong to man. No man has anything of his own but untruth and sin. But if a man has any truth or righteousness, it from that fountain for which we must thirst in this desert, so that we may be refreshed from it as by drops of water and not faint on the
way.

CANON 23. Concerning the will of God and of man. Men do their own will and not the will of God when they do what displeases him; but when they follow their own will and comply with the will of God, however willingly they do so, yet it is his will by which what they will is both prepared and instructed.

CANON 24. Concerning the branches of the vine. The branches on the vine do not give life to the vine, but receive life from it; thus the vine is related to its branches in such a way that it supplies them with what they need to live, and does not take this from them. Thus it is to the advantage of the disciples, not Christ, both to have Christ abiding in them and to abide in Christ. For if the vine is cut down another can shoot up from the live root; but one who is cut off from the vine cannot live without the root (John 15:5ff).

CANON 25. Concerning the love with which we love God. It is wholly a gift of God to love God. He who loves, even though he is not loved, allowed himself to be loved. We are loved, even when we displease him, so that we might have means to please him. For the Spirit, whom we love with the Father and the Son, has poured into our hearts the love of the Father and the Son (Rom. 5:5).

CONCLUSION. And thus according to the passages of holy scripture quoted above or the interpretations of the ancient Fathers we must, under the blessing of God, preach and believe as follows. The sin of the first man has so impaired and weakened free will that no one thereafter can either love God as he ought or believe in God or do good for God's sake, unless the grace of divine mercy has preceded him. We therefore believe that the glorious faith which was given to Abel the righteous, and Noah, and Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and to all the saints of old, and which the Apostle Paul <sic> commends in extolling them (Heb. 11), was not given through natural goodness as it was before to Adam, but was bestowed by the grace of God. And we know and also believe that even after the coming of our Lord this grace is not to be found in the free will of all who desire to be baptized, but is bestowed by the kindness of Christ, as has already been frequently stated and as the Apostle Paul declares, "For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake" (Phil. 1:29). And again, "He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6). And again, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and it is not your own doing, it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). And as the Apostle says of himself, "I have obtained mercy to be faithful" (1 Cor. 7:25, cf. 1 Tim. 1:13). He did not say, "because I was faithful," but "to be faithful." And again, "What have you that you did not receive?" (1 Cor. 4:7). And again, "Every good endowment and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights" (Jas. 1:17). And again, "No one can receive anything except what is given him from heaven" (John 3:27). There are innumerable passages of holy scripture which can be quoted to prove the case for grace, but they have been omitted for the sake of

brevity, because further examples will not really be of use where few are deemed sufficient.

According to the catholic faith we also believe that after grace has been received through baptism, all baptized persons have the ability and responsibility, if they desire to labor faithfully, to perform with the aid and cooperation of Christ what is of essential importance in regard to the salvation of their soul. We not only do not believe that any are foreordained to evil by the power of God, but even state with utter abhorrence that if there are those who want to believe so evil a thing, they are anathema. We also believe and confess to our benefit that in every good work it is not we who take the initiative and are then assisted through the mercy of God, but God himself first inspires in us both faith in him and love for him without any previous good works of our own that deserve reward, so that we may both faithfully seek the sacrament of baptism, and after baptism be able by his help to do what is pleasing to him. We must therefore most evidently believe that the praiseworthy faith of the thief whom the Lord called to his home in paradise, and of Cornelius the centurion, to whom the angel of the Lord was sent, and of Zacchaeus, who was worthy to receive the Lord himself, was not a natural endowment but a gift of God's kindness.

Appendix C

On Justification (CCC 1990-1995)

1990 Justification detaches man from sin which contradicts the love of God, and purifies his heart of sin. Justification follows upon God's merciful initiative of offering forgiveness. It reconciles man with God. It frees from the enslavement to sin, and it heals.

1991 Justification is at the same time the acceptance of God's righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ. Righteousness (or "justice") here means the rectitude of divine love. With justification, faith, hope, and charity are poured into our hearts, and obedience to the divine will is granted us.

1992 Justification has been merited for us by the Passion of Christ who offered himself on the cross as a living victim, holy and pleasing to God, and whose blood has become the instrument of atonement for the sins of all men. Justification is conferred in Baptism, the sacrament of faith. It conforms us to the righteousness of God, who makes us inwardly just by the power of His mercy. Its purpose is the glory of God and of Christ, and the gift of eternal life:[40] But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation by His blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in His divine forbearance He had passed over former sins; it was to prove at the present time that He himself is righteous and that He justifies him who has faith in Jesus.[41]

1993 Justification establishes cooperation between God's grace and man's freedom. On man's part it is expressed by the assent of faith to the Word of God, which invites him to conversion, and in the cooperation of charity with the prompting of the Holy Spirit who precedes and preserves his assent:
When God touches man's heart through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, man himself is not inactive while receiving that inspiration, since he could reject it; and yet, without God's grace, he cannot by his own free will move himself toward justice in God's sight.[42]

1994 Justification is the most excellent work of God's love made manifest in Christ Jesus and granted by the Holy Spirit. It is the opinion of St. Augustine that "the justification of the wicked is a greater work than the creation of heaven and earth," because "heaven and earth will pass away but the salvation and justification of the elect . . . will not pass away."[43] He holds also that the justification of sinners surpasses the creation of the angels in justice, in that it bears witness to a greater mercy.

1995 The Holy Spirit is the master of the interior life. By giving birth to the "inner man,"[44] justification entails the sanctification of his whole being:
Just as you once yielded your members to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now yield your members to righteousness for sanctification.... But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the return you get is sanctification and its end, eternal life.[45]