

Mary Worship, Christianity and Roman Catholicism : Part 1

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Roman Catholic Practices: Praying To Mary, Worshipping Mary, Street Processions And Kissing Statuettes, Rightly Divide The Word Of Truth, Test All Doctrines And Beliefs With The Word, Powerful Anointing Of The Holy Spirit Fuels Great Commission, Persecution Results In Widespread Propagation Of The Gospel, Gospel Of Salvation Was Delivered To The Jewish Nation First, Gospel Preached To All Nations, Conversion Of Saul Of Tarsus, Apostle Peter's Vision Results In The Gentile Believers Being Embraced By The Church, Persecution Of First Century Church, Disciples First Called "Christians" At Antioch, First Century Sects And Damnable Heresies, False Doctrines, False Brethren

A number of years ago while engaging in some messageboard conference browsing, I came upon the following remarks, which I assume were made by a member of the Roman Catholic Church:

----- Begin Quote -----

"Catholics would agree that the Blessed Virgin Mary should not be worshipped; that is taught by the Catholic Church to be a sin."

"There is no reason to suppose that it is inappropriate to ask for her prayers, though. The word "pray" means "ask, beg, petition or entreat." There is nothing that limits our requests, petitions or entreaties to the mighty Triune God only."

----- End Quote -----

In my view, it appears that these two statements contradict each other. If, as the first quote states, the Roman Catholic Church does not condone the worship of Mary, why then do we see so many processions throughout the world -- such as where I live -- where statues of Mary are carried on shoulders, or on a platform, down city streets, or from door-to-door? In my locale, it is a common practice for the locals to kiss Mary's statuette when she is taken from house-to-house each year. Is this not a form of blatant idol worship which the Holy Bible explicitly warns us against? Is it also not a form of worship when fervent prayers are made to Mary, in the vain hope that a particular petition may be granted?

As I explain in a number of other articles such as "Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth", in discussing any matter which concerns our Christian faith, it is very important that as Believers, we try -- or test -- each doctrine or belief in order to determine if it conforms with and agrees with the doctrines which were taught and promoted by Jesus Christ and the Apostles and Disciples of the First Century. After all, it is only God's Word -- that is, the Bible -- which serves

as the sole valid source of authority for our beliefs. It is the foundation of our faith, and a clear record of what was said and taught almost two thousand years ago. Furthermore, the reason why we test all things against the Scriptures in order to determine whether or not they are true, is because God's Word is Divinely Inspired. Consider these verses:

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

2 Timothy 2:15, KJV

"And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."

Acts 17:10-11, KJV

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."

1 John 4:1, KJV

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:"

2 Timothy 3:16, KJV

"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

2 Peter 1:21, KJV

Having stated the above, we are now going to delve into the Scriptures in order to determine whether or not worshipping Mary, praying to Mary, and creating statues and figurines in her supposed likeness truly conform to God's Word and Will.

In the Book of Acts -- which is also known as the Acts of the Apostles -- we learn about the early history of our Christian faith, and how it first began to be propagated from Jerusalem immediately following Jesus' Ascension into Heaven. As many of my readers will know, this propagation was a result of the First Century Disciples being anointed with the Power of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost in Acts chapter two. The primary purpose of this wonderful miracle of God was to give them the boldness, power and wisdom to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom in the known world of their day. Consider these verses:

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were

confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God." Acts 2:1-11, KJV

However, even though the Apostles had received this mighty and wonderful anointing from on high in Acts chapter two, and had witnessed to literally thousands of people in their native languages in Jerusalem on that Day of Pentecost, it really was not until Acts chapter eight -- when they were persecuted by Saul of Tarsus and the other Jewish legalists who accompanied him -- that they actually began to obey and fulfill Jesus' Great Commission of going into all the world. As I mention in articles such as "The Mystery of Cornelius the Centurion", their procrastination at that time was due in part to the fact that the Apostles still believed that the Gospel -- and thus Salvation -- was only meant for the Jews of their own nation. This is because this is precisely what Jesus had previously instructed them to do. Consider the following verses:

"These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Matthew 10:5-6, KJV

"And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour." Matthew 15:22-28, KJV

"Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews." John 4:22, KJV

"Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only." Acts 11:19, KJV

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to

the Jew first, and also to the Greek."
Romans 1:16, KJV

Please note that in the previous verses where Jesus says "the children's bread", He is referring to the Jews; and where the word "dogs" is used, He is referring to the Gentiles. While the Lord's words may seem harsh to some of you, please know that in reality, Jesus was simply testing this woman's faith with His comments. He obviously already knew that the Gospel of Salvation would eventually be taken to the Gentiles -- that is, to all men -- in due time, in perfect accordance with His Father's own plans. Thus, the Lord also said the following in the Gospels:

"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."
Matthew 24:14, KJV

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:"
Matthew 28:19, KJV

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."
Mark 16:15, KJV

"And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."
Luke 24:46-47, KJV

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."
John 12:32, KJV

If you are interested in acquiring additional information which is related to this subject, please consider reading such articles as "Not Everyone Is a Child of God", "All Are Give a Chance, But . . ." and "Is the Message of Salvation Meant for All Men?". At any rate, as I stated a moment ago, it was not until the Lord actually sent serious persecution in the form of Saul of Tarsus and his companions, that the Apostles and Disciples of the First Century finally got the message that they were really supposed to decentralize their operations, and take the Gospel into all the world. Consider the following verses, and take notice of the reversed verse references here. We see Jesus' order in the first verse, and then the actual fulfillment of the same in the second verse:

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
Acts 1:8, KJV

"And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles."

Acts 8:1, KJV

As you may already know, it was not long after this that Saul of Tarsus was himself converted to the faith, following his terrifying and miraculous encounter with Jesus as he traveled on the road to Damascus, Syria, where he had every intention of persecuting the Christian Church. As I more amply discuss in "Biblical Cafeteria, or the Whole Course?" and in a number of other articles, Saul eventually became known as the Apostle Paul. Not only did he become the Apostle to the Gentiles, but along with his various traveling companions, he was in large part responsible for preaching the Gospel to the people who inhabited the vast region between Syria and Spain, as well as the island nations of the Mediterranean Sea.

In addition to Paul's outreach to the Gentile nations of the First Century, as I likewise mention in the article entitled "The Mystery of Cornelius the Centurion", once the Apostle Peter likewise acquired the understanding that the Gospel of Salvation was meant for the Gentiles as well -- which was the result of a vision that the Lord gave him in Acts chapter ten -- the Great Commission was at last in full swing. Both Jews and Gentiles were welcomed into the Church, despite protests from the Jewish legalists. Being as I discuss these topics at length in other articles, I won't be dwelling on the specifics in this current article.

As we have already seen, as a result of the mighty spiritual explosion which occurred in Acts chapter two, which was later followed by Paul's conversion to the faith, and the Apostle Peter's vision, serious persecution arose against the Church in Jerusalem. Suffice it to say that being a follower of the sect of the Nazarenes during the First Century was not a very popular occupation. As had occurred with Jesus Himself, being a follower of the Carpenter from Galilee quite often resulted in being ridiculed, hated, despised, persecuted, imprisoned, beaten and even being put to death. While I discuss the issue of persecution in other articles such as "Civil Disobedience and Christian Persecution", allow me to share some related verses here:

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me."
Matthew 10:34-38, KJV

"Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another."
Matthew 24:9-10, KJV

"Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that

shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."
Mark 13:12-13, KJV

"Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law."
Luke 12:51-53, KJV

"But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. And it shall turn to you for a testimony. Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. But there shall not an hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your souls."
Luke 21:12-19, KJV

"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me."
John 15:18-21, KJV

"For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day."
1 Corinthians 4:9-13, KJV

"But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings;"
2 Corinthians 6:4-5, KJV

"Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with

rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness."
2 Corinthians 11:23-27, KJV

"If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:"
2 Timothy 2:12, KJV

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."
2 Timothy 3:12, KJV

It is in Acts chapter eleven where we discover that some time after Paul and Barnabas arrive, the congregation of Believers in Antioch are first given the name of "Christians", as we see here:

"Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord. Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."
Acts 11:19-26, KJV

Some sources claim that the designation of "Christian" was originally meant to ridicule the First Century followers of Jesus Christ. Let us not forget that the Jewish religious authorities did in fact view Jesus as a blasphemer, a son of Beelzebub, a lawbreaker, a false prophet, a gluttonous man, and a winebibber. So it is possible that the word "Christian" may have been used in a derogatory sense by them. The Jewish political and religious leaders of that period both viewed the Nazarenes as a new sect. However, unlike today, the word did not have a negative connotation. It simply meant a group of men who adhered to a particular set of tenets. In fact, as you can see by the following verses, even the Sadducees and the Pharisees were viewed as sects. In other words, they were basically two different denominations of Judaism:

"Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation,"

Acts 5:17, KJV

"But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses."

Acts 15:5, KJV

"For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes:"

Acts 24:5, KJV

"Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee."

Acts 26:5, KJV

"But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against."

Acts 28:22, KJV

What you may find equally interesting is the fact that the word "sect" is derived from the Greek word "hairesis". As you may possibly deduct, it is likewise from this word that we obtain our English word "heresy", which does in fact have a negative meaning. However, in the truest sense of the word, according to Thayer's Greek English Lexicon, all a heresy is, is a different opinion from what someone else believes. These differences of opinion can -- and in fact did and still do -- result in doctrinal dissensions. The end result of such major differences of opinion and doctrinal dissensions is the birth of different denominations. In the case of those beliefs which contradict the doctrines of Jesus Christ, the Apostle Peter refers to them as "damnable heresies", as we clearly see by the following verse:

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction."

2 Peter 2:1, KJV

It is evident that Satan did not waste any time before he began his dirty work. Similar to the above verse, there are other warnings in the New Testament regarding false brethren and false doctrines, because the bitter and divisive root of denominationalism had already infected the Early Church. Let me share some additional verses with you:

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;"

1 Timothy 4:1, KJV

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;"

2 Timothy 4:3, KJV

"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the

sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:"
Ephesians 4:14-15, KJV

"Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein."
Hebrews 13:9, KJV

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them."
Romans 16:17, KJV

"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him . . . For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."
2 Corinthians 11:3-4, 13-15, KJV

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."
Galatians 1:6-9, KJV

"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but dotting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself."
1 Timothy 6:3-5, KJV

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."
2 John 1:9-11, KJV

Please go to part two for the continuation of this series.

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Mary Worship, Christianity and Roman Catholicism : Part 2

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Man Worship And Divisive Denominationalism, Peter And Paul Disagree Strongly In Galatia, Doctrinal And Spiritual Unity, Roman Catholicism Becomes Legal Dominant Religion Of Roman Empire Under Emperor Theodosius I, Compromise With Paganism, Heresies And Misguided Practices Of Roman Catholic Church Who We Follow And Who Saves, Wear Christian Name With Honor We Belong To Christ And Are Bought With A Price, Jesus Alone Can Save Us, Predestinated And Chosen For Spiritual Adoption, Propagation Of The Name "Christian", Don't Be Ashamed Of Your Faith, Definition Of "Christian", Original Definition Of The Word "Catholic", God's True Universal Christian Church, Jesus Is The True Rock And Not The Apostle Peter, Jesus Christ Is The Rejected Cornerstone Of God's Universal Spiritual Church

As if legalistic false brethren and false doctrines didn't already create enough problems for the First Century Church, even before all the Apostles died, denominational divisions appeared as some Disciples began to succumb to personality cult worship, and started to coalesce around the teachings of one Apostle or another. Rather than keep their eyes on Christ, they put them on man instead. Recall the Jerusalem meeting that occurred in Acts chapter fifteen, which was convened in order to establish doctrinal standards within the Church. There was likewise the difference of opinion that occurred between Peter and Paul. Apparently, their disagreement was so strong, that Paul had to rebuke Peter over the Galatian issue. Consider the following verses:

"For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"
1 Corinthians 1:11-13, KJV

"For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase."

1 Corinthians 3:3-7, KJV

"These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage."
Jude 1:16, KJV

"But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"
Galatians 2:11-14, KJV

It is due to these same reasons that so many denominations exist in our own time. Each denomination views the doctrines of other denominations as heresies. Thus, the word "heresy" is purposely given a negative context by those people who oppose a certain point of view which does not agree with their own. How sad that the modern Christian Church no longer abides by verses such as the following which speak of the importance of doctrinal and spiritual unity:

"And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are . . . That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."
John 17:11, 21-23, KJV

"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."
John 10:16, KJV

"That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."
Romans 15:6, KJV

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."
1 Corinthians 1:10, KJV

"Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."
2 Corinthians 13:11, KJV

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace . . . That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."
Ephesians 4:1-3, 14-16, KJV

"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;"
Philippians 1:27, KJV

"Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."
Philippians 2:2, KJV

Clearly, what a sad, tragic, divided mess the modern Church has become. That old serpent the Devil has used the past two thousand years to divide Christian against Christian over issues regarding doctrine. As a result of Roman Catholicism becoming the dominant and enforced religion of Rome under Emperor Theodosius I -- please refer to the series entitled "Pontifex Maximus: Pagan High Priest to Roman Catholic Pope" and "Roman Catholicism, Water Baptism and the Trinity" for more details -- anything which disagreed with the misguided doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church was labeled a heresy. Thus, for many centuries, non-Catholics were persecuted and killed, due to their refusal to come under the umbrella of the popish religion of Rome.

As many of you will no doubt already know, the irony of this situation lies in the fact that it was actually the so-called "Holy Mother Church" herself which committed -- and continues to commit -- the heresies with her many false doctrines and misguided practices, which she had knowingly absorbed -- and so-called Christianized -- as she conquered the pagan masses which populated the vast Roman Empire. As I point out in the aforementioned articles, as well as in the series "Lies and Deceptions of the Roman Catholic Church", the corrupt state religion of the Roman Empire was so intent on expanding her sphere of power, wealth and influence, that she compromised our faith, and willingly adopted different pagan festivals and practices, renamed them, and sought to apply a Christian interpretation to them. Thus, today we have holidays such as Christmas, Easter, and All Souls Day and All Saints Day which immediately follow the pagan holiday known as Halloween.

Returning to the amazing events of the First Century and the early years of our Christian faith, regardless of how the name "Christian" first came to be applied to the Disciples

in the city of Antioch, nevertheless, to this day it remains the name which is widely used to describe people who follow the teachings of Jesus Christ. Not only does this name tell the entire world in whom we believe, but it also tells them by whom they can be saved. It is a name which we should all bear with honor; because it designates who we are, who we belong to, and who we follow. There should be no doubt that we do indeed belong to Christ, because as God's Word clearly informs us, He knows them that are His, and He purchased us with His very own Blood, as we can easily determine by the following verses:

"Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."
Matthew 20:28, KJV

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."
Acts 20:28, KJV

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."
1 Corinthians 6:19-20, KJV

"Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men."
1 Corinthians 7:23, KJV

"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."
Ephesians 1:13-14, KJV

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."
1 Timothy 2:5-6, KJV

"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."
2 Timothy 2:19, KJV

While we should bear the name "Christian" with honor, as I mention in the series "Endtime Witnessing: Winning the Sheep and Waging the Warfare", it does not mean that we should do so in a proud, boastful or condescending manner, as if we are responsible for our Salvation, or are in some way better than everyone else. As the previous verses indicate, Jesus paid the full price for us. Jesus saved us when we could not save ourselves, because we are all born in sin, and we have no righteousness of our own, as I more amply explain in many of my articles which concern the issue of Salvation. I am reminded of the following verse that is found in the Epistle to the Hebrews:

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Hebrews 7:25, KJV

Not only do the Scriptures clearly inform us that Jesus alone can save us, but we are told that we were predestinated and chosen for adoption by the Father, through Christ, from the foundation of the world. Consider the following verses and marvel at our Heavenly Father's Divine Foresight:

"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."

John 6:44, KJV

"And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."

Acts 13:48, KJV

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together . . . For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."

Romans 8:15-17, 29, KJV

"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love . . . Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will . . . In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:"

Ephesians 1:4-5, 11, KJV

"But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:"

2 Thessalonians 2:13, KJV

"No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."

2 Timothy 2:4, KJV

"Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?"

James 2:5, KJV

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:"

1 Peter 2:9, KJV

"These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful."

Revelation 17:14, KJV

As the previous verses clearly indicate, it is the Father who draws us. We are ordained to Eternal Life. God the Father in fact foreknew us. We were called, predestinated and chosen by Him to receive the Gift of Salvation and Eternal Life through Jesus Christ. It was by God's Design that we today are called Christians, just as our predecessors have been called by this name for the past almost two thousand years now. In addition to the previous verses which are found in the Book of Acts, we likewise find the word "Christian" mentioned in these two verses as well:

"Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

Acts 26:28, KJV

"Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."

1 Peter 4:16, KJV

What I find interesting regarding the previous verse that is found in the Book of Acts, is that it clearly reveals that the name of our faith -- that is, Christian, from the Greek word "Christianos" -- was likewise known to the political leadership of Israel; that is, to King Herod Agrippa I. If we consider the fact that the Herods were puppet leaders who were appointed by Rome, it seems probable that the name of our faith was likewise known in Rome by this time as well.

To reiterate, the name "Christian" is a name which we should all wear with honor, and not with shame. Many sacrifices have been made, and a great deal of blood has been spilled for the sake of preserving that precious name, and the faith which it represents. As we learned in part one, the Apostle Peter said "let him not be ashamed", and the Apostle Paul likewise wrote "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ". It is because of the work of brave men such as these, that we know about Jesus Christ today. Following are a few more verses which mention this same theme:

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Matthew 5:16, KJV

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."

Matthew 10:32-33, KJV

"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

Mark 8:38, KJV

"For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

2 Timothy 1:12, KJV

In referring to two secular sources -- that is, the American Heritage Desktop Dictionary and Apple's built-in "Dictionary" app -- we find the following definitions regarding the word "Christian":

----- Begin Quote -----

American Heritage Desktop Dictionary:

"A person who believes in Christ or follows the religion based on His teachings."

Apple's built-in "Dictionary" app:

"Adjective - of, relating to, or professing Christianity or its teachings: the Christian Church."

"Noun - a person who has received Christian baptism or is a believer in Jesus Christ and his teachings."

----- End Quote -----

So both the Scriptures and these dictionaries make it very clear that anyone who follows the teachings of Jesus Christ is a Christian. If you are interested in learning exactly what it means to be a follower and Disciple of Jesus Christ, I encourage you to read some of my other articles. My primary focus here has simply been to establish the correct meaning of the word "Christian", and to state the origin of the word. But what about the word "catholic"? It may surprise some of my readers to learn that in its original context, this word did not refer to what eventually became known as the Roman Catholic Church. In its first two definitions, the American Heritage Desktop Dictionary defines the word "catholic" in the following manner:

----- Begin Quote -----

"Of or belonging to the whole body of Christians or the universal Christian church. Of or belonging to the ancient undivided Christian church."

----- End Quote -----

Apple's built-in "Dictionary" app likewise notes that when it is used as an adjective, the primary meaning of the word "catholic" is actually "including a wide variety of things; all-embracing; of or including all Christians." It likewise informs us that the word "catholic" finds its origin in the Greek word "katholikos", which means "universal". It becomes clear then, that the true Catholic Church is by no means the worldly Roman Catholic Church which came into being during the Fourth Century. Rather, it is the Universal Church which was founded upon the Blood of Jesus Christ during the First Century. To reiterate, God's true Universal Church became the corrupt Roman Catholic Church during the Fourth Century when

Rome took control of, and placed its stamp of approval upon, our Christian faith, and introduced all kinds of pagan ideas and practices, thus perverting it.

Based upon the original meaning of the word "catholic", we can conclude then that anyone who places their faith solely in the Sacrifice of Christ, and who follows His teachings, is both a Christian, and likewise a member of God's Universal Church. Such a person is a Catholic in the truest sense of the word. As I amply explain in some of the aforementioned articles, contrary to the misguided belief which is embraced by modern-day Roman Catholics, the Apostle Peter was not the first bishop of Rome, or the first pope of the Roman Catholic Church. There is absolutely no Scriptural evidence to support this erroneous claim whatsoever. In fact, as I mention in the in-depth series entitled "Lies and Deceptions of the Roman Catholic Church", the belief that the Apostle Peter went to Rome is a Roman Catholic invention which finds its origin in a very questionable -- and in fact ridiculous -- apocryphal work called "Acts of Peter". I have read it, and it is utter nonsense.

As we have already seen, the corrupt Roman Catholic Church did not come into existence until the Fourth Century. In fact, it did not solidify its power until the last quarter of that same century during the reign of Emperor Theodosius I, as I explain in the series "Roman Catholicism, Water Baptism and the Trinity". As you may know, this erroneous Roman Catholic doctrine regarding Peter being the first pope of Rome finds its origin in a perversion of Jesus' own words when He said the following to Peter in the Gospel of Matthew:

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
Matthew 16:18-19, KJV

The previous two verses have been misquoted, misused, and misunderstood by Roman Catholics for many centuries now. As I point out in some of the aforementioned articles, while it is indeed true that Jesus appointed Peter as the spiritual head of the band of Apostles in those verses, personally, I remain firmly convinced by other Scriptures that He was not saying that Peter was the Rock. Yes, Peter's name, as well as the name he was given by Jesus -- Cephas -- do literally mean "a stone". Nevertheless, Peter was not the actual Rock.

Jesus was clearly referring to Himself as the Rock. I believe He was saying "upon this Rock, upon my own body which will be crucified for you, I will build my Church". In fact, I have come to suspect that perhaps even Peter himself realized that some of the First Century Disciples were misunderstanding the Lord's words. Thus, in his first Epistle, Peter writes the following in which he clarifies that Jesus is the Rock, and the Cornerstone which was rejected by his own unbelieving Jewish brethren:

"To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also as lively

stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe, He is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner . . ." 1 Peter 2:4-7, KJV

It should be evident to you that Peter is clearly informing his readers that he is not the Chief Cornerstone. Jesus is the one and only Cornerstone of His true spiritual Church; that is, His Christian, Universal -- or catholic -- Church. In fact, in the Book of Acts, when the Apostles were brought before Annas the high priest, Caiaphas and the other elders of Israel, Peter stated the very same thing to them. Let me also inform you that in so doing, Peter was actually quoting from one of the Messianic Prophecies which is found in the Book of Psalms. Consider the following verses:

"The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes." Psalms 118:22-23, KJV

"And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this? Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner." Acts 4:5-11, KJV

As I said, this belief that Jesus is the Rock and the Chief Cornerstone which was rejected by the unbelieving Jews is clearly supported by other verses which are found throughout the Bible, including in some of the Old Testament prophecies, such as the main one that is found in the Book of Psalms. As such, there is no way to misinterpret what Jesus was really saying to Peter in the Gospel of Matthew. Carefully consider the following Scriptural evidence, and be not deceived by the lies of the Roman Catholic Church which claim that Peter is the Rock upon which the Church is built:

"Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? . . . And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them."

Matthew 21:42, 44-45, KJV

"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

1 Corinthians 3:11, KJV

". . . for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."

1 Corinthians 10:4, KJV

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

Ephesians 2:19-22, KJV

"Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces . . . And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."

Daniel 2:34, 44, KJV

"Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

Psalms 2:6-9, KJV

Please go to part three for the continuation of this series.

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Mary Worship, Christianity and Roman Catholicism : Part 3

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False Doctrinal Pillar Of Roman Catholic Church, Catholics Claim That They Are Not Christians, Idol Worship Of Heathen, Praying To Deaf Statues, Jesus Is Our Only Mediator With The Father, In Jesus' Name Only, False Roman Catholic Doctrine Regarding Mary Being A Co-Redemptrix And Co-Mediatrix, Bible Condemns Communicating With The Dead, Necromancy And Familiar Spirits, Jesus Serves As Our Perfect Intercessor Because He

Lived In The Flesh And Understands Our Condition And Needs, Scriptures Which Roman Catholics Purposely Twist To Support Their Wayward Doctrine, Praying For Someone Is Not The Same As Praying To Someone, Let Your Requests Be Made Known Unto God, Living Persons Who Intercede For Other Living Persons, Apostle Paul's Distaste For Idols, Paul And His Companions Encounter Trouble At Ephesus, False Goddesses Of Love And Fertility, Famous Temple Of Artemis Constructed At Ephesus, "Goddess Diana Idol Makers Union" Was Earning A Good Profit

The reason why it is so very important for you to understand this teaching from the Scriptures, is because it is primarily based on their misguided and erroneous interpretation of what Jesus said to Peter in the Gospel of Matthew that the Vatican hierarchy in Rome claims the legitimacy of the Roman Catholic Church. By destroying that false doctrinal pillar, the Roman Catholic Church has absolutely nothing left on which to stand. It can make no claim to any direct tie to the Christian Church of the First Century. All it has left are the real events that occurred during the Fourth Century, when Roman Catholicism was foisted upon the pagan masses of the Roman Empire by means of legal force, and the threat of persecution against those who refused to embrace this seriously compromised brand of our faith.

As I have mentioned before, a number of years ago I was very surprised to discover that, apparently, some Roman Catholics do not view themselves as Christians. I honestly do not know how widespread this belief is, or whether or not it is even something that is generally promoted and taught by the Roman Catholic Church. Whatever the case may be, I assure you that I have engaged in conversations with Roman Catholics where they have told me flat out that they are not Christians; they are Catholics. Even when I have explained to such people what the word "Christian" signifies, and inquired of them if they believe that Jesus is the Son of God and the only Savior of the world -- which I know that they do -- nevertheless, these people have still insisted that they are Roman Catholics and not Christians. It has left me flabbergasted to say the least.

Given the adamancy of some of these people, I can only assume that even if this belief is not outright taught and promoted as a Roman Catholic doctrine in their catechism, it must at least be strongly encouraged within Roman Catholic circles -- and certainly not frowned upon -- as a part of their general misguided "one true faith" mentality. It almost seems as if in the Roman Catholic mind, to confess that one is a Christian is to somehow deny or be unfaithful to their Roman Catholic faith.

Returning to the original conversation which motivated me to write this current series, in his response to another person, the same person -- who I quoted at beginning of part one -- stated that one of the primary practices which sets the Roman Catholic faith apart from Christianity -- please notice again the intentional distinction which is made by Roman Catholics -- is their worship of Mary, the biological mother of Jesus Christ. Of course, any knowledgeable individual realizes that this misguided worship extends way beyond just Mary, and also includes the worship of many other Roman Catholic saints. This

is reflected in the manufacture of many thousands of statues and other smaller figurines and various objects of worship.

As I pointed out in part one, it is the Scriptures, and the Scriptures alone which serve as the model for what should be viewed as acceptable Christian beliefs and practices. Upon undertaking a thorough examination of God's Word, we discover that there are quite a few verses which strongly condemn the sin of idolatry and related practices. Carefully consider the following:

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments."
Exodus 20:3-6, KJV

"Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them."
Psalms 115:4-8, KJV

"The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; They have ears, but they hear not; neither is there any breath in their mouths. They that make them are like unto them: so is every one that trusteth in them."
Psalms 135:15-18, KJV

"They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the LORD commanded them: But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works. And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them. Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood. Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions."
Psalms 106:34-39, KJV

"They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith; and he maketh it a god: they fall down, yea, they worship. They bear him upon the shoulder, they carry him, and set him in his place, and he standeth; from his place shall he not remove: yea, one shall cry unto him, yet can he not answer, nor save him out of his trouble."
Isaiah 46:6-7, KJV

"For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and with

gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good."
Jeremiah 10:3-5, KJV

"A drought is upon her [Babylon's] waters; and they shall be dried up: for it is the land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols."
Jeremiah 50:38, KJV

"Son of man, set thy face toward the mountains of Israel, and prophesy against them, And say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD; Thus saith the Lord GOD to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys; Behold, I, even I, will bring a sword upon you, and I will destroy your high places. And your altars shall be desolate, and your images shall be broken: and I will cast down your slain men before your idols. And I will lay the dead carcasses of the children of Israel before their idols; and I will scatter your bones round about your altars. In all your dwellingplaces the cities shall be laid waste, and the high places shall be desolate; that your altars may be laid waste and made desolate, and your idols may be broken and cease, and your images may be cut down, and your works may be abolished. And the slain shall fall in the midst of you, and ye shall know that I am the LORD."
Ezekiel 6:2-7, KJV

"And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: should I be enquired of at all by them? Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the LORD will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols; That I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations. For every one of the house of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth in Israel, which separateth himself from me, and setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to a prophet to enquire of him concerning me; I the LORD will answer him by myself: And I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people; and ye shall know that I am the LORD."
Ezekiel 14:2-8, KJV

In addition to manufacturing thousands of statues and other figurines, Roman Catholic practices likewise include lighting candles before their idols, praying to the saints, observing saints days and feast days, and various other Roman Catholic traditions which find absolutely no basis in the Scriptures.

Please notice how in some of the previous verses, we are told that "they have ears, but they hear not." Despite this truth,

how often have we seen devout Roman Catholic standing before or kneeling before a deaf and dumb statue of Mary or of one of the many other Roman Catholic saints, and quietly offering a prayer to the idol, as if the idol can actually hear them? As you may know, there are many Scriptures in the Bible which make it absolutely clear that we are only to bow down to and worship, and offer prayers to our Heavenly Father, by way of the person of His Son. According to God's Word, Jesus Christ alone is our Mediator with our Heavenly Father. This truth is made so evident by verses such as the following:

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;"
1 Timothy 2:5, KJV

"But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises."
Hebrews 8:6, KJV

"And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."
Hebrews 9:15, KJV

"And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."
Hebrews 12:24, KJV

As Jesus Himself informs us in the Gospel of John, "No man cometh unto the Father but by [Him]." If no person can come to the Father other than through Jesus, that most certainly leaves out other supposed mediators and intermediaries such as Mary and the Roman Catholic saints, doesn't it? Consider this verse:

"I am the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me."
John 14:6, KJV

Because our Heavenly Father has personally established His Son as our one and only Mediator, we should only petition the Father in Jesus' Name, and not in the name of Mary, or of any of the Roman Catholic saints. Please consider the following verses which confirm this point:

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."
Philippians 2:9-11, KJV

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
Acts 4:12, KJV

"And whoso shall receive one such little child IN MY NAME receiveth me."
Matthew 18:5, KJV

"For where two or three are gathered together IN MY NAME, there am I in the midst of them."
Matthew 18:20, KJV

"But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle IN MY NAME, that can lightly speak evil of me."
Mark 9:39, KJV

"For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink IN MY NAME, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward."
Mark 9:41, KJV

"And these signs shall follow them that believe; IN MY NAME shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;"
Mark 16:17, KJV

"And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child IN MY NAME receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great."
Luke 9:48, KJV

"And whatsoever ye shall ask IN MY NAME, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing IN MY NAME, I will do it."
John 14:13-14, KJV

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send IN MY NAME, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."
John 14:26, KJV

"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father IN MY NAME, he may give it you."
John 15:16, KJV

"And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father IN MY NAME, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing IN MY NAME: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father. At that day ye shall ask IN MY NAME: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you:"
John 16:23-26, KJV

As you can plainly see, the previous verses are quite clear. We are not to ask or petition God for things in the name of Mary, or in the name of any other Roman Catholic saint. We are only to pray in the Name of Jesus. Therefore, for Roman Catholics to refer to Mary as their so-called Co-Redemptrix

and Co-Mediatrix is utterly false, because Mary is no such thing. Jesus Christ is our one and only Redeemer, and our only Mediator. Furthermore, to pray to dead Roman Catholic saints and make petitions of them, and to in fact supposedly serve as channels of communication for the spirits of the departed -- as I have read that some charismatic Catholics do -- is in blatant violation of God's Laws. The Scriptures refer to the vile practice of communicating with the dead as necromancy and having familiar spirits, and it is strongly condemned, as we can easily determine by these verses:

"Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God."
Leviticus 19:31, KJV

"And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people."
Leviticus 20:6, KJV

"There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer."
Deuteronomy 18:10-11, KJV

"And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger."
2 Chronicles 33:6, KJV

"And he made his son pass through the fire, and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger."
2 Kings 21:6, KJV

"Moreover the workers with familiar spirits, and the wizards, and the images, and the idols, and all the abominations that were spied in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away, that he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiyah the priest found in the house of the LORD."
2 Kings 23:24, KJV

"And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?"
Isaiah 8:19, KJV

"And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof; and I will destroy the counsel thereof: and they shall seek to the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards."
Isaiah 19:3, KJV

"But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments . . . Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitude of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth; if so be thou shalt be able to profit, if so be thou mayest prevail. Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee."
Isaiah 47:9, 12-13, KJV

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

"Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts."
Revelation 9:21, KJV

"And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived."
Revelation 18:23, KJV

To reiterate, it is only through the Name of Jesus that we are to pray, because He is our link to the Father. Please notice in the previous verses that Jesus is not even saying that we should pray to Him. Rather, He clearly says that we should pray to our Heavenly Father in His -- Jesus' -- Name. If we are not even to pray to Jesus, how then do misguided Roman Catholics arrive at the erroneous conclusion that it is okay to pray to Mary or to statues of their dead saints?

There should be no doubt then that Jesus Christ is our only Intercessor and Mediator before God the Father. He is our Defense Attorney who fights against that evil Prosecuting Attorney -- Satan -- before the Judgment Seat of God. Jesus paid the full ransom price, and made the Ultimate Sacrifice for our sakes. Thus He deserves this highly exalted position in the Heavenly Courts. Because He lived amongst us in weak human flesh, Jesus fully understands all of our temptations, weaknesses, battles, desires and needs. That is why He makes the perfect Intercessor for us. Consider these verses:

"Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."
Romans 8:34, KJV

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."
Hebrews 4:15, KJV

"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;"
Hebrews 5:8, KJV

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."
Hebrews 7:25, KJV

Despite the plethora of Scriptural evidence which I have provided thus far in this series, dogmatic Roman Catholics remain very adamant regarding their belief that it is okay to make supplications to statues of Mary and their saints. There are a number of verses that are found in the Epistles which Roman Catholics use in their vain attempt to justify their wayward practice. These include the following:

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;"
Ephesians 6:18, KJV

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;"
1 Timothy 2:1-3, KJV

"Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."
James 5:14-16, KJV

It really amazes me the way that Roman Catholics twist the obvious meaning of the previous verses. Carefully notice what these verses state. They say "for all saints" and not "to all saints." They say "for all men" and not "to all men". They say "pray one for another" and not "pray one to another". There is a major difference between praying for a person, and praying to a person. The previous verses do in fact encourage us to pray for and intercede for our fellow Christian brethren. Personally, I do it all the time because I often receive prayer requests from my Facebook friends via private chat. So what do I do? I pray to our Heavenly Father in Jesus' Name, on their behalf, exactly as Jesus told us to do. In the following verse, the Apostle Paul likewise tells us to "let [our] requests be made known unto God":

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."
Philippians 4:6, KJV

Please carefully notice that Paul does not say that we should

make our requests known to Mary or to a Roman Catholic saint. He clearly states that we should make our requests known to God. By comparing Scripture with Scripture, we have already come to understand that this we do by using the Name of our one and only Mediator, Jesus Christ. Let me also point out to you that the previous verses all describe living persons who are praying for other living persons. None of the previous verses in any way hint at praying to dead persons, and much less bowing to or kneeling before and praying to statues of Mary and departed Roman Catholic saints.

As a former member of the strict sect of the Pharisees, the Apostle Paul was acutely aware of the fact that to set up stone idols and pray to them was an abomination to the Lord. Paul was extremely knowledgeable of the Scriptures, and he would never have condoned such a thing. Tragically, therein lies the subtle deception of the Roman Catholic Church. Those misguided people take the previous verses regarding making intercession for each other, and totally twist their meaning in order to support their blatant idol worship. Worse yet, as I mentioned earlier, some Catholics even engage in necromancy and entertain familiar spirits. Some time ago I read some of their material firsthand, and I was appalled to say the least.

The Apostle Paul's distaste for stone statues and idols is likewise made apparent by some of his experiences which are described for us in the pages of the Acts of the Apostles. I am reminded, for example, of the problems which Paul and his companions encountered in Ephesus. To quote the entire story as it is found in Acts chapter nineteen would require a lot of space. Thus, allow me to share with you a summary of the events, as they are recorded by the writer Luke. There was a Greek craftsman in Ephesus by the name of Demetrius. Being a pagan at heart, Demetrius was engaged in the very lucrative business of making silver shrines to the Roman goddess Diana.

During the early years of her worship, this pagan goddess was associated with hunting and the forests, and was viewed as the virgin goddess of childbirth and women. However, in later years, she also became known as the moon goddess. It is interesting to note that in our modern day, there is also a flavor of the Wicca religion that is referred to as Dianic Wicca due to the fact that Wicca is also a religion which is closely associated with the natural creation. As I point out in the seven-part series called "Our Pagan World: The Easter Myth Exposed", based on my studies, I suspect that a number of these ancient goddesses may have possibly been the very same demon which simply posed as different female deities in various cultures throughout history. These false goddesses would include Ishtar, Ashtoreth, Asherah, Astarte, Artemis, Aphrodite, Venus, and Diana herself. All of these goddesses were at some point associated with love and fertility.

Directly associated with this is the fact that there was a major temple dedicated to Artemis in Ephesus at the time that the Apostle Paul and his companions visited there. In fact, this temple -- which was the third and final version of that edifice -- was considered one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Historical records indicate that it was eventually destroyed as a result of the Goth invasions which occurred during the middle of the Third Century AD. This temple was also known as the Temple of Diana. At any

rate, due to the presence of this famous Temple of Artemis -- or Diana -- the idol makers in Ephesus were apparently making quite a handsome profit by selling their silver shrines and other objects which were related to this false goddess.

Please go to part four for the continuation of this series.

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Mary Worship, Christianity and Roman Catholicism : Part 4

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Greedy Jews Moneychangers And Other Merchants Earn Profits At The Temple In Jerusalem, Jesus Drives Out The Merchants, Apostle Peter Warns Early Christians To Beware Of Religious Profiteers, Money-Making Bible Hucksters And Filthy Lucre, Great Is Diana Of The Ephesians, Church Of Ephesus Loses Its First Love, Asia Minor = Anatolia = The Republic Of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, Roman Catholic Fanatics With Cries Of "One True Faith", "Holy Blessed Mother" And "Mother Of God", Roman Catholic "Mother Of God" Doctrinal Error, Jesus Is The Son Of God And Not Actually God, God The Father Is Both The God And Father Of Jesus Christ, Paul Was Taught Directly By Jesus Christ, My God, The Father And Jesus Are Two Separate Distinct Spiritual Entities, God The Father Is Greater Than Christ, Jesus Was A Perfect Reflection Of His Father, Jesus Received A Full Measure Of His Father's Spirit, Jesus Will Ultimately Submit Himself To His Father's Will, Invention Of Holy Trinity Doctrine, God Has No Mother Or Father And He Is Eternal, There Is Only One God, God The Father Created All Things Through Christ, Old Testament Hebrew "Yasha" Appears To Signify "Deliverer" And Not "Saviour" As We Understand It

In thinking about the "Goddess Diana Idol Makers Union" that was present in the city of Ephesus, I suspect that it really was not that much different from how the greedy Jews were also profiting from the Temple that was in Jerusalem. As you will recall, the Lord clearly exposed the hypocrisy of those selfish moneychangers and other Jewish merchants when He went into the Temple courts with a whip, overturned their tables, and angrily drove them all out, as we see by these verses:

"And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; And said unto

them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise."
John 2:13-16, KJV

In his second Epistle, the Apostle Peter likewise warned the Lord's flocks regarding those unscrupulous individuals who would endeavor to "make merchandise of [them]" for the sake of obtaining financial gain, as we see by these verses:

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not."
2 Peter 2:1-3, KJV

In the previous verses, the word "merchandise" is derived from the Greek word "emporeuomai", which means to trade, travel or traffick in business. In fact, if you look at it closely, you can easily see how we derive our English word "emporium" from it, which signifies a large retail store. Following are a few more verses which warn us to be wary of money-making Bible hucksters; that is, preachers who only use the Gospel as a means to obtain material gain. The New Testament refers to this practice as "filthy lucre":

"Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous . . . Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;"
1 Timothy 3:3, 8, KJV

"For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre . . . Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake."
Titus 1:7, 11, KJV

"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;"
1 Peter 5:2, KJV

Please understand that the previous verses are not talking about the Lord's dedicated servants who accept voluntary, charitable donations to support their ministries. They are actually referring to people who commercialize God's Word and Work for the sake of profit alone. As I explain in the series "Money-Making Bible Hucksters and Mammon", in my view, this includes people who sell books, DVD's, videos, magazine subscriptions, statuettes, figurines and other religious trinkets, etc. In fact, even those so-called "partner" programs that some fast-talking preachers and ministries promote should be scrutinized. In other words, those verses are talking about people who refuse to share the Word of God with you -- or at least what they claim is the Word of God -- unless you pay them money first. That

is not freely sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is selling it, and it is wrong to do so.

Returning to the problems that Paul encountered in Ephesus, as I mentioned a moment ago, the writer Luke informs us that making shrines to the goddess Diana was a very lucrative job for Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen. Thus, those pagans became rather upset when these strangers arrived in town and began to preach about a new God who could even raise people from the dead, beginning with the Son of God Himself. As a result of Paul and his companions preaching the Gospel in Ephesus, the pagan idol business apparently began to slump, and the local idol union was not about to take it lightly. Thus the last half of Acts chapter nineteen deals with the persecution which arose against Paul, Gaius and Aristarchus. Following are some of the key verses from Luke's account:

"Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth. And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians . . . But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. And when the townclerk had appeased the people, he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter?"

Acts 19:26-28, 34-35, KJV

Wow! Just imagine! Those spiritually blind pagan fanatics of Ephesus did not stop shouting their foolishness for almost two hours. It reminds me of a modern rock concert where the participants sometimes get into a real frenzy; almost as if they are possessed by demons! Well, the pagans of Ephesus were certainly mesmerized by the false goddess -- or perhaps a demoness? -- named Diana, or Artemis. Despite the obvious strong hold that Diana had on the people of Ephesus, we know from the Scriptures that Paul and his companions were still able to establish a Christian Church there. That is the good news. The bad news is that according to the Apocalypse -- or the Book of Revelation -- at some time they lost their first love for the Lord, as we see by the following verses:

"Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that

thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

Revelation 2:1-7, KJV

Please note that the word "Asia" is not referring to Asia as we know it today. It is in fact referring to Asia Minor, or Anatolia, which are the historic names of the nation we know today as Turkey. I explain in other articles that the modern name of "Turkey" has only been used for about a century now. It is derived from Mustafa Kemal Ataturk -- a Turkish army officer -- who is attributed with being the founder and first president of the modern Republic of Turkey. The name "Ataturk" in fact means "Father of the Turks". The Seven Churches which are mentioned in the Book of Revelation were in fact located in this same geographical region.

At any rate, how similar the previous verses from the Book Of Acts sound to the sad situation which exists today within the Roman Catholic Church. Regardless of what the Vatican claims to believe and promote, the idol-worshipping practices I have described for you in this series are indeed real, and cannot be denied. These misguided practices are prevalent in every single Roman Catholic dominated area I have visited or lived in during the course of my life. I dare say that some Roman Catholics may be just as fanatical about worshipping Mary, as the Ephesians were about worshipping Diana two thousand years ago. I recall instances where certain Roman Catholic fanatics have endeavored to silence me with their misguided cries of the so-called "one true faith". Tragically, where I currently reside, I more often hear the phrases "Holy Blessed Mother!" or "Mother of God!" on the lips of Roman Catholics, than I do praises being offered to God the Father and Jesus. I find it quite revealing.

What also really disturbs me regarding this Catholic practice of vocalizing such high praise for Mary while seeming to just ignore the Father and the Son, is the fact that even stating that Mary is the "Mother of God" is a blatant inaccuracy. It clearly reveals a gross misconception amongst members of the Roman Catholic Church. Whether this is a result of personal ignorance, or is actually one of so many misguided doctrines which are taught and promoted by the Roman Catholic Church, I honestly do not know.

Whatever the case may be, as I explain in other articles, it is quite evident in the Scriptures that Jesus Christ was not, has never been, and is not, God. He is clearly the Son of God. In fact, while you may not be aware of it, even the Apostle Paul plainly informs us in his Epistle that not only does Jesus have a Father, but this Father is also Jesus' God as well. If you doubt that this is so, then consider the following revelatory verse:

"The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not."
2 Corinthians 11:31, KJV

Do you see it? Paul plainly states to his readers that God the Father is both the God, as well as the Father, of Jesus

Christ. Why in the world would the Apostle Paul make such a statement if -- as so many misguided Christians believe today -- Jesus is God? In other words, if Jesus is God as a lot of Christians erroneously believe, how then can He have a God? Is Paul committing a grievous doctrinal error here, or are modern Christians and Roman Catholics the ones who have been deceived?

As I explain in a few other articles, I am firmly convinced that all of the primary doctrines that Paul taught and wrote about were personally taught to him by the Lord Himself. In fact, Paul tells us as much in his Epistle to the Galatians, as we see by these verses:

"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Galatians 1:11-12, KJV

That being the case, then Paul cannot be wrong when he says that God the Father is both the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. Furthermore, in his writings, Paul paraphrased what Jesus Himself had said and taught in the Gospels. What does this mean then? It simply means that somewhere in the Gospels, Jesus must have said that God the Father is His God, just as He is our God as well. As it turns out, not only did Jesus make such a statement in three of the Gospels, but He also said it in the Book of Revelation as well. Consider the following verses and learn the truth:

"Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."

John 20:17, KJV

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name."

Revelation 3:12, KJV

"And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Matthew 27:46, KJV

"And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Mark 15:34, KJV

Just look at how many times in those verses Jesus refers to God the Father as "my God". This truth regarding the actual relationship between the Father and the Son has been in the Scriptures for the past two thousand years, yet so many of the Lord's children have failed to see it, because they have in fact been conditioned to not see it!

"Now, wait a minute!" some of you may be saying in protest.

"If Jesus is calling His Father "God" in all of those verses, doesn't that actually mean that Jesus is not God, since the Bible teaches us that there is only one God?" If that is what you are thinking, you are absolutely correct. Jesus looks up to His Father as the one and only true God as well. Just by saying "My God", Jesus is indirectly stating that He Himself is not God, because there is only one God; yet how often do we hear this truth being proclaimed from the pulpits by the popular pastors, preachers and evangelists? Normally you do not; because they have all been poisoned by the so-called Holy Trinity doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, and they don't want to rock the boat by telling the Scriptural truth. They prefer to assign a position to the Lord, which even He never claimed. Jesus Christ was not so foolish as to usurp the position which belongs to His Father alone.

For my part, I have long taught that not only are God the Father and Jesus Christ two separate and distinct Spiritual Beings, but God the Father is superior to and greater than Jesus Christ. As I mention in articles such as "Birth of Jesus and the Star of Bethlehem", Jesus Himself informs us in the Gospel of John that His Father is greater than Him, as we see by the following verses:

"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."
John 10:28-29, KJV

"Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I."
John 14:28, KJV

"Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel . . . I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me."
John 5:19-20, 30, KJV

If God the Father is "greater than all", that must likewise mean that He is greater than Jesus Christ. That is why the Lord also says "my Father is greater than I". The reason why He is greater, is because He alone is the one true God. That is why Jesus also states "The Son can do nothing of himself." These verses make it very plain that Jesus can only do or reflect what He sees His Father do. This is why Jesus also says the following:

"Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?"
John 14:9, KJV

Contrary to what so many Christians have been led to believe, Jesus is not saying that He is actually God the Father. He is simply saying that because He is such a perfect reflection of His Father's Will, Purpose and Divine Nature, in seeing Him, we have seen the Father. Furthermore, let us not forget that Jesus was given the Spirit without measure. While He was and is the Son of God, during His time on Earth, while He served as His Father's personal Ambassador to humanity, Jesus was given a full measure of His Father's Power and Authority. In other words, unlike us who receive just a small dose of the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ was filled to overflowing with the Spirit of His Father. Despite the fact that His Father's Holy Spirit dwelt in His physical flesh in all of its Power, Jesus was -- and still remains -- the Son of God. He is not, and has never been, God the Father. Consider these verses:

"For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him."
John 3:34, KJV

"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."
Colossians 2:9, KJV

Please stop and think about this very carefully. If God the Father is giving His Son the Holy Spirit, that means -- as Jesus already said -- that God is greater than Him. As final proof that the God the Father is greater than Jesus Christ, consider also the following verses which clearly reveal that Jesus will ultimately submit Himself to His Father, after He has subdued all of His Father's enemies. Due to the manner in which these Scriptures have been translated into English -- with so many he's and him's -- they may be difficult for some Christians to understand. Therefore, I have taken the liberty to add certain explanatory words in brackets for the sake of clarification. These words are not a part of the original Bible text:

"Then cometh the end, when he [Jesus] shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he [Jesus] shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he [Jesus] must reign, till he [Jesus] hath put all enemies under his [under Jesus'] feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he [God the Father] hath put all things under his [under Jesus'] feet. But when he [God the Father] saith all things are put under him [under Jesus], it is manifest that he [God the Father] is excepted, which did put all things under him [under Jesus]. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, [unto Jesus] then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him [unto God the Father] that put all things under him [under Jesus], that God may be all in all."
1 Corinthians 15:24-28, KJV

I realize that this is a very difficult concept for some of my readers to grasp, because your minds have been polluted by the false Roman Catholic doctrine -- referred to as the Holy Trinity -- for many years now. Just like the Roman Catholics, you have been deceived into believing that Jesus is God, and that He is a part of a so-called "triune God", and the second person of a so-called "trinity", even though neither of these words is found anywhere in the pages of the King James Bible. As I explain in the series "Roman Catholicism, Water Baptism

and the Holy Trinity", it is a false doctrine of men which was established during the Fourth Century by the misguided "church fathers" of the early Roman Catholic Church.

As a result of this deceptive trinity doctrine in which Jesus is made to be God, I understand why you may find it difficult to grasp how God can be greater than Jesus, or why Jesus must submit Himself to God if Jesus supposedly is God. However, as I have already made clear, the Scriptures really do not teach us that Jesus is God. Nevertheless, this is exactly why Roman Catholics erroneously call Mary the "mother of God"; that is, because they do believe that Jesus is God. Quite frankly, the idea of God having a mother is ludicrous to say the least. He has neither beginning nor end, and is eternal in the heavens. He has no mother or father. Furthermore, as I have already mentioned several times now, the Bible clearly teaches us that there is only one God. Consider the following sample verses:

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:"
Deuteronomy

Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God."
Isaiah 44:6, KJV

"Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any."
Isaiah 44:8, KJV

"I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me:"
Isaiah 45:5, KJV

"Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me."
Isaiah 45:21, KJV

"Yet I am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me: for there is no saviour beside me."
Hosea 13:4, KJV

"And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he . . . And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:"
Mark 12:32, 39, KJV

"Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith."
Romans 3:30, KJV

"But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him."
1 Corinthians 8:6, KJV

"Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one."
Galatians 3:20, KJV

"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."
Ephesians 4:4-6, KJV

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;"
1 Timothy 2:5, KJV

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

Please notice how some of the previous verses actually speak in pairs, reflecting the relationship between the Father and the Son: "the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts"; "there is but one God, the Father . . . and one Lord Jesus Christ"; "there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus". This is similar to what we see in the Book of Genesis with the phrase "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness". As I explain elsewhere, the reason why the verse uses "us" and "our" is because the word "elohim" is actually plural. Thus, we can understand that Moses is actually saying that God the Father made all things through Jesus Christ -- including ourselves, as Paul notes in the previous verse with the phrase "we by him" -- and as we also see by the following verses as well:

"And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:"
Ephesians 3:9, KJV

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;"
Hebrews 1:1-3, KJV

You will also notice that in the previous "one God" verses, the word "saviour" is used a few times. If some of you are confused by this, I don't blame you. What makes it even more confusing is the fact that sometimes the translators chose to capitalize the word, while at other times they did not. Equally confusing is the fact that the original Hebrew word that is used there -- "yasha" -- is sometimes translated as save, saved, saviour, deliver, deliverer or delivered. For example, in the following verse, the words "deliverer" and "delivered" are both translated from this same word "yasha":

"And when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel, who delivered them, even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother."

Judges 3:9, KJV

In contrast, in the following verses, the very same word "yasha" is translated as "saviour", when in my opinion, the obvious intended meaning is "deliverer". After all, Israel was delivered from the Syrians, just as they were delivered out of Egyptian bondage as well:

"(And the LORD gave Israel a saviour, so that they went out from under the hand of the Syrians: and the children of Israel dwelt in their tents, as beforetime."

2 Kings 13:5, KJV

"They forgat God their saviour, which had done great things in Egypt;"

Psalms 106: 21, KJV

"Yet I am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me: for there is no saviour beside me."

Hosea 13:4, KJV

If you study enough of the Old Testament verses where the word "yasha" is used -- as I have done -- it becomes rather apparent that while the translators sometimes translated it as "saviour" -- with or without a capital "s" -- the intended meaning is that God saved or delivered the Israelites out of a bad situation; such as from Egyptian bondage, out of the hands of their foreign enemies, or from some other negative situation. In other words, in those particular verses, the word "saviour" is not meant to be understood in the Christian context of referring to Salvation and Eternal Life. Stated more plainly, the previous Old Testament "one God" verses do not seem to be referring to Jesus Christ, or to His role as the Savior of the world. It is my view that they are simply describing God the Father as a Divine Deliverer who saved the Israelites out of different difficult situations.

Please go to part five for the continuation of this series.

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Mary Worship, Christianity and Roman Catholicism : Part 5

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The Father Is One True God, No Man Hath Seen God At Any Time, Testimonies That Jesus Is The Son Of God, God Prepared A Body For His Son, President And The Vice President, Spirit Of God The Father Was In Jesus, "Christ" Means One Who Is Anointed, Holy Spirit Is An Extension Of God The Father, Our Treasure In Earthen Vessels: God The Father Dwells In Us By Presence Of Holy Spirit, Kingdom Of God Is Within You, Hard Questions

Be Set Free By The Truth Of God's Word, Spiritual Blindness, Beware Of The Traditions Of Men, Be A Berean And Carefully Compare All Doctrines And Beliefs To The Scriptures, Test My Teachings, Study God's Word Directly To Discover The Answers, Beware Of Denominations With Confusing Doctrinal Divisions, Doctrinally-Rigid Self-Contained Cookie-Cutter Churches And Denominations, They Will Change You, You Won't Change Them, Faithfully Study The Word To Show Yourself Approved To God, Recap Of Important Points Discussed, Apostle John Arrives On Isle Of Patmos In Order To Receive The Book Of Revelation, God's Divine Chain Of Command, Twenty-Two Amazing Chapters, John Attempts To Worship The Angelic Messenger, Old Testament Prophet, First Century Resurrection, Lesson: Worship God Only, Shadrach, Meshach And Abednego And Test In The Fiery Furnace

The reason why it is so important for you to understand this point, is because as we have already seen, there is only one true God, and that God is not Jesus Christ. The one true God is God the Father, who as we saw earlier, the Apostle Paul informs us is also the God and Father of Jesus Christ. As we learned previously, even Jesus Himself confessed that there is only one God. If you are still not fully convinced that Jesus is not God, but is rather the Son of God, then please realize that you are contradicting what both Jesus and the Apostle John tell us in the following two verses:

"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."
John 1:18, KJV

"No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us."
1 John 4:12, KJV

It isn't difficult to conclude that if "no man hath seen God at any time", then Jesus obviously was not, and is not, God, because everyone clearly saw Him, talked to Him, touched Him, ate with Him, etc. So by saying that "no man hath seen God at any time", Jesus was indirectly stating that He was not God. Isn't that simple enough for you to understand? Furthermore, to say that Jesus is God, is basically to claim that there are two Gods; which itself is a very clear contradiction of the Scriptures which we have already examined.

As I point out in the series entitled "Is Jesus the Only Begotten Son of God?", in the Gospels and other Books which form a part of the New Testament, everyone from the Archangel Gabriel, to the Apostles and Disciples, to the demons which Jesus cast out, to the unbelieving Jews themselves, referred to Jesus as the "Son of God". Jesus also referred to Himself as the "Son of God" and the "Son of man". Contrary to popular belief, not one single time did Christ ever say "I am God". The simple act of calling Jesus the Son of God -- as so many of the New Testament witnesses did -- is itself a very clear statement that He is not God; because He cannot be both God and the Son of God at the same time. He is one or the other.

In a word, either Jesus Christ truly is who He and so many other witnesses in the New Testament say He is -- that is, the Son of God -- or else He is who misguided Roman Catholics

and so many other deceived Christians say He is; that is, God Himself. Do you believe the Scriptures, or do you accept the traditions of men? If we accept the truth of the Scriptures, then we can properly say that Mary was the mother of the Son of God, but we cannot say -- as Roman Catholics say -- that she was the "mother of God". Even the Scriptures themselves inform us that God prepared a special body for His Son, which He then placed in Mary's womb by the Creative Power of His very own Holy Spirit. Consider the following verses in which Jesus speaks prophetically to His Father -- who He addresses as "O God" and "O my God" -- regarding His appearance in the world in a body of human flesh:

"Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God."
Hebrews 10:5-7, KJV

"Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart."
Psalms 40:6-8, KJV

As I have already made clear, while Jesus was fully empowered with the indwelling of His Father's Spirit, nevertheless, He still remained the Son of God. I have mentioned before how it is similar to when a president leaves his country in order to temporarily engage in political business in a foreign nation. During the president's absence from his home country, it is customary for the nation's vice president to temporarily take on or assume the authority and powers of the president. The vice president does not actually become the real president; he merely has the authority to act on behalf of the president. This is an easy way to understand how Jesus had the full power of His Father dwelling in Him, while still remaining the Son of God. That is why the Apostle Paul writes as follows:

"To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."
2 Corinthians 5:19, KJV

Exactly what does Paul mean when he says "that God was in Christ"? How was God in Christ? As I have already made clear, it simply means that the Spirit of His Father was dwelling in Jesus without reservation or measure. Jesus possessed a full anointing of the Holy Spirit, as the previous verses revealed. As you may know, this is in fact what the word "Christ" -- or "Christos" in Koine Greek -- actually means; that is, one who is anointed. After all, as Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well in the fourth chapter of the Gospel of John:

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."
John 4:24, KJV

That is why I have long taught that it is my personal belief that the Holy Spirit is merely an extension of God the Father

Himself. It is not the third person of some imaginary "Holy Trinity" which was dreamed up by the Roman Catholic "church fathers" many centuries ago. I believe that the Holy Spirit is God's very essence or spiritual substance with which He empowered His Son while He fulfilled His Mission on the Earth two thousand years ago. It is the same Divine Anointing which empowered the Apostles and Disciples afterwards. Finally, it is the same Spiritual Gift which still empowers us today when we are obedient to His Will. The Holy Spirit is like a small portion of the Father which dwells within each of us. It is our treasure in earthen vessels, as I explain in an article of the same name. Consider what the Apostle Paul states in the following two verses:

"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."
2 Corinthians 4:7, KJV

"One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."
Ephesians 4:6, KJV

So as I mentioned a moment ago, while Jesus Christ was filled to overflowing with the Spirit of His Father, in contrast, we Christians only receive a small portion of the very same Holy Spirit. In the previous verses, Paul makes it clear that the Spirit which dwells in us is in fact the Spirit of the Father when he writes "and in you all". Perhaps now you will better understand why Jesus made the following profound statement in the Gospel of Luke. I will humbly confess that even I have struggled with it for quite a long time. The truth is that we want so badly to see a physical Kingdom of God on Earth, but consider what Jesus said to the Pharisees:

"And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you."
Luke 17:20-21, KJV

There is an abundance of other evidence in the Scriptures which clearly confirms that Jesus is not God, but is rather the Son of God. For those of you who may still be having a difficult time accepting this solid Scriptural truth, allow me to share the following list of ten questions with you. As your spiritual eyes are opened, you will no doubt discover that there are many other questions which expose the error of the "Jesus is God" doctrine:

1. If Jesus is God, who repeatedly said at different places in the Gospels "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"?
2. If Jesus is God, who gave Him the Spirit without measure?
3. If Jesus is God, why did He say "My Father is greater than I"?
4. If Jesus is God, to whom did He pray in John chapter seventeen?

5. If Jesus is God, to whom was He praying in the Garden of Gethsemane when He asked His Father to remove the cup from Him?

6. If Jesus is God, to whom did He cry out "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"?

7. If Jesus is God, to whom did He say "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit"?

8. If Jesus is God, why does the Apostle Paul inform us in the fifth chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews that Jesus learned obedience by the things which He suffered? In other words, If Jesus is truly God as the false doctrine claims, why would He have to learn obedience, and who would He have to learn to obey?

9. If Jesus is God, why did He tell Mary that He had to ascend "to my God, and your God"? in John chapter twenty?

10. If Jesus is God, why did He say "O God", "O my God" and "my God" in so many other places in the Bible as well?

If you are really sincere in your desire to know the truth, questions such as these will force you to admit that Jesus is not God. To reiterate, if there is only one God as the Scriptures clearly indicate, then Jesus cannot possibly be that God, because that God is in fact His very own God and Father.

If you are still with me after having read the meaty material which I presented in the previous parts of this series, I must commend you. Why? Because I know for a fact that there are a lot of Christians -- including some of my own online friends -- who will not be able to accept the Scriptural truths which I have shared herein. Sadly, as a result of their spiritual blindness, and their dogmatic adherence to the misguided and false doctrines of men, they will not allow the plain truth of God's Word to penetrate their hearts and set them free. As the Lord Himself said to the unbelieving Jews of His own day:

"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free . . . If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

John 8:31-32, 36, KJV

This sad situation is really nothing new. As I mention in a number of my other articles, some people have made it their practice to reject the truth of God's Word since it was first delivered to humanity by His holy Prophets, Apostles, Saints and Disciples millennia ago. Such individuals do not have the Spirit of God dwelling in them. As a result, they are simply darkened of both mind and heart, and they cannot even begin to comprehend the marvelous truths which are expounded upon in God's Holy Word. Consider the following Scriptures which describe some of these people:

"And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the

kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear."

Matthew 13:10-16, KJV

"Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."

Matthew 15:14, KJV

"Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor! . . . Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel."

Matthew 23:16, 24, KJV

"And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other."

Mark 3:5, KJV

"And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth."

John 9:39-41, KJV

"(According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day . . . For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."

Romans 11:8, 25, KJV

"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

1 Corinthians 2:14, KJV

"Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:"

Ephesians 4:18, KJV

As we have seen through our discussion regarding the Roman

Catholic Church, Mary and saint worship, and various aspects of our Christian faith, rather than embrace the plain truth of the Scriptures, such people will invent their own range of erroneous doctrines and practices, and promote them as God-inspired truth. They will even go so far as to elevate their own traditions, as a means to smother and conceal the true light of God's Word. I am reminded of what the Apostle Paul wrote in his Epistle to the Colossians:

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."
Colossians 2:8, KJV

As I mentioned in part one of this series, if people would take the time to read the Bible for themselves, instead of relying upon secondhand knowledge and opinions, they would begin to see through the many false and misguided doctrines and practices which have corrupted and perverted our faith. By carefully studying God's Word, and comparing Scripture with Scripture -- as the wise people of Berea did in the seventeenth chapter of the Book of Acts -- you will be able to rightly divide the truth from the lie, and thus guard yourself from deception, so that you do not so easily fall into doctrinal error.

I expect my readers to follow the very same practice with my own writings as well. While I personally believe that what I share with you is true, based on the current knowledge which I possess, nevertheless, I still expect you to question it, and to compare it with the Scriptures for yourself, in order to determine whether or not what I say and teach conforms to God's Word. As my regular readers will already know, I always strive to support my views with the Bible, but this does not mean that I am infallible or perfect in my understanding. In fact, in the article entitled "Humility in Our Understanding of God's Word", I point out that despite my many years of studying God's Word, I still feel like a spiritual babe in my understanding, because God's Word is just that profound.

To reiterate, when it concerns Christian doctrine and other aspects of our faith, the Scriptures should be the primary source and authority to which we all should refer, and not some local priest, pastor, shepherd, deacon, bishop, Sunday school teacher or anyone else. Please don't forget that the reason why different denominations exist in the first place, is because of their differences of opinion regarding proper interpretation of the Scriptures. As a result, no matter who you go to, they are going to have a strict set of doctrines and practices which they will adamantly adhere to and defend at all cost. After all, their very legitimacy as a church or denomination depends on defending those particular doctrines, regardless of whether they are right or wrong.

If you approach a certain church or denomination in the hope of acquiring answers to your questions, you should be mindful of something. If you demonstrate that you believe contrary to the way that they believe, they will not hesitate to tell you that you are wrong, and they will endeavor to convince you to believe as they believe. Do not fool yourself into believing that they are going to come around to your way of thinking, because it is very doubtful that they ever will. You need to

realize that churches and denominations are extremely rigid institutions. More than likely, they have probably embraced their particular doctrines and practices for decades, if not for centuries. They are not about to change, even if you do point out an obvious error in their thinking.

The bottom line is this. Either you conform to their set of doctrines and practices, and become just another sardine in their can, or you might as well forget it, because you will never fit in otherwise. While this may seem harsh to some of you, the simple truth of the matter is that each denomination is very similar to a self-contained, cookie-cutter religion which mass produces members who think, believe and act just like themselves. It is very much a group-think environment. Whether we are talking about churches, denominations or even cults, they are all pretty much the same in that regard.

So again, if you really want to know the truth, then please go directly to the Word of God for yourself in order to find the answers, and don't be spiritually lazy. If you truly and sincerely want to know the truth, I have no doubt that God will reveal it to you by His Spirit through His Word. As I shared with you in part one:

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
2 Timothy 2:15, KJV

Through a preponderance of Scriptural evidence which I have now shared with you, we have seen that the Roman Catholic practice of creating statues and figurines in the likeness of Mary and the Roman Catholic saints is wrong, and is in fact a form of modern idolatry. We have likewise seen that to refer to Mary as Co-Mediatrix, Co-Redemptress and Mother of God is a seriously-misguided, not to mention unbiblical practice. Contrary to Roman Catholic beliefs, Mary is not the mother of God; our Salvation is in no way related to the worship of her; and we are not to use her as any kind of mediator or intercessor with our Heavenly Father. We have also learned that we are not to pray to, or to try to communicate with, dead saints, because this really amounts to necromancy, which is strongly forbidden in the Bible.

In contrast to the aforementioned Roman Catholic practices and beliefs, the Bible plainly teaches us that Jesus alone is the manner of Salvation which God has chosen for the world. His was a complete work of Salvation, and nothing and no one else needs to be added to it. As the Scriptures also inform us, it is only in Jesus' Name that we should ever petition our Heavenly Father, because He is our Mediator, High Priest and Intercessor before the Throne of God. He purchased us with His own Blood which was shed on the Cross, and we each belong to Him now.

As I pondered the Roman Catholic practice of kneeling down before and basically worshipping and talking to the deaf and dumb idols of their saints, I was reminded of certain verses which are found in the Book of Revelation. In this ancient manuscript -- which is also known as the Apocalypse -- the Apostle John is now rather aged. While the exact time frame is a source of debate amongst theologians, we can agree that

it is sometime during the latter half of the First Century. John has spent his entire life being a faithful witness for the Lord. In the Book of Revelation, he informs us that he is on a small island in the Aegean Sea called Patmos. From what I recall reading quite some time ago, Patmos -- which is located off of the western coast of the nation of Turkey -- was a Roman penal colony.

Despite his old age, it seems that God still had plans for John. Even though he had written the Gospel of John, as well as his various short Epistles, his greatest revelation and most mysterious prophecy was yet to be given. As many of you will already know, this is precisely what we find written in the pages of the Book of Revelation. What is most important to our current discussion, is exactly how John received this amazing revelation. Please consider the following opening verse of the Apocalypse:

"The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John."
Revelation 1:1, KJV

As you can see, this verse reveals God's chain of command. God the Father Himself gave this profound revelation to His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus in turn handed the prophecy to one of His Angels. This Angelic Messenger was then responsible for delivering this important revelation to John. Following the previous verse are twenty-two chapters of what has to be the most amazing revelation which has ever been given to the human race. This prophecy is so profound, that it has been analyzed, discussed, debated and been the subject of various interpretations for the past two thousand years. In the very last chapter of this Book, it is again confirmed for us that this important message was brought to the Apostle John by an Angelic Messenger who was under the direct orders of Jesus Christ Himself, as we can determine by the following verse:

"I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."
Revelation 22:16, KJV

How these events relate to our current discussion regarding the worship of Mary and the Roman Catholic saints becomes quite obvious when we examine the following verses which are found in this same chapter:

"And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God."
Revelation 22:8-9, KJV

As you can see, dear John displayed typical human behavior. He found himself in the presence of a wonderful Celestial Being, and he automatically assumed that he was supposed to show respect for this Angelic Messenger by bowing down and worshipping him. However, please notice what happened next.

To John's surprise, the Angel told him "Don't do it, John. Don't worship me; worship God instead." What is interesting is why the Angel told John to not worship him. According to the text, this particular Angelic Messenger was actually a departed Saint. He was one of the Old Testament Prophets. I suspect -- but obviously cannot conclusively prove -- that he may have been resurrected during the amazing resurrection which occurred following Jesus' Crucifixion. Consider the following verses:

"Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."
Matthew 27:50-53, KJV

Whatever the case may be, the important lesson we can learn from this event is that the Angelic Messenger clearly told John that it was wrong to bow down before and worship anyone but God. The Old Testament Prophet demonstrated humility and specifically told John to worship God only, and not himself. In light of this clear Scriptural example, how can anyone who claims to be a Bible-believing Christian justify bowing down before and praying to deaf and dumb idols of departed Roman Catholic saints? There is absolutely no Biblical basis for engaging in such idolatrous practices. In fact, as we have already seen, there is quite a bit of Scriptural evidence which says the exact opposite.

I am likewise reminded of the account of the three Jews who are discussed in the third chapter of the Book of Daniel. As you may recall, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to bow down and worship the great golden statue which was set up by pagan Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar in the plain of Dura. Even upon being threatened with being cast into the fiery furnace, they still refused to obey the king's orders, which would have incurred the wrath of their own God. Thus, into the fiery furnace the three of them went. But, as you may also know, God honored their faith and their dedication, and He delivered them from the flames without even the smell of smoke on their clothes, as we see by these verses:

"Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire. And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them. Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego,

who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God."
Daniel 3:24-28, KJV

Please go to part six for the conclusion of this series.

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Mary Worship, Christianity and Roman Catholicism : Part 6

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God Is A Very Jealous God, Idolatrous Worship Of Israelites, God's Eternal Unchanging Word, We Condemn Ourselves When We Reject The Light Of God's Word, Making The Word Of God Of None Effect Through Traditions, Mary's Precious Gift And Her Suffering, Closing Remarks, Suggested Reading Resources List

If there is one thing which we learn from the Books of the Torah -- that is, the five Books of Moses -- it is that our God is a very jealous God who refuses to have any other gods -- real or imagined -- before Him. Over and over again we are informed of His displeasure with idolatry; and as I point out in the series "The Fruits of Disobedience", the Old Testament is full of stories regarding how God punished the Israelites when they fell into deep apostasy and idolatrous worship of the false gods of the heathen nations around them. It just is not wise to provoke our jealous God to wrath. Consider these verses:

"Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;"
Exodus 20:5, KJV

"For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God:"
Exodus 34:14, KJV

"For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God."
Deuteronomy 4:24, KJV

"Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me,"

Deuteronomy 5:9, KJV

"(For the LORD thy God is a jealous God among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth."
Deuteronomy 6:15, KJV

Anything which takes our attention away from God is an idol, and should be removed from our lives. This certainly includes statues and figurines which are made in the likeness of Mary and the Roman Catholic saints. Misguided Roman Catholics can try to justify their wayward actions with all of the clever excuses in the world. They can even try to distort the true meaning of God's Word so that it appears to lend support to their idolatrous practices, as some of them already do. But regardless of what they say or do, it still does not change the truth of God's Word, and what it clearly says regarding such things. God's Word is Eternal, and He does not change. Therefore, if God condemned idolatry thousands of years ago, it is still a sin today as well. Consider these verses:

"For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."
Malachi 3:6, KJV

"LAMED. For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven."
Psalms 119:89, KJV

"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."
Psalm 119:105, KJV

Once we receive the Light of God's Word, there is no longer any need for us to walk in darkness. However, if we willingly choose to remain in darkness after having received the Light, then we must also understand that we condemn ourselves, and that someday we will be judged accordingly. I am reminded of the following verses which are found in the Gospel of John:

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."
John 3:19-21, KJV

"If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin."
John 15:22, KJV

So my question to Roman Catholic idolaters is this: Do you truly believe that the Scriptures are the inspired Word of God? If so, are you willing to accept the Light of their truth regarding what they teach us concerning idolatry and placing any humans -- living or dead -- between us and our Heavenly Father? If you choose to ignore the Bible-based truth which has been revealed to you in this series, then please realize that similar to the stubborn Scribes and Pharisees of old, by foolishly continuing to embrace your misguided Roman Catholic practices and traditions, you will be make the law of God of none effect. Consider these

two verses:

". . . Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition."

Matthew 15:6b, KJV

"Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye."

Mark 7:13, KJV

While I have taken a very strong stand in this series against Mary worship and other idolatrous Roman Catholic traditions and practices, I trust that my readers understand that for my part, I have utmost respect for the woman herself. No one can deny that Mary was indeed greatly blessed by God, because He chose her to be the special vessel who would bear His Son in human flesh. This was a wonderful work of God's Holy Spirit. However, beyond recognizing that Precious Gift, and realizing what a wonderful mother Mary must have been, and how much she must have silently suffered when He was rejected by His own race, and then cruelly tortured and murdered by His enemies, she should not be worshipped or venerated. This is where we Christians should draw the line.

Mary -- as well as the true Saints of generations past -- have already received their rewards in Heaven. As such, they have no need for us to pray to them, or to honor them in any special way. However, we should acknowledge and be thankful for the fact that they yielded their lives to God, and paid the price through persecution and martyrdom, so that we can hear the Gospel and be saved two thousand years later today. Just as Paul looked back at the Saints of the Old Testament with respect and admiration in the famous chapter of Hebrews eleven, we can also quote that same verse and look back with admiration at our First Century brothers and sisters and say with Paul:

"God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

Hebrews 11:40, KJV

All of us -- from the opening chapters of the Bible until our current time -- look forward to something better. The Apostle Paul tells us exactly what that is in the following verses which are also found in that very same chapter:

"For he [Abraham] looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God . . . These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city."

Hebrews 11:10, 13-16, KJV

For an amazing description of that wonderful Celestial City,

please consider reading the final two chapters of the Book of Revelation. In conclusion, please be very careful that you do not become sidetracked by concrete church buildings, deaf and dumb statues, meaningless traditions and rituals, or any other thing which may cause you to take your eyes off of God. These are all temporal things which will someday disappear. Stay focused on Jesus, who is the Author and the Finisher of your faith, your Mediator and Intercessor, the Captain of your Salvation, and the Bishop of your soul, as we see by the following verses:

"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."
Hebrews 12:2, KJV

"For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."
Hebrews 2:10, KJV

"For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."
1 Peter 2:25, KJV

With these verses I will bring this series to a close. I trust that you have found it informative, and I pray that it has been a blessing and an inspiration in your life. If you have enjoyed reading this series, please consider sharing its URL with your online friends. If you have an account with Facebook, Twitter or Google+, I would also appreciate if you would take the time to click on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thanks so much, and may God bless you abundantly!

For additional information and further study, you may want to refer to the list of reading resources below which were also mentioned in this series, or which are related to the topics which were discussed in this series. All of them are likewise located on the Endtime Prophecy Net web server:

A Treasure in Earthen Vessels: God's Promise of the Spirit
All Are Give a Chance, But . . .
Biblical Cafeteria, or the Whole Course?
Birth of Jesus and the Star of Bethlehem
Cardinal Ratzinger's Rebellion
Civil Disobedience and Christian Persecution
Endtime Witnessing: Winning the Sheep and Waging the Warfare
Halloween and Samhain: No Room for Compromise!
Happy Hanukkah and Merry Christmas?
Have You Read the New Scriptures Yet?
Humility in Our Understanding of God's Word
Is Jesus the Only Begotten Son of God?
Is the Message of Salvation Meant for All Men?
Lies and Deceptions of the Roman Catholic Church
Lying Wonders of the Endtime
Message to the World
Money-Making Bible Hucksters and Mammon
Not Everyone Is a Child of God
Our Pagan World: The Easter Myth Exposed
Pontifex Maximus: Pagan High Priest to Roman Catholic Pope

Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth
Roman Catholicism, Water Baptism and the Trinity
The Family Life of Jesus Christ
The Fruits of Disobedience
The Mystery of Cornelius the Centurion
To Pray or Not to Pray, That is the Question

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