

# **Bible Lessons For Catholics**

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Southern Publishing Association,  
Nashville, Tennessee

## **Preface**

These lessons are designed as a guide to be followed in studying the Bible with members of the Catholic faith. Introductory information for use by the person giving the studies precedes most of the lessons. This information provides a background for understanding certain Catholic beliefs in order to present Scriptural truths successfully.

Before studies are given, the instructor should carefully study the introductory material, plus other sources, to be conversant with points to be made. But under no circumstances should the introductory information for the instructor be shown to the person to whom studies are to be given.

Used wisely and prayerfully, BIBLE LESSONS FOR CATHOLICS Will be a means of enlightening hearts and minds, of giving men and women a clearer view of what the Scriptures teach about the plan of salvation and the character of God.

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## **Understanding the Catholic Mind**

Wherever we live, we are surrounded by Catholic neighbors. What is being done to enlighten them in reference to our message? The answer invariably is, "I am afraid to talk to them about religion." And thus the Catholic is passed by. This neglect is largely due to a complex that most Protestants have when it comes to dealing with the doctrines of Catholicism.

A change of mental attitude toward the Roman Catholic and his doctrine will bring about a revision of this condition. A new attitude will bring about an adjustment and inner organization which will obviously result in a new relationship with the Roman Catholic. The mental processes are conviction, interest, knowledge, approach, and a desire for action. "As we think, so do we act."

Conviction: We should be convinced in our minds that we are the custodians of the last message of the truth that is to decide the destiny of every soul, and that every Roman Catholic is a prospective candidate for the kingdom of heaven. Conviction that all heaven is at our command and reception must grip our hearts as we put forth effort for these people who may not have the spiritual advantage we have, but who have a devotion to God and a profound regard for Jesus Christ. Our Lord's heart of love yearns for their salvation as well as ours.

Interest: In order to reach a human heart with the Adventist message we must have genuine interest in people. We will find distinct and varied types of individuals who are characteristically different, and it will take a noble spirit to be "all things to all men." Of Christ it is said, "He passed by no human being as worthless, but sought to apply the healing remedy to every soul. He sought to inspire with hope the roughest and most unpromising." - Gospel Workers, pp. 46, 47.

Knowledge: There is power, confidence, and assurance that comes through knowledge that one does not have in its absence. The lack of confidence in the ability to deal with Catholic doctrines has kept many a lay member from approaching his Catholic neighbor on the question of religion. So, with all thy getting, get knowledge, knowing that "a man of knowledge increases strength." (Proverbs 24:5.)

We should study available material which deals with the various dogmas of the Roman Church. At least have an intelligent knowledge of what the Church teaches on Christ, the Virgin Mary, saints, St. Peter, purgatory, etc. Remember that only in the Word of God are found the fundamental principles which are capable of working a lasting transformation of the mind of the average Catholic.

Approach: It is essential that the heavenly plant of love be interwoven in our manner of approach. We may possess every other qualification-knowledge, eloquence, zeal, and poise---but without the love of Christ in the heart our efforts will be a failure. Our approach either repels or draws souls to the message. Remember that "a word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." (Proverbs 25:11.) "In the work of soul-winning, great tact and wisdom are needed. The Savior never suppressed the truth, but He uttered it always in love. In His-intercourse with others, He exercised the greatest tact, and He was always kind and thoughtful. He was never rude, never needlessly spoke a severe word, never gave unnecessary pain to a sensitive soul. He did not censure human weakness. . . . He saw in all, souls whom it was His mission to save."-Ibid., p. 117.

We must seek a common ground on which to introduce the subject of religion. Events which tie in with prophecies of the last days as recorded in Matthew 24 are good subjects to use to awaken an interest in the Holy Scriptures. There are many avenues of approach to honest hearts.

Be a Good Listener: Be interested in what others relate regarding their experience and what their church teaches. Never act shocked over the most flagrant and preposterous assertions. Remember the Catholic was taught from infancy the tenets of his church, and they are woven into his very being.

Be Patient: The Catholic's profound ignorance of the Holy Scriptures and his inability to grasp at first the principles of truth will need patience on our part.

Never Argue: The longer we hold out on a controversial question, the more stubborn his heart will become. Never say, "I am going to prove that you are wrong." Change the subject for one that is less polemical. The "milk of the word" should be given before administering the "strong meat"

Desire for Action: The Lord will help a man who acts or puts forth an effort, but God cannot do anything for the man who refuses to act. Men who have accomplished the most good were men of action. They made mistakes because they were imperfect men. Churchill once said, "Success is the result of making mistakes." The Spirit of Prophecy states, "Gain an experience by working for others. You may make mistakes; but this is not more than the most intelligent, and those in positions of trust, have done again and again. You will not always meet with success; but you can never know the result of humble, disinterested effort to help those who are in darkness." - Review and Herald, January 12, 1897.

There is no great achievement without action. A baby would never learn to walk if he were to wait until his limbs would carry him without faltering. The babe wills to walk, and he attempts the impossible. Does he fall? Of course he does; but this does not deter him. He arises and again sets out, and he keeps up this process until perfection is reached. This is how we, through the power of God, become proficient in the work of soul saving.

There is a tendency for us to become discouraged and give up all attempts for fear of making mistakes and of failing in our first overtures to secure the attention of our Catholic neighbor, friend, or relative. Perseverance, coupled with strong faith in God, is a wonderful virtue. The enemy of souls will put a thousand reasons in our minds why we should not approach that next-door neighbor on points of our doctrine. Arise to action, and the God of the Reformers will be with us and will cover up the mistakes and blunders that poor mortals are prone to make. His special blessing accompanies the labor of men of action; men who will not be swerved from the straight line of duty.... For love of Him, they count not their lives dear unto themselves. Their work is to catch the light from the Word, and let it shine forth to the world in clear, steady rays. Fidelity to God is their motto." - Prophets and Kings, p. 148. (Italics supplied.)

Protestantism's resting on her oars and allowing the Catholic to go his way has led the Roman Church to a sense of carnal security and has emboldened her until we can see today her ascendancy to that lofty place which the prophets have foretold. But, thank God, amid all this superior power and influence, a voice is heard, "Come out of her, my people." During the days of the Reformation, little would have been accomplished if the leaders had been intimidated by the fear of offending the ruling and inexorable Church of Rome. The Reformers believed in their heaven-sent message, and while they had very meager facilities with which to accomplish their task, they nevertheless went forth conquering and to conquer through faith in the divine Word of God.

Luther's reliance was not in himself, but in the Lord. His prayer was, "O almighty and everlasting God.... if it is only in the strength of this world that I must put my trust, all is over.... This is not my work, but Thine. . . . The cause is Thine,... and it is a righteous and eternal cause. O Lord, help me!" -The Great Controversy, pp. 156, 157.

The God of Luther, who chose him for his work, has chosen us and will stand by our side as we go forth to work for the souls of Catholics. May that same undaunted, intrepid spirit that possessed Luther when he was threatened with being burned, reverberate in our souls as we go forth to meet the same enemy of all truth. Luther said, when he was told that he would be burned and his body reduced to ashes, "Though they should kindle a fire all the way from Worms to Wittenberg, the flames of which reached to heaven, I would walk through it in the name of the Lord." - Ibid., p. 153.

Every evangelist, pastor, Bible instructor, physician, colporteur, and layman should carry on his heart the unfinished task of reaching the Roman Catholic with this message. Prayerful consideration should be given to ways and means by which the work can be accomplished with the greatest skill.

"The spirit of love, meekness, and forbearance pervading our life will have power to soften and subdue hard hearts and win to Christ bitter opponents of the faith." - Testimonies, Vol. 5, p. 174.

Every devout Catholic is taught from the catechism that doctrines and dogmas advocated by the Church are divine, and, therefore, irrevocable. To doubt their truth would mean heresy, and heresy is defined thus: "Heresy, deciding for oneself what one shall believe and practice." And again: "A heretic is condemned by the very fact of his choosing for himself." The Roman Catholic will shy away from any teaching that would lead him to doubt or question any of the doctrinal points of his church.

The Catholic Dictionary has the following to say about heresy: "Formal heresy is a grievous sin, for it involves rebellion against God, who requires us to submit our understandings to the doctrines of his church."

We may ask how these souls can be reached by the Adventist message. Is there anything too hard for God? It is the presentation of the living Word of the infallible God that alone can break the fetters of man-made creeds and allow the oppressed to go free.

The first and most important step in instructing the Catholic is to direct his mind to the Book of God as the only rule of faith. Once he is convinced that the Holy Scriptures are inspired by the Lord, there will not be much difficulty in convincing him of the various points of our faith.

The subject that has been used to good advantage, which breaks down prejudice and opens the way for future study of the Word, is the prophecies relating to Christ's first advent. There is a fourfold purpose in presenting this particular theme.

First: It establishes the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, which is most essential. Emphasis should be placed on the dates when the prophecies were written in order to show that they were given many hundreds of years before Christ came to the earth. Then point out the accurate fulfillment of these prophecies as recorded in the New Testament. This will create a profound reverence for the Bible and show that a divine hand guided in its composition.

Second: Show how the first advent of Christ was carefully chronicled with minute detail years before the event took place, and that our Savior fulfilled every specification of every prophecy written. No other being ever could claim that he had fulfilled these detailed prophecies, as recorded in the Old Testament.

Third: This study will also reveal the close relationship that exists between the Old and the New Testaments. This is very necessary to future study.

Fourth: Any subject which centers on Christ's miraculous birth; His pure, holy life; His crucifixion, burial, and resurrection, makes a strong appeal to the heart of a Roman Catholic.

When studying or conversing on sacred things with a Catholic, we should exhibit profound solemnity, both in language and demeanor. The Bible should be handled with reverential awe. The posture while in prayer should be carefully guarded. One should always kneel on both knees while praying.

There are other topics such as Daniel 2, the sanctuary, the second coming, and the millennium that may be given without any reservations. However, there are studies that should not be presented until the student is sufficiently established so that he will not take offense when he finds that his church is graphically portrayed in the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 should not be presented until the student is prepared by the acceptance of the less controversial subjects.

Here are a few points to keep in mind when dealing with a Roman Catholic: The Bible should be referred to as the Holy Scriptures. The name Jesus must not be used without bowing the head in a worshipful manner. Other names or titles can be used, such as Christ, our Blessed Lord, our Savior, without bowing the head. The Lord's Supper is known to the Roman Catholic as the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. It is penance and not repentance that the Catholic is taught.

It is not necessary for us to know the answer to every Catholic doctrine in order to converse with them about some part of the Holy Scriptures. However, we should become intelligent on some of the vital points of the Catholic faith so that we can reason from the Scriptures regarding them.

We must never forget that our dependence must be centered in the help, power, and wisdom which alone can come from God. When we have the burden to enlighten our Catholic friends, God will furnish the needed help. Note this promise: "The Lord imparts a fitness for the work to every man and woman who will co-operate with divine power. All the requisite talent, courage, perseverance, faith, and tact will come as they put the armor on." - Testimonies, Vol. 6, p. 333.

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December, 1967

## **1. Our Blessed Lord And The Holy Scriptures**

### **Information On Lesson 1**

The church's regard for the Holy Scriptures is evidenced by the words of the Archbishop of Baltimore: "The Church of Jesus Christ, by virtue of her divinely endowed infallibility, vouches for the divine origin of the Sacred Scriptures, and as such we respectfully, but confidently, submit them to the public." - His Eminence James Cardinal Gibbons, Preface, p. 2, of The Holy Bible, Douay Version.

The early fathers believed in the study of the Scriptures. St. Jerome says, "To be ignorant of the Scripture is not to know Christ." (In Isaiam. Prol.) To know our Lord we must find Him in His Word. St. Jerome further states, "A man who is well grounded in the testimonies of the Scripture is the bulwark of the Church." (In Isaiam 54:12.)

St. Jerome in his Epistle to Nepotian has this counsel: "Often read the divine Scriptures; yea, let holy reading be always in thy hand; study that which thou thyself must preach... Let the speech of the priest be ever seasoned with Scriptural reading." - S. Hier. de vita cleric, ad Nepot

St Gregory the Great admonished those engaged in the sacred work of preaching: “Those who are zealous in the work of preaching must never cease the study of the written Word of God.” - S. Greg. M. Regul. past ii. 11 (al. 22); Moral. xvii- 26 (al. 14).

In November, 1893, Pope Leo XIII penned his most famous encyclical, entitled *Providentissimus Deus*, which was addressed to the Catholic clergy throughout the world on the study of Sacred Scripture. Note the following:

“1. DOCTRINAL. Among the reasons for which the Holy Scripture is so worthy of commendation-in addition to its own excellence and to the homage which we owe to God’s Word-the chief of all is, the innumerable benefits of which it is the source; according to the infallible testimony of the Holy Ghost Himself, who says: “All Scripture inspired of God is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice. That the man of God may be perfect, furnished to every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16,17.)

“a. Words and Example of Christ. That such was the purpose of God in giving the Scripture to men is shown by the example of Christ our Lord and of His apostles. For He Himself who ‘obtained authority by miracles, merited belief by authority, and by belief drew to himself the multitude’ was accustomed, in the exercise of His divine mission, to appeal to the Scriptures. He uses them at times to prove that He is sent by God, and is God Himself. From them He cites instructions for His disciples and confirmation of His doctrine. He vindicates them from the calumnies of objectors; He quotes them against Sadducees and Pharisees and retorts from them upon Satan himself when he dares to tempt Him. At the close of His life His utterances are from the Holy. Scripture, and it is the Scripture that He expounds to His disciples after His resurrection, until He ascends to the glory of His Father.”

Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical further states that Christ made use of the Scriptures and that He is our example: “You, therefore, should follow His example by being conversant with the Holy Scriptures.”

The pope even granted an indulgence for reading the Bible: “Pope Leo XIII grants to the faithful who shall read for at least a quarter of an hour the books of the Sacred Scripture with the veneration due to the Divine Word and as spiritual reading, indulgence of 300 days.” - *Preces et Pia Opera*, 645.

Pope Benedict XV wrote his encyclical *Spiritus Paraclitus* (September 15, 1920) on the study of Holy Scripture. These excerpts are worthy of prayerful consideration by every Catholic:

“The Holy Spirit, the Comforter, had bestowed the Scriptures on the human race for their instruction in Divine things. He also raised up in successive ages saintly and learned men whose task it should be to develop that treasure and so provide for the faithful plenteous ‘consolation afforded by the Scriptures’ (Romans 15:4). Foremost among these teachers stands St. Jerome.... The responsibility of our Apostolic office impels us to set before you his wonderful example and so promote the study of Holy Scripture in accordance with the teachings of our predecessors, Leo XIII and Pius X.”

“And none can fail to see what profit and sweet tranquility must result in well-disposed souls from such devout reading of the Bible. Whoever comes to it in piety, faith and humility, and with a determination to make progress in it will assuredly find therein and will eat the ‘bread that comes down from heaven’ (John 6:50).”

“Hence, as far as in us lies, we, Venerable Brethren, shall, with St. Jerome as our guide, never desist from urging the faithful to read daily the Gospels, the Acts and the Epistles, so as to gather thence food for their souls.... But what, in his view, is the goal of such study? First, that from the Bible’s pages we learn spiritual perfection.... Secondly, it is from the Bible that we gather confirmations and illustrations of any particular doctrine we wish to defend.... We confidently hope that his example will fire both clergy and laity with enthusiasm for the study of the Bible.... So convinced indeed was Jerome that familiarity with the Bible was the royal road to the knowledge and love of Christ that he did not hesitate to say: ‘Ignorance of the Bible means ignorance of Christ’ (Prol. in Comment in Isaiah cf. Tract. de Psalm 77).”

“Jerome still calls to us. His voice rings out, telling us of the super excellence of Holy Scripture, of its integral character and historical trustworthiness, telling us, too, of the pleasant fruits resulting from reading and meditating upon it”

“Our one desire for all the church’s children is that, being saturated with the Bible, they may arrive at the all-surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ.”

Every professed Christian should accept the instruction of St. Jerome, who said, “Love the Bible and wisdom will love you. Love it and it will preserve you; honor it and it will embrace you; these are the jewels which you should wear on your breast and in your ears.” - Epistle, 130:20.

## Introduction

Did Jesus base His teachings on the Holy Scriptures? Pope Benedict XV in his encyclical *Spiritus Paraclitus* states: “When Christ preached to the people, whether on the mount by the lakeside, or in the synagogue at Nazareth, or in his own city of Capernaum, He took His points and His arguments from the Bible.” The Gospel record bears this out

St. Luke 4:16-20

Following His baptism He went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day and took part in the service by reading from Isaiah 61:1, 2.

St. Luke 4:21

He pointed to the fulfillment of prophecy found in the Old Testament Scriptures. This was the unqualified evidence that He was the One of whom the prophets wrote.

St. Matthew 5: 17, 18

Christ declared He did not come to destroy or abolish the Old Testament, but to carry into effect its teachings.

St. John 10:34, 35

Our Lord, in asserting Its deity before the Jews, quoted from Psalm 82:6, and then added, "The scripture cannot be broken."

St. Luke 10:25-28

When the question on how to "possess" eternal life was asked, He answered, "What Is written?" The reading and the doing of the Holy Scriptures ensures eternal life. The same holds true today, for God's plan of salvation never changes.

St. Luke 10:29

The lawyer's question, "Who is my neighbor?" indicates that while he read the law, he did not practice it. Christ informed the lawyer that unless the letter of the law was carried out, he could not be saved.

## **The Necessity of Old Testament Scriptures**

St. Luke 17:26, 27

Our Lord mentioned the days of Noah. How would we know what the "days of Noah" were if we did not study Genesis 6 to 8?

St. Luke 17:28-30

"Days of Lot." Who was Lot? Without the Book of Genesis we would be unable to understand what our Lord meant when He mentioned Lot and Sodom.

St. Luke 17:32

"Remember Lot's wife." There must be something vital to our salvation relative to Lot's wife, otherwise Christ would not have cautioned us to remember her. How can we remember something about which we know nothing? Our Lord intended us to study this woman's experience in order to avoid her fate.

## **Essential to Study Prophecy**

St. Matthew 24:15

Christ predicted the downfall of Jerusalem, which took place in AD 70. He told His people to read and understand what Daniel recorded about the Roman army and the overthrow of the city. Great importance was attached to the prophecy of Daniel. If a person refused this prophecy, what would be the result?

## **Necessity of Studying the Scriptures**

St. John 5:39

Jesus tells us to search the Scriptures. They testify of Him. We must study the Bible in order to know our Lord. The Bible alone reveals His character.

St. Mark 12: 10

"And have you not read this scripture?" Were our Lord on earth today and were He to ask about our reading the Scriptures, what would be the answer? Throughout Christ's ministry He emphasized the importance of the Holy Scriptures.

St. Luke 24:25, 26

Unbelief in the Holy Scriptures caused the disciples to doubt the Messiah ship of Christ. Never would our Lord have been betrayed and forsaken by His followers had they studied and believed the prophecies of the Old Testament relating to the Messiah. How necessary it is for us today to "believe all that the prophets have spoken"

## **Christ's Example**

St. Luke 24:27

What a Bible study our Lord gave to the two disciples! He began with Genesis and followed His topic throughout the Old Testament.

St. Luke 24:44

When Christ met with the disciples after His resurrection, He reminded them of what constituted the basis of His teachings during His ministry. He left us an example.

St. Luke 24:45

He opened the minds of the disciples to an understanding of the Scriptures. He will do the same for us.

St. Matthew 22:29

We err in doctrine by not knowing the Holy Bible. The Scriptures and the power of God are closely connected. We can see that our Lord taught from the Old Testament Scriptures and stressed their importance. He intended that all His followers should accept them as the standard of faith, doctrine, and morals.

St. Luke 11:28

These who hear and keep the word of Holy Writ will be blessed. May we be men and women of the Word of God.

## **2. The Apostles And The Holy Scriptures**

The Bible preceded the church. In fact, if there were no Bible, there would be no church—that is, no true church. The doctrine based upon Holy Scriptures distinguishes the true church from the false and is its guiding principle.

2 Timothy 3:16

The Scriptures are given for “doctrine,” for correcting false religious creeds. In Monsignor Knox’s New Testament, the translation reads thus: “Everything in the scripture has been divinely inspired, and has its uses; to instruct us, to expose our errors, to correct our faults, to educate us in holy living.”

### **St. Peter and the Holy Scriptures**

Acts 1:16-20

A thousand years before it happened, the Bible foretold the part Judas was to act in the betrayal of our Lord, and the result. Note all the Old Testament scriptures which are covered in St. Peter’s discourse concerning Judas. Psalm 41:9; Zechariah 11:12, 13; Psalm 69:25; 109:8.

Acts 2:14, 16-21, 25, 41

On the day of Pentecost, St. Peter gave a sermon based upon the prophecies of Joel and David. The result was the conversion of three thousand people. The New Testament church was founded upon the Old Testament Scriptures. Our Lord stated that in order to be in the kingdom of heaven one must be born again. (St. John 3:3)

1 Peter 1:23

St. Peter says that conversion, or the new birth, is the result of the study of the Sacred Scriptures.

1 Peter 1:25

St. Peter preached the Word, which “endures for ever,” and thus made converts for the kingdom. The enduring, infallible Word of God was taught, not the traditions of men or the dogmas of a general council.

### **St. Paul and the Holy Scriptures**

Acts 17:2

The teaching of the Scriptures by St. Paul resulted in the founding of the Thessalonian church.

Acts 17:10, 11

St. Paul in Berea taught the Word to his hearers. He commended the Bereans for searching the Scriptures each day in order to test his teachings by that Word. We, too, should test our beliefs by the Scriptures. If the doctrines which were taught us do not harmonize with a “Thus said the Lord,” then we will want to accept what the Word says.

Acts 17:13

There was opposition to St. Paul as he preached the Word. Some people today will still stir up trouble to hinder the teaching of the Scriptures.

Romans 16:25, 26

St. Paul says that the gospel based upon the Scriptures and prophets was “made known to all nations.”

Romans 15:4

The writings of the Old Testament Scriptures brought learning, comfort, and hope to the church of Rome and to the aged apostle. The Scriptures will do the same for us today, providing we make use of them.

2 Timothy 1:2, 5

St. Paul speaks of Timothy’s sincere faith and attributes it to the teaching of his mother and grandmother.

2 Timothy 3:15

From childhood Timothy was taught the Holy Scriptures, which brought salvation through faith in Christ. The only Scriptures available to the young Timothy were the books of the Old Testament.

2 Timothy 4:1, 2

St. Paul gave the solemn charge to Timothy, and to all other religious teachers, to preach the Word.

2 Timothy 4:3, 4

That doctrines which the Bible establishes would be put aside for “fables” was foretold by St. Paul.

1 Corinthians 15:3, 4

Christ’s burial and resurrection were according to Scripture. Therefore, He was the true Messiah.

St. John 14:29

The fulfillment of prophecy establishes faith in the Holy Bible. Both St. Peter and St. Paul provide safe examples.

### **3. The Messianic Prophecies Of The Old Testament**

The Old Testament Scriptures give a graphic picture of our Redeemer from I-Es birth to His crucifixion. His resurrection and intercessory work as our High Priest in the sanctuary in heaven are depicted by shadows and types.

It is essential for us to study the Holy Scriptures in order to be conversant with the truths which they contain.

In the following outline we will confine our study to the events relative to the betrayal, judgment, crucifixion, and sufferings of our blessed Lord. With what accuracy the prophets delineated the scenes surrounding Calvary! If the disciples had accepted what the Old Testament said about the Messiah, they never would have forsaken Him, and St. Peter would not have denied Him in that crucial hour. His loving heart yearned for the support and sympathy of the men whom He had chosen to be His followers. But, alas, the Word of God was not cherished and obeyed. The record states, “Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.” St. Matthew 26:56.

This study, comparing the Old Testament prophecies and their fulfillment in the New Testament, is designed to establish the authenticity of the Holy Bible. It further safeguards against the intrusion of false messiahs. Only One filled the specifications of Bible prophecy, and that One is our blessed Lord.

#### **Prophesied---Old Testament**

#### **Fulfilled-New Testament**

Isaiah 7:14	(742 BC)	Born of a virgin	St. Matthew 1: 18
Micah 5:2	(710 BC)	Come out of Bethlehem	St. Matthew 2:1-6
Zechariah 11:12	(487BC)	Sold for thirty pieces of silver	St Matt 26:15, 16
Zechariah 11:13	(487BC)	Betrayal money cast into field	St. Matthew 27:5-7, 10
Isaiah 53:7	(712 BC)	Dumb before His accusers	St. Matthew 27:12-14
Isaiah 50:6	(712 BC)	Smitten and spat upon	St. Matthew 27:30
Isaiah 53:5	(712 BC)	Wounded and bruised	St. Matthew 27:26-29
Psalms 22:16	(A.V.)	Hands and feet pierced	St. John 20:25-27
Psalms 21:17	(D.V.)		
Isaiah 53:12	(712 BC)	Crucified with thieves	St. Mark 15:27, 28
Psalms 109:25	(A.V.)	“Shook their heads”	St. Matthew 27:39
Psalms 108:25	(D.V.)		
Psalms 22:7, 8	(A.V.)	Ridiculed by priests, scribes	St. Luke 23:35
Psalms 21:8, 9	(D.V.)		St. Matt 27:41-43
Psalms 22:18	(A.V.)	Parted His garments	St. John 19:23, 24
Psalms 21:19	(D.V.)		
Psalms 22:1	(A.V.)	His forsaken cry to God	St. Matthew 27:46

Psalm 21:2	(D.V.)		
Psalm 34:20	(A.V.)	Bones not broken	St. John 19:33, 36
Psalm 33:21	(D.V.)		
Zechariah 12:10 (487 BC)		His side pierced	St. John 19:34, 37
Isaiah 53:9	(712 BC)	Buried in rich man's tomb	St. Matthew 27:57-60

Thus we can see the close relationship between the Old and the New Testaments. The prophecies of the Old Testament were fulfilled. Were it not for these prophecies, we could never be certain of the true identity of Christ. He fulfilled every specification of what was written in the Old Testament Scriptures centuries before. He Himself established His Messiah ship by pointing to the Scriptures. Will He not rebuke us, as He rebuked His disciples, if we do not believe all that the prophets have spoken?

## **4. The Origin Of Sin And Its Remedy**

The question often arises, Who is responsible for the entrance of sin into our world, and with whom did it originate? Another vital question is frequently asked, Why did God not destroy Satan when he first introduced sin into the universe? Without the Holy Scriptures these and other related questions could not be explained with certainty.

From the inception of sin our Lord has suffered. In this study we shall see how the heart of God went out to this world when our first parents, Adam and Eve, came under the alluring power of evil. True, the Lord could have blotted them from His creation, but instead, He gave His only begotten Son for their redemption. We are all the recipients of this great salvation, which our blessed Lord made possible by His condescension, life, passion, resurrection, ascension, and intercessory work.

### **Who Was the Originator of Sin?**

1 John 3:8

Sin started with the devil. There was no sin in the universe until he introduced it.

St. John 8:44

Satan committed the first murder and spoke the first lie. Who charged him with being a murderer and a liar? It was our Lord, the One who knew, for He was well acquainted with Satan's rebellion in heaven.

### **Created a Perfect Being**

Ezekiel 28:15

What kind of being was this fallen angel? The record says that he was perfect until iniquity was found in him. He made a devil out of himself. God is not responsible for Satan's action. Satan was a free moral agent as we are, with the power of choice. He could choose to obey God's commandments, or he could choose to disobey and take the consequences.

St. John 8:44

He "abode not in the truth." This infers that he was at one time "in the truth."

### **How Satan Sinned**

Ezekiel 28:17

How did he sin? He was "lifted up because of . . . [his] beauty." He took the beauty and intellect which God gave him and became proud and self-exalted.

Isaiah 14:12

Lucifer, "day-star," was his name before he sinned.

Isaiah 14:13, 14

These tremendous ideas cherished in the mind of this created being mark the beginning of sin in the universe. He rose higher and higher in his selfish ambition until finally he wanted to "be like the most High." He could go no higher.

Ezekiel 28:14

He was the most beautiful being God ever created. He was endowed with intellectual greatness which elevated him to the highest position of all created beings. As "the anointed cherub," he was above all the angelic host.

Ezekiel 28:16

God pronounced his doom. However, he was not destroyed when he sinned. Why? Had God blotted him out of existence, the good angels and the inhabitants of other worlds would question the justice of God throughout eternity. God, who alone could read the innermost sanctuary of the heart, knew how deep seated were Satan's rebellion and hatred. Consequently, time had to be given to demonstrate his character to the universe and to the human family. He lost his position in heaven and later entered the Garden of Eden, the home of our first parents. Satan's purpose was to lure them to sin against God.

## **Adam and Eve Deceived by Satan**

Genesis 1:28

Adam and Eve were to have "dominion" over the earth. God placed man here, yet man was to recognize God as the rightful owner of all. His life and happiness depended upon his obedience to his Maker.

Genesis 2:8, 9

God supplied man's every need.

Genesis 2:16, 17

They could eat freely of every tree but one. God reserved that one tree for Himself to attest to His ownership. As long as Adam and Eve kept their hands off this prohibited tree, they acknowledged God as their ruler. Satan knew the condition under which Adam was to retain his dominion. If he could get the holy pair to disobey the command of God, he would have the earth, and Adam and Eve would be subject to him.

Genesis 3:1

Satan used subtlety by employing a serpent as a medium to speak to Eve. This serpent was in the forbidden tree. "Hath God said?" asked Satan, questioning the validity of God's word. He is still casting doubt upon the Holy Scriptures, but instead of using a beast as a medium, he is employing human beings.

Genesis 3:2, 3

If Eve had only held fast to what "God hath said," what a different story we would have! The violation of the Word of God brings death.

Genesis 3:4, 5

Satan contradicted God. "You will not die by disobeying; you will be more alive than ever before."

Genesis 3:6

Eve believed Satan and enticed her husband to eat the forbidden fruit also. Adam sold his dominion to Satan and became a subject under his control.

## **Prophecy of the Coming Redeemer**

Genesis 3:15

God in His mercy made known the plan of redemption to Adam and Eve. Through the grace of God they could extricate themselves from the power of the devil. The "seed," our Savior, would bruise the head of Satan. Here is the first intimation of the battle which was to be fought between Christ and Satan. Christ's heel would be bruised; that is, He would suffer. Nevertheless He was to be victorious over the enemy.

Genesis 3:21

God made coats of skin and clothed them. This covering cost the life of an innocent animal. Blood had to be shed. This typified the death of the innocent Lamb of God, who was to shed His blood in behalf of the human family, and with His perfect life He would clothe us--credit to our account His righteousness. Thank God for this provision! All that was lost in the fall would be bought back by Christ.

## **Christ Invaded Satan's Dominion, This Earth**

St. John 14:30

Our Lord called Satan the "prince of this world." We have enough evidence to prove his ruler ship. Read history and the daily papers, which tell the tragic events that attest to Satan's dominion.

Ephesians 2:2

Satan is the “prince of the power of the air.” As far as God permits, he controls the elements. Were it not for the constraining power of God, we would be blotted from the earth by some capricious cataclysm.

St. Luke 19: 10

What was lost? Man and the earth were lost. Our Redeemer came to restore both man and his lost possession, which is the earth.

St. Luke 4:5-7

Satan knew that the Son of God came into this world to take from him that which Adam forfeited. He had the brazen effrontery to tell Christ that the earth was “delivered” to him, when he had received it by usurpation, actually.

St. Luke 4:8

Had Christ yielded to the suggestions of Satan, all would have been lost; but thank God, He withstood the enemy. Christ did not dispute when Satan said, “All this power will I give thee.” But He could have said He knew how it had been obtained. Our Lord never entered into an argument with Satan. He adhered to what was “written.”

## **The Dominion Purchased by Sacrifice**

St. Luke 22:44

When this blood dropped upon the earth, the ransom price was paid. Man and earth were now purchased. The earth was to be Christ’s and the human family’s. Satan may have a lease on it, but one of these days that lease will terminate and Christ will take over.

Micah 4:8

The “tower of the flock” is Christ, and unto Him the “first dominion” will come.

Ephesians 1: 14

This earth is called the “purchased possession.” It is twice His. He first made it, and then He bought it. Likewise, human beings are twice His. He created them, and then with His blood He bought them. We are precious to Him, and He should be precious to us.

Revelation 11: 15

What a day it will be when the Lord takes over the affairs of this earth! The kingdoms of this world will be His, and He will reign forever. Christ is now making up His subjects. Let us choose to be numbered among them.

## **5. Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream-Daniel 2**

The prophecy of Daniel 2 is designed by God to call our attention to the events leading up to the close of this world’s history. This prophecy relating to world empires is one to which historians have attested. The historian Gibbon has this to say: “The images of gold, or silver, or brass, that might serve to represent the nations and their kings, were successively broken by the iron monarchy of Rome.”-The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Vol. III, p. 634.

## **Who Is the Author of Prophecy?**

2 Peter 1:21

St. Peter tells us how God gave prophecy. It did not come by the will of man, but by the Holy Spirit taking control of the prophet, who wrote as the Holy Spirit guided.

Isaiah 46:9, 10

God alone can tell the end from the beginning.

Amos 3:7

He reveals future events by His prophets. We should study what the prophets have written in order to know what the future holds for us. If we refuse to investigate the prophecies, we are ignoring what God in His love gave to prepare us for coming events.

St. Matthew 24:15

Our Lord recognized Daniel as a prophet. According to Christ, we can understand prophecy if we read the Book of Daniel. How few are heeding the injunction which our Lord gave to read and understand the prophecies of Daniel. Satan wants to keep us in ignorance regarding the future.

## **The Great Image**

Daniel 2:1

The king had a dream which troubled him. He was aware that it involved him as, a world ruler.

Daniel 2:2, 3

The so-called wise men had professed to foretell the mystery of the future, and now they are to be put to the test.

Daniel 2:4

Had the king remembered the dream and made it known to the astrologers, they would have evoked by some magic incantation an interpretation which would have been false. God withheld the dream so that no false meaning would be applied by the professed wise men.

Daniel 2:5, 6

The king was about to take drastic measures because he had been deceived by these pseudo scientists. They claimed to read the stars and tell their influences upon human affairs and predict what would happen.

Daniel 2:7

They again asked the king to tell them the forgotten dream, and they promised that the interpretation would be forthcoming.

Daniel 2:8, 9

The king said if they would only tell him the dream, he would have confidence in their interpretation.

Daniel 2:10, 11

Only "the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh," could tell the dream, said the magicians.

## **Daniel Comes on the Stage**

Daniel 2:12, 13

A death decree which included Daniel and his companions went forth.

Daniel 2:14, 15

Daniel learned for the first time what he faced.

Daniel 2:16

It took courage to appear before such an infuriated ruler. Daniel was a captive from Judea who believed in the true God, the One who alone could reveal the future.

Daniel 2:17, 18

Daniel and his three companions had a prayer meeting in which they implored God to reveal the dream and its interpretation.

Daniel 2:19-23

The answer to their united prayers came. God will do the same for us today if we seek Him for wisdom and an understanding of the prophecies of His Word.

Daniel 2:24, 25

Arioch took the credit for finding a man who would make known to the king his lost dream and its meaning.

Daniel 2:26

"Art thou able?" The professed wise men had failed.

Daniel 2:27

Why couldn't the wise men tell the king what the dream was all about? The answer is that the king was to be introduced to the true God by the Hebrew captive.

Daniel 2:29

Daniel even told the king what he was thinking before he had the dream. He was wondering what would happen to his kingdom and what the future held in store for him.

Daniel 2:30  
Note Daniel's humility.

## **The Forgotten Dream Revealed**

Daniel 2:31-35

The king must have listened with rapt attention as Daniel unfolded the dream to him, It was no wonder he was troubled regarding it. He was eager to know what it implied.

Daniel 2:36

Daniel did not ask the kin. if this was what he had dreamed. That would have cast reflection upon the validity of what God had revealed to him. "This is the dream," he said.

## **The Inspired Interpretation**

Daniel 2:37, 38

The king was an idolater. He worshiped images. The metallic image in his dream, therefore, made a profound impression. His kingdom represented the head of this image, which was gold. Imagine his reaction when he realized the image was not all gold, which would indicate that his kingdom would not last forever.

Daniel 3:1-7

Later Nebuchadnezzar made an image all of gold in defiance of the word of prophecy, and commanded everyone, under penalty of death, to bow down and reverence the image he had made.

Daniel 3:8-18

Three young men refused. They believed in God's Ten Commandments. They would rather die than violate them, and bowing to this golden image would be breaking the first and second commandments. Their love for their Lord surpassed their love for life in this world. This is true Christianity. We, too, should choose to die rather than bow to an image.

## **The Kingdom of Babylon (605-539 BC.)**

Daniel 2:37, 38

Nebuchadnezzar reigned over one of the greatest of kingdoms, which was represented by the golden head of this image. In 605 BC. Babylon became a universal power. Its capital, regarded as one of the wonders of the world, was laid out in a perfect square, 15 miles on each side. It had a wall 350 feet high and 86 feet thick. The city had 50 streets, each 150 feet in width, and 150 gates of solid brass. The river Euphrates flowed through the city. Never has there been a city like it. Isaiah, the prophet, writing about Babylon, expresses it thus: "Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency."

Such was Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom of Babylon. In this city with its impregnable walls Daniel witnessed for the true God. He was a captive, but he maintained his integrity to his Lord. He lived to see the fulfillment of the king's dream in the overthrow of Babylon by the Medes and Persians. The golden kingdom perished, and another took its place.

## **Kingdom of Medo-Persia (539-331 BC.)**

Daniel 2:39

An "inferior" kingdom. As silver is inferior to gold, so the Medo-Persian Empire was inferior to Babylon.

Isaiah 45:1, 4

The Lord called Cyrus by name 113 years before he was born, and told how he was to take the impregnable city of Babylon.

Isaiah 45:2, 3

The gates of brass were not to be shut. Had they been, Cyrus could never have taken the city. God went before Cyrus, for the time had come when the wickedness of Babylon had reached its summit.

Daniel 5:1-23

This chapter tells the story of why the God of heaven could no longer bear with this kingdom. (See Jeremiah 50:24, 25) During Belshazzar's feast, marked by drunkenness and unholy revelry, Cyrus made his attack. The massive gates were not shut, for the sentries were insensible to the impending danger because of the gala season.

Daniel 5:25-31

Daniel read the handwriting which spelled the doom of that once-great empire. The young profligate king was slain, and the kingdom went into the hands of the Medes. The unrivaled mistress of western Asia was shattered, never to be restored.

Daniel 2:39

The Medo-Persian kingdom bore sway over the world from 539 to 331 BC. It was inferior in wealth, luxury, and magnificence, but not in power or extent. The silver breast and arms of the image extended from the Aegean Sea to the River Indus, the most extensive empire which had ever existed up to that time.

## **The Grecian Empire (331-168 BC.)**

Daniel 2:39

A third kingdom of brass was to supplant the Persian kingdom, namely, Greece. Alexander the Great, the formidable foe at the Battle of Arbela in 331 BC, was victorious over the Persians. But prophecy further states that the Grecian Empire was not to stand forever.

## **The Roman Empire (168 BC-AD 476)**

Daniel 2:40

What kingdom succeeded Greece? The legs of iron denote the strength of the fourth and last world empire. Rome conquered Greece in the Battle of Pydna, June 22, 168 BC. The whole empire of Greece fell to the Roman power. This empire extended throughout Europe, with possessions in Asia and Africa. It conquered everything, and its laws, in many instances just, were felt throughout the world. But even this universal kingdom, according to prophecy, was not to stand forever. It was to be divided into ten parts.

## **The Ten Toes**

Daniel 2:41, 42

Here is depicted the dividing of the Roman Empire - ten toes, ten divisions. This division was accomplished between AD 351 and 476. These ten independent kingdoms were Alemanni, Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Franks, Vandals, Suevi, Burgundians, Heruli, Anglo-Saxons, and Lombards. The connection between these nations and the nations of modern Europe can be easily discerned by such names as England (the Anglo-Saxons), Franks (the French), and Alemanni (which suggests the name of Germany). The European nations today are "partly strong, and partly broken," just as the prophecy states.

Daniel 2:43

"They shall not cleave one to another." Men have dreamed of uniting Europe, men such as Charlemagne, Charles V, Louis XIV, Napoleon, Kaiser Wilhelm, and Hitler. But all have failed. Rome was to be the last universal kingdom until God's kingdom is set up. Prophecy cannot be broken. Force, intrigue, and diplomacy thus far have failed to weld together the fragments of the old Roman Empire. "The scripture cannot be broken." St. John 10:35.

Daniel 2:43

"They shall mingle themselves with the seed of men." Through intermarriage of royal families, alliances, intrigues, and high-level conferences, governments have tried to consolidate their power for the purpose of uniting these divided nations. But all such human endeavors have failed, as the prophecy has declared. Iron and clay cannot mix.

Daniel 2:44

"In the days of these kings" God is going to take over. No man or body of men can find a lasting solution to world problems. All attempts thus far have been futile. The United Nations has not yet solved the vexing situation confronting the world. In this text we reach the glorious end of this stupendous prophecy, the end of human history and human ruler ship.

## The Eternal Kingdom

Daniel 2:45, 34

Only one universal kingdom can be established the kingdom of God.

Revelation 11: 15

“The kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of our Lord.” We are still praying the Lord’s prayer – “Thy kingdom come.” This kingdom is soon to be set up.

1 Peter 2:3, 4

The stone that strikes the image on the feet is Christ. St. Peter declares that our blessed Lord is the stone. He is the “Rock of Ages,” who paid the infinite price not only for man, but for the whole earth. He bought back this earth by shedding His blood on Calvary.

Daniel 2:35

This is the coming kingdom. This should be the all absorbing thought of our lives. We want to participate in the glories and blessings of our Lord’s everlasting kingdom. And He wants us with Him.

## 6. The Second Commandment

How the God of heaven regards image worship is clearly revealed in Holy Scripture.

### INFORMATION ON LESSON 6

The second commandment as found in the Douay Version reads thus: “Thou shall not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shall not adore them, nor serve them: I am the Lord thy God, mighty, jealous, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me: and showing mercy unto thousands to them that love me, and keep my commandments.” Exodus 20:4-6.

### How the Early Fathers Regarded Images

The early fathers voiced their protest on the inception of images being brought into the church. Here are a few terse statements as historical evidence:

“It is an injury to God, to make an image of Him in base wood or stone.” - Justin Martyr, Justin’s Apology, 11, p. 44.

“God ought to be worshiped without an image; images serving only to bring the Deity into contempt.”-Augustine, Augustine de Civit. Dei, 1. VII, C. 5. Again from the same author: “It would be impious in a Christian to set up a corporeal image of God in a church; and that he would be thereby guilty of the sacrilege condemned by St. Paul, of turning the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man.” - Augustine, Augustine de Fidi, et symb., c. VII.

Here is another testimony of one who is widely quoted: “You Christians have nothing to do with images, on account of the second commandment; the first thing we teach those who come to us is, to despise idols and all images. It being the peculiar character of the Christian religion to raise our minds above images, agreeably to the law which God Himself has given to mankind.” - Origen, Origen Against Cetsus, 1. V., 7.

Others of the early fathers, such as Tertullian and Clemens Alexandrinus, opposed images and their introduction into the church. These fathers disapproved the arts of statuary and painting. The principles of the second commandment were practiced by the people of God down through the ages. This was a safeguard against the heathen system of idol worship. Bowing before an image of wood, brass, or marble, the workmanship of human hands, was foreign to the observers of the second commandment.

This commandment of God is explicit and conclusive and needs no theologian to decode it. Had all obeyed this commandment, there would never have been a heathen or the various religions which are practiced in Africa, Asia, and in other parts of the world.

The inception of image worship into the church came first with the veneration of the cross and of relics. Next came the belief that those who died as martyrs, or those who were regarded as saints, could make intercession if implored, because they were in heaven, close to the throne of God.

Pilgrimages by the devout were made to the tombs of deceased saints. Merits and supernatural favors were allegedly gained by those who visited, touched, and kissed the place where the deceased saint lay. But a memento was needed. A memorial was sought which would be more appealing than a skull, a bone, or the mantle of a departed saint. Painters and sculptors were employed. A painting or sculpture of the deceased saint displaced the gruesome skull.

Pictures, when first introduced, were seemingly for the purpose of instructing those who had difficulty in learning. Also, to meet the minds of the newly converted pagans, pictures were used in a discreet manner. The artist who painted pictures of the venerable dead and the sculptor who modeled the departed pious were now in demand. Their work adorned the places of worship.

At first the pictures, images, and relics were not venerated, nor did they become part of worship until about the beginning of the eighth century, when stealthily and imperceptibly reverence and adoration were given to the images. The progression was slow, but the inevitable results were realized. Christians began praying before the images of the saints, and the door was opened for image worship in the church.

Space will not permit an account of the controversy between the emperors and the popes over image worship. However, this brief statement taken from the 1961 National Catholic Almanac will tell the story:

"726-Eastern Emperor Leo III ... issued an edict which declared that the veneration of images, pictures and relics was idolatrous, and ordered their removal from churches. This was the error of Iconoclasm, or image-breaking.

"727-a synod at Rome declared that the veneration of images was in accordance with Catholic tradition. Pope Gregory III condemned Iconoclasm in 731." - Page 134.

The condemning of image-breaking by the imperious pontiff did not silence either the Emperor Leo III or his son Constantine V. During the reign of Emperor Constantine V a council was held in AD 754 at Hiera near Constantinople. There were 338 bishops present at the council, which lasted from February 10 to August 17. The assembly was unanimously against the worship of images, and the council issued the following decree: "The holy and Ecumenical council. . . adhering to the Word of God, the definitions of the six preceding councils, to the doctrine of the approved fathers, and practice of the church in the earliest times, pronounce and declare, in the name of the Trinity, and with one heart and mind, that no images are to be worshiped; that to worship them or any other creature is robbing God of the honor that is due to Him alone, and relapsing into idolatry."

The council went so far as to prohibit the setting up of images in churches or in private places of worship. This council was reckoned as the Seventh General Council, but the Catholic Church does not list it because of its decree against image worship.

The council at Hiera, or Constantinople, did not end the struggle, which continued until the Second Council of Nice. It was called by Queen Irene, wife of the deceased Emperor Leo IV, who had during his reign been in opposition to images. He had been zealous in trying to eradicate idolatry from the Christian church. Queen Irene, holding the regency after the death of the Emperor, convoked a general council. She wrote Pope Adrian I desiring his presence, or that of one of his papal legates, at the council which was to be held at Nice, in support of the worship of images. The pope was happy at the prospect of the images being restored in the churches from whence they had been ejected. In AD 787 the famous second Nicaea Council convened. The church reckons it the seventh in the list of councils, thus disregarding the one called by Constantine V in AD 754, where 338 bishops, after deliberating on the worship of images, condemned their worship. In one of its publications the church has the following to say on this council: "7. Nicaea 11, 787: Adrian I; condemned Iconoclasm, which held that the use of images was idolatry." - 1961 National Catholic Almanac, p. 142.

There were 350 bishops present at the second Nicaea Council, and the final result of their deliberations was in favor of images. This decree was issued: "That holy images of the cross should be consecrated, and put on the sacred vessels and vestments, and upon walls and boards, in private houses and in public ways. And especially that there should be erected images of the Lord God, our Savior Jesus Christ, of our blessed Lady, the mother of God, of the venerable angels, and of all the saints. And that whosoever should presume to think or teach otherwise, or throw away any painted books, or the figure of the cross, or any image or picture, or any genuine relics of the martyrs, they should, if bishops or clergymen, be deposed, or if monks or laymen, be excommunicated."

They ended the council by pronouncing anathemas upon those who rejected the holy images. The decree was signed by 308 of the 350 bishops present. On October 13, AD 787, the seventh general session issued the definition of faith: "In it the council teaches that the figure of the cross, and 'holy images, whether made in colors, or of stone, of any other material,' are to be retained.... It is right to salute, honor, and venerate them, to burn lights and incense before them. . . . The council uses the word 'worship' of the veneration due to images .... This decision was approved by Pope Adrian." - A Catholic Dictionary, p. 423.

Queen Irene, representing the state, and Pope Adrian I, representing the Church, united their regent ship for the purpose of establishing image worship by decree through this Nicaea Council. The commandment of God was cast aside for the traditions of men. Today, statues, relics, medals, pictures, and amulets are venerated and appealed to for guidance and for protection against evil. Their devotees do not realize they are robbing God of His rightful place.

True, the Nicene decree was later rejected by the great Council of Frankfort, on the question of supreme and secondary worship. The Church says that you can give one kind of worship, called Latria, to God, another, caged Dulia, to saints and angels, and still another, Hyperdulia, to the Virgin Mary.

The question which arose at the Frankfort Council related to these three forms of worship. God, the Virgin Mary, and the saints are interwoven in prayers. How could the worshiper change his form from Latria to Hyperdulia and then to Dulia? The Frankfort Council questioned this and found it to be irreconcilable.

## **Standards the Same**

St. Luke 10:27

The fundamental principle of love is what we find in the Ten Commandments. We are to love God with all the heart, soul, strength, and mind.

Deuteronomy 6:4, 5

God had the same standard down through the ages. His plan for mankind has never changed.

## **The First Commandment**

Exodus 20:1-3

God alone is entitled to supreme reverence and worship. This commandment forbids man to give to another, saint or angel, his affection or his service. Whatsoever we adore that interferes with our love for God, of that we make a god.

## **The Second Commandment**

Exodus 20:4

Images or similitudes are forbidden by this second commandment. The heathen claims that his images are only symbols by which his god is worshiped. Some may claim that we have the image only to remind us of God and the saints. But God says not to “make ... any graven image.” Any attempt to represent our blessed Lord by material objects would lower man’s perception of Him.

Exodus 20:5

“Thou shall not bow down thyself to them.” Images, carvings, or pictures. Since God gave this commandment, He expects His people to obey by putting aside all material objects of worship. For more than four hundred years a controversy was waged over images being placed in the church. This practice eventually led to their being accepted as objects of worship. But all the general council decrees can never change what God spoke and also wrote on tables of stone.

Exodus 20:5

“I the Lord thy God am a jealous God.” The sacred relation of God to His people is here revealed. The displeasure of God against images being made and adored is fitly called jealousy.

Psalms 115:3

“Our God is in the heavens.” He is neither on a cross nor in the arms of a Madonna.

Psalms 115:4

Idols are “the work of men’s hands.”

Psalms 115:5-7

Looking at images turns the mind away from the infinite perfection of God and attracts it to the creature rather than to the Creator.

Romans 1:25

Truth is exchanged for error, and the creature is worshiped and served more than the Creator. More prayers are offered to the beatified and canonized saints than to God Himself.

Habakkuk 2:18-19

A woe is pronounced upon those who worship graven images.

Jeremiah 51:17, 18

“By beholding we become changed.” Our character is formed by what we look at in our religious exercises. If we gaze upon that which is formed by human hands, the conception of the eternal God becomes obscure, and as a consequence the character becomes defective.

Deuteronomy 4:15

The Lord did not allow His people to see any “similitude,” form, or resemblance of Himself when He was on Mount Sinai.

Deuteronomy 4:16

Had they seen God’s “similitude,” they would have been inclined to corrupt themselves by forming an image like a male or female. His attitude is the same today toward images.

## **The Folly of Idols**

Isaiah 44:6, 8

God declares He is the Eternal. He is the One and only One.

Isaiah 44: 10

Images are “Profitable for nothing,” God declares. Why should we have in our worship that which is of no benefit?

Isaiah 44:11

The ones who form the images are “men.”

Isaiah 44:12

The “tongs,” “coals,” and “hammers” are used in the formation of idols. Workmen use their strength and skill to fashion them. The artisan gets hungry and has to be revived by food and water. How futile to put faith in any object made by human hands!

Isaiah 44:13

The skilled carpenter is employed to use his technique in fashioning the “figure of a man,” to be set up in the house for the devout to venerate.

Isaiah 44:14-17

What can more graphically portray the utter futility of idol making and idol worship than is recorded in these few texts! To give obeisance to that which is made by the hands of man is an insult to our blessed Lord.

Isaiah 44:18, 19

The Lord, through His Holy Word, will open our eyes and give us an understanding of the awful danger in disregarding the second commandment of the Ten Commandments.

Revelation 22:15

Idolaters will not be saved, according to this scripture.

St. Matthew 4: 10

May God help us to give from the heart the adoration which is due to God alone.

## **7. St. Peter And The Rock**

### **Information For Lesson 7**

The Catholic Church teaches that our Lord built His church upon Peter and that all who do not subscribe to Peter’s being the foundation are outside the pale of the true church. “Jesus, our Lord, founded but one Church, which He was pleased to build on Peter. Therefore, any church that does not recognize Peter as its foundation stone is not the Church of Christ, and therefore cannot stand.” - James Cardinal Gibbons, Faith of Our Fathers, p. 100.

The following statement teaches that Peter, and not Christ, is the “central authority” who unifies and protects: “So the church, the society of the faithful, is founded by Christ upon the rock of a central authority which will hold it together and be the citadel of union and protection. This central authority is established concretely in the person of Simon Peter.” - Charles Alfred Martin, Catholic Religion, p. 61.

Each pope who is voted into office is believed to be the successor of St. Peter, and the vicar of Christ on earth. This makes a pope, while in office, the “Rock,” according to the Catholic belief: “As the Church of Christ was to last beyond the lifetime of St. Peter, even to the end of the world, and as the Church is not a lifeless, material building, but a living body of men requiring a living head to rule them and to be a foundation to that great society, this promise of Christ, of making Peter a Rock, was meant not only for Peter, but also for his successors. . . . Therefore the successors of St. Peter, as the supreme visible rulers of the Church, are each, like St. Peter, the Rock or the visible foundation of it.”-Joseph Faa di Bruno, Catholic Belief, pp. 64, 65.

Those who reject such claims are not true followers of Christ, according to Cardinal Gibbons, who wrote, “The Catholic Church teaches also, that our Lord conferred on St. Peter the first place of honor and jurisdiction in the government of His whole Church, and that the same spiritual supremacy has always resided in the Popes, or Bishops of Rome, as being the successors of St. Peter. Consequently, to be true followers of Christ all Christians, both among the clergy and the laity, must be in communion with the See of Rome, where Peter rules in the person of his successor.”-James Cardinal Gibbons, Faith of Our Fathers, p. 95.

The Catholic Church is established on the doctrine of the primacy of Peter. The unbroken line of succession of popes, the Church holds is essential to the validity of its being the true and only Church. Discredit this dogma, and the whole structure of Catholicism collapses.

Every Bible student should be conversant with the Catholic viewpoint on this subject in order to deal intelligently and Scripturally with it. If our Lord had made such a significant transfer of divinity by making Peter the foundation and head of I-Es church, would not the New Testament Scriptures declare it? If the office of pope was created, and a papal chair established to the end of time, surely the Bible would abound with information on such an important innovation. However, the Holy Scriptures are strangely

silent on this dogma. Let us appeal to the Holy Word of God, which is the highest authority on earth, to determine if Christ did institute the office of pope.

## **Evidence of His Divinity**

St. Matthew 14:24-27

Only a divine Being could walk on the angry waves which endangered the lives of the Twelve. Who but the Master of sea and land could still the violent tempest? Christ had given repeated evidence of His God ship, and it was on the disciples' belief in Him as God that their own salvation depended, as well as the salvation of those whom they were to teach.

St. Matthew 14:28-31

Peter's faith in Christ as a divine Being was tested.

St. Matthew 14:32, 33

"When they [Christ and Peter] were come into the ship," the other disciples said, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God." Peter did not unite with the disciples in acknowledging Christ as the Son of God, as the record bears out. Later, however, at Caesarea Philippi, when the question was asked by our Lord, "Whom say you that I am?" Peter acknowledged Him before the other disciples.

## **Christ's Important Announcement**

St. Matthew 16:13, 14

After the disciples' missionary tour Jesus inquired how the people regarded Him. From the answer, it was evident that none at that time recognized Him as the Messiah. John the Baptist, Elias, and Jeremiah were sinners and needed a Savior even though they were considered good men. Christ was more than an ordinary man. He was God. He was anxious that all should see in Him the Redeemer of the world, the One sent of God.

St. Matthew 16:15

Now Christ asks all the disciples, "Whom say you that I am?" Had the people influenced them in any way? Was their faith in Christ as a divine Being, weakened by the report which they brought back?

St. Matthew 16:16

Peter was the spokesman on this occasion. The disciples' opinion had not changed. Prior to Peter's acknowledgment of the divinity of Christ, the other disciples had openly expressed their belief in Him as the Son of God. "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This confession expressed the faith of the Twelve. Beneath the form of humanity they saw the glory of the Son of God. The truth which Peter had confessed is the foundation of every believer's faith.

St. Matthew 16:17

Possessing such knowledge was no ground for self glorification. Humanity, of itself, cannot attain to a knowledge of God. It was only through the Spirit of God that Peter and the other disciples could get the revelation of God and the plan of salvation. Blessed indeed are those to whom the Holy Spirit, through the Word, reveals the truth regarding Christ as the divine One.

St. Matthew 16:18

This is the text the Catholic Church uses as the basis for its claim that Christ instituted the office of pope, giving Peter credentials to the papal chair and making him the foundation of the church. Let us examine this statement. "Thou art Peter [Petros in the Greek, meaning "a stone"], and upon this rock [petra in the Greek, meaning "a rock"] I will build my church." Petra, the immovable rock, is Christ and not Peter. Two different Greek words are petros, a stone-a rolling stone; and petra, a rock-the Rock of Ages which stands unmoved. Moreover, the Greek word petros is a masculine noun, whereas petra is a feminine substantive. Was Peter the rock upon which the church was founded? The gates of hell did prevail against him when he denied his Lord by cursing. (See St. Matthew 26:69-74) Peter's confession of faith that Christ was the Son of the living God was the foundation upon which the church was built, and the gates of hell would never prevail against this foundation. There is security in the church which has for her foundation the One who stood unmoved amid the storms of the enemy.

## **St. Peter's Testimony on the Rock**

1 Peter 2:3-6

Did Peter understand he was the rock upon which the Christian church was founded? On the contrary, these texts clearly show that he knew Christ was the "chief corner stone," the "head of the corner," the precious One. Peter did not say, "He that believes on me shall not be confounded," but "he that believes on him."

1 Peter 2:6

Peter applies the prophecy of Isaiah 28:16 to Christ.

1 Peter 2:7

Some will believe in Him as the foundation, while others reject Him.

1 Peter 2:8

To those who stumble at the Word-the Bible Christ becomes a Rock of offense. A substitute rock or human being will be accepted by those who do not believe what the Bible teaches-that Christ is the Rock upon which the true church is founded.

## **St. Paul's Testimony on the Foundation**

1 Corinthians 3:10

Paul admonishes us to take heed upon what foundation we build, Christ or mere men.

1 Corinthians 3:11

If Peter was the foundation-the rock upon which the Christian church was to be built-then Paul knew nothing about it. He declares Christ is the foundation.

1 Corinthians 10:4

Paul in this text states that Christ is the Rock and was so known back in the days of Moses. Why should Christ, being the Rock and Foundation of His church down through the ages, abdicate in favor of Peter, or any other mortal? A position as important as the foundation, chief cornerstone, and head of His spiritual structure (the church) would never be transferred to any human being.

Ephesians 2:19, 20

The church is not built upon any one apostle, or prophet, but upon all of them-that is, their work and their doctrine, which is contained in the New and Old Testaments. Christ is the Chief Cornerstone.

Galatians 2:7, 8

Paul was called to be an apostle to the Gentile world, and Peter to the Jews. If Peter were pope, he would be head over all, both Jew and Gentile.

Galatians 2:9

Paul puts James first as one of the pillars. All three James, Cephas (who was Peter), and John-were of equal standing.

Galatians 2:11-14

Paul reproved Peter before the church. If Peter occupied the pontifical office, Paul did not regard it. Would a subordinate rebuke the pontiff of Rome?

Acts 23:1-5

The record reveals that Paul had a deep regard for a sacred office. He apologizes for what he said, not because of the high priest, but because of the divinely appointed office which he held. Had the chair of popedom existed, with Peter the officiating officer, Paul would never have rebuked him publicly regardless of how he felt about his conduct. After the church at Antioch had the experience with Peter which is recorded in Galatians 2, would they have accepted Paul's teaching if he had declared that Peter was the foundation and the head of their church? Some embarrassing questions could have been asked relative to the stability of that foundation.

## **Epistle to the Romans**

Paul addressed a long letter to the Christians at Rome. He mentioned many names, but he did not mention a Roman pontiff. The emperor's name is recorded but not a pope's, who was supposed to have reigned in the Roman capital. If Christ had established a pontifical office with Peter occupying it, Paul knew nothing of it.

## **Equality and Not Supremacy**

We have two ecclesiastical publications from Peter (First and Second Peter), but neither mentions his vice regal authority or his supremacy over his brethren.

1 Peter 5: 1-5

Peter declares himself to be an elder among the elders. He assumed none of the prerogatives of his so-called successors, such as commanding the apostles, issuing bulls, enacting laws, judging and ruling on controversies, summoning councils, transferring kingdoms, wielding the spiritual swords, and dethroning disloyal kings and princes.

1 Peter 5:3

The elders were not to function as “lords,” nor to rule by force over the churches. Peter’s language is against papal authority.

Acts 10:25, 26

The humble fisherman refused the homage of Cornelius. “I myself also am a man,” not a being to be venerated, he said.

## **Christ’s Democratic Methods**

St. Luke 22:24

The subject of authority was an ever-prevailing question with the disciples while Christ was among them in person.

St. Luke 22:25

Here Christ shows that the non-Christian attitude to “exercise authority” is a Gentile trait, not a saintly quality.

St. Luke 22:26

“But you shall not be so.” By these inexorable words, Christ debarred provision for any one man to rule over His church.

St. Luke 22:27

“I am among you as he that serves.” Christ was a servant. He wore no pontifical robes, nor was a jewel-studded crown ever placed upon His brow.

## **Practical Questions**

A few pointed questions: What kind of foundation would Peter have been? If Christ had built His church upon Peter, what would have happened to the church when Peter fell on various occasions? What happens when the foundation of a structure, government, or society is removed?

If every pope is the successor of Peter and is supposed to be the head of the church, what happened when the anti popes ruled? Here is a list, given by the church, of the anti popes:

Paschal III	1169
Callixtus III	1169
Nicholas V	1328
Clement VII	1378
Benedict XIII	1394
Clement VIII	1424
Felix V	1439

During the time of these anti popes two heads were ruling the Church. What happened to the body (church) during these episodes? Then, too, when a pope dies, there is an interim between his death and the election of a new head; what happens in this interval? A church having a human being as its foundation and head was never the plan of our Lord. He never intended that any one of His followers should accept with blind credulity teachings not based upon Holy Scriptures.

The New Testament is silent upon pontifical supremacy. The Holy Scriptures make no mention of a human vicar-general, but they do reveal the Holy Spirit as Christ’s representative in His church. Thank God for the heavenly Vicar who alone guides into all truth! Christ has a true church, and He is its head and foundation, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

## **8. Peter And The Keys**

### **Information On Lesson 8**

Before dealing with the keys from Holy Scripture we will first find out what the Catholic Church teaches regarding this subject: “But Peter alone receives the keys of the church. He alone is the rock on which the Church is built; on the faith of him alone the faith even of the other Apostles depends; he alone is made the shepherd of the whole flock.” - William E. Addis and Thomas Arnold, A Catholic Dictionary, Page 669.

All must be subordinate to Peter. He and his successors prescribe dogmatically the laws for the Church, which, if not obeyed, will bring dire results. Note the following: “While the Church lasts, Peter (and his successors) will hold its keys.... Peter is the steward to whom the keys are committed. He admits to and excludes from the Church in his Master’s name. In other words, he is the center of the Church’s unity. All, from the great Apostle of the Gentiles down to the most obscure of the Church’s children, hold their place and exercise their functions in subordination to Peter....

“What he binds and looses on earth is bound and loosed in heaven, i.e., he is the ultimate earthly judge of what is lawful and unlawful. He is to lay down the laws and conditions on which communion with the Church and participation in its privileges depend, and the decisions of his tribunal here will be ratified in the heavenly court.” - Ibid.

These statements teach that St. Peter was given the keys of the kingdom. Through the succession of the popes the keys are said to be retained and used. We will now prayerfully examine this subject in the light of the Holy Scriptures.

## **The Gift of Keys**

St. Matthew 16:19

The doctrine of the Petrine primacy is alleged to be based on this text. The keys, so the Church asserts, were given alone to Peter. Were these instruments given exclusively to the authority of one man? Would the Omnipotent God deliver into the hands of such a capricious character as Peter the right to admit or reject, to decree what is lawful or unlawful?

St. Matthew 18:18

This is a parallel text to St. Matthew 16:19. In this whole chapter Jesus is speaking to all His disciples.

St. Matthew 16:20

In this text Jesus is speaking to all the disciples, as He was without a doubt doing in verse 19 also. On the other occasion when He repeated the same statement (St. Matthew 18:18), it is clear that He was addressing the group. Keys are for the purpose of opening and shutting. Keys alone without the skilled hand cannot function. Christ gave the keys of the kingdom to the disciples for a purpose.

## **What Are the Keys?**

Revelation 11:3-6

“Two witnesses” - the Old and New Testaments which were kept in obscurity during the Dark Ages. The people were forbidden to read the Holy Scriptures. “These,” the Old Testament and New Testament, have power to “shut heaven.” The Holy Bible when studied and obeyed will open heaven. If disregarded, or misinterpreted, it will shut heaven. These were the keys entrusted to all the disciples, including St. Peter.

St. Luke 11:52

Christ speaks of the key as “the key of knowledge” of how to enter heaven.

2 Timothy 3:15

The Holy Scriptures instruct in salvation.

2 Timothy 3:16

From the Scriptures we get pure doctrine and instruction in righteousness.

2 Timothy 3:17

If we want to be children of God, we must not only study but adhere to the instruction laid down in the Holy Bible. Perfection and good works will follow when the Scriptures are obeyed. It is thus that the “keys of the kingdom” will open heaven. We will no longer be “bound” to the things of earth. Sin will lose its charm. We will be heaven-bound.

## **St Augustine an Exemplar**

St Augustine had a deep regard for Holy Scripture. Note what he said: “As soon as respect for the Holy Scripture fails, faith totters. In a way which stands plainly in Holy Scripture is to be found the whole of faith and morals. I have learnt to bring such reverence to the books of Holy Scripture alone that I firmly believe that their authors were preserved from every error in writing them. Others, however conspicuous they may be-for sanctity and learning, I read so that I do not take anything for granted merely because they suppose it true, but because they convince me by means of those canonical writers or on reasonable grounds.”-St Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, *De Doctrina Christiana*, p. 37. (On Christian Doctrine.)

Every professing Christian should have this same deep regard for the Holy Bible. St. Augustine believed in the true keys. He refused to follow even writers who were considered saintly if their writings were not based on the Holy Scriptures.

## **St. Peter Used the Keys**

Acts 2:14-16

On the day of Pentecost Peter preached from the Book of Joel with glorious results. (Joel 2:28-32.)

Acts 2:25-27

Peter proved that Christ was the true Messiah from the prophecy which David wrote 1,000 years before, recorded in Psalm 16:8-11.

Acts 10:43

Peter was a Bible student. He understood these prophecies, which were written many years earlier, revealing the first advent of Christ.

Acts 10:44

The Holy Spirit came upon the Gentile believers who “heard the word.” Peter made good use of the keys. The Bible opened the hearts of the Gentiles and converted them to Christ.

Acts 10:25, 26

It was in the home of Cornelius that Peter refused to accept homage. Had Peter accepted the adoration, Cornelius and his kinsmen would have been drawn to Peter rather than to God. Peter’s refusal to accept obeisance, and his teaching of the Holy Scriptures, opened the kingdom of heaven to the Gentiles. The proper use of the keys had been made.

1 Peter 1:23

The rebirth, or conversion, comes through the “incorruptible [seed]” of the Word of God-the Bible. Peter knew the power of that Holy Book. When the Bible is taught and accepted, it releases from sin and opens the way to heaven; it reveals Christ to the sinner.

1 Peter 1:25

Peter preached the gospel based upon the Word. Thus the keys were used effectively, and the results bore witness to their power.

## **Paul Used the Keys**

1 Corinthians 16:9

The keys, the Word of God, opened the doors to mission fields for Paul to enter.

Acts 26:22

Paul’s teaching was based upon what the prophets and Moses wrote.

Acts 24:14

St. Paul was accused of heresy because he had left the popular synagogue, or church, of that day. He defended his position by stating that he worshiped according to what the Holy Scriptures taught. The keys had loosed him from error and had opened the way to heaven. This will be the experience of all who, like Paul, will be guided by the Bible.

## **Timothy Given the Keys**

2 Timothy 4:1, 2

The charge given Timothy by Paul was to “Preach the word.” He was given the keys, the use of which would open hearts to prepare for the judgment and the coming of the Lord.

2 Timothy 4:3, 4

In time false teachers would not teach doctrine according to the Word, the Bible. They would turn away from hearing the truth.

John 17:17

What is the truth that Paul said people would not listen to?

## **Wrong Use of the Keys**

2 Peter 3:15, 16

The wrong application of Scripture, St. Peter states, will mislead, and consequently error instead of truth will be cherished. The result will be destruction; thus the kingdom of heaven will be shut. The keys were given the wrong turn.

St. Matthew 23:13

The Pharisees had the keys, but their misinterpretation and misapplication shut heaven against them and those whom they taught.

St. Matthew 23:15

This is a fearful indictment pronounced by our Lord upon those who were working for converts for their church or synagogue, none of whom would be in the kingdom.

St. Matthew 15:9

God does not accept the worship of those who teach the doctrines or traditions instituted by man.

St. Luke 11:52

These lawyers had the keys but “hindered” the people from listening to truth. Such religious leaders would probably say, We are the first and only church. We have Father Abraham as the foundation of our church. (St. Matthew 19) Look at our large member ship and our educated priests. Compare the small following this new religion has. It is led by One who has no letters, and those who associate with Him are untutored.

## **Power of Holy Scriptures**

Psalms 119:9

The Word gives purity of thought and action. To be taught the Word of God is what the youth of today need.

Psalms 119:11

Having the Word in His mind kept Christ from sinning, and it will do the same for us.

## **Who Will Enter Heaven?**

Revelation 22:14

Christ will ultimately declare who will enter heaven. It will be those who have kept the commandments of God, those who made good use of the keys.

## **9. The First Church Council**

### **Information On Lesson 9.**

How did Peter’s contemporaries regard him? He was held in high esteem as an inspired apostle. But was he looked upon as a pope? The record of the Council at Jerusalem reveals that he was not credited as possessing official supremacy.

In AD 31 Christ uttered the words in the hearing of all the disciples, “I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.” St. Matthew 16:19,20. The Council of Jerusalem was held in AD 52, according to the chronological dates of the Bible. This would mean, according to the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, that Peter had occupied the papal chair for almost twenty years when this first council assembled. Surely, by this time the church would have been conversant with Peter’s authority as the head of the body.

In the church at Antioch a controversy arose on the question of circumcision. Certain Pharisees from Judea had gone to Antioch declaring that in order to be saved, the Gentile converts must be circumcised and keep the ceremonial law. The ceremonial law prefigured the death of Christ, and when the Lamb of God died, that law was done away with. Hence it was no longer to be observed. This false teaching on the ceremonial law by the Pharisees resulted in much confusion and contention. The disputed question demanded an authoritative decision. Had Peter been holding the office of pope, would he not have been appealed to for a decision on this vital subject?

Peter, in keeping with his so-called successors, should have been the one with the authority to call for a church council to decide the issue. But Paul, Barnabas, and members from the church in Antioch were the leading figures in this council. We will examine the record in Acts 15 to see if the apostle of posthumous fame, revealed marks of distinction at this important church council.

## Introduction

The question of circumcision and other points caused the church at Antioch to call for a general council to be held at the headquarters.

Acts 15: 1

The question of circumcision was the issue.

Acts 15:2, 3

The church sent Paul and Barnabas with a delegation of its members to Jerusalem to discuss the matter with the “apostles and elders.” Had St. Peter been functioning as a pope, would they not have brought this vital question to him for a decision? Following his decision would come an encyclical containing an authoritative decree which would forever settle the question. But no, we find Paul submitting the question to the apostles (Peter was one of them), elders, and church members. This was the established order of the early Christian church.

Acts 15:4

When the representatives arrived in Jerusalem, they were received by the church, apostles, and elders. It should be noted that in their reception the church is named first, then the apostles and elders. The laity played a very important part in this council. The church, the body of Christ, was the primal source of authority. This was a church council.

Acts 15:5, 6

In the council certain Pharisees who professed the Christian faith rose to defend the doctrine of circumcision.

Acts 15:7-11

St. Peter takes the floor. While his speech was presented with vigor and punctuated with invincible facts, it failed to settle the controversy. Further discussions were necessary. Had Peter been the vicar of Christ, his speech would have settled this doctrinal dispute.

Acts 15:12

Paul and Barnabas testify to a hushed audience. These men who had “hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus” could speak with authority. (See verses 25, 26)

Acts 15:13-21

The speech that resolved the doctrinal dispute was given by James, the chairman of the council. His statement unified the members of the council and brought a unanimous decision.

Acts 15:22

A united and final decision was rendered by the “apostles and elders, with the whole church.” St. Peter, if he were pope, did not exercise his judicial authority. Peter, as a man of God, recognized the principle of church authority, as did all the apostles. The democratic tenets of self-government were featured at this first church council, setting a pattern for all subsequent councils.

Acts 15:23

This letter, written by the council, gives for its source of authority the “apostles and elders and brethren.” Evidence of a papal chair is lacking. Not one word or act on the part of St. Peter, nor on the part of those who engaged in the discussion, could be interpreted as giving any official distinction to Peter.

Acts 15:24-30

Paul, Barnabas, Judas, and Silas delivered the official church letter to the assembled “multitude,” which comprised the church. The letter was not delivered to a clergyman but rather to the body. So, the principle of church authority was observed even in the delivering of the letters. Any deviation from this principle is a virtual denial of the Scriptures, a departure from Bible precedent which gives rise to a hierarchy.

Matthew 23:8, 9

“Rabbi, Master,” “Father,” are titles not to be assumed by the true follower of the meek and lowly One. “All you are brethren.” Let us all, through His divine power, emulate Him.

## **10. The Auricular Confession**

### **Information For Lesson 10**

The auricular, or ear, confession is obligatory among Catholics. Those who refuse to confess to a priest are violating the third commandment of the Catholic Church. Note what the catechism teaches:

“The third commandment of the Church obliges us to go to confession once a year. This law was enacted at the Fourth Council of Lateran in the year of 1215. The penalty attached to the violation of this law is, that the sinner may be interdicted from entering the church while living, and be deprived of Christian burial when dead....

“The church leaves us free to choose any confessor who is authorized by the bishop to hear confessions.

This law of the church is binding on all who have attained the use of reason. Therefore as soon as children can distinguish between right and wrong, so as to be capable of mortal sin, they ought to be prepared for their first confession.” - Francis J. Butler, Holy Family Catechism, No. 3, p. 203.

If auricular confession was ordained by Christ, the Founder of the Christian church, why should almost 1,200 years be allowed to pass before imposing the obligation requiring members to confess to an ordained priest, a mere human being?

Did Christ change the plan of salvation after twelve centuries had elapsed, permitting the institution of the auricular confession, and anathematizing all who should reject it?

## **God Never Changes**

Malachi 3:6

He would not be our eternal God if we could not rely upon His character and His unchangeable Word.

Hebrews 13:8

Our Savior is always the same. The doctrines in the Sacred Scriptures, and which Christ and His apostles taught, have not changed.

Psalms 89:34

God will not alter His Word; but man has presumed to do so by adding dogmas.

Revelation 22:18

A fearful penalty awaits those who add dogmas.

Revelation 22:19

Divine retribution will be meted also to all who delete any truth from the Scriptures.

## **Do Priests Have Power to Forgive Sins?**

The Catholic Church claims that our Lord conferred upon the apostles the power to forgive sins. Supposedly, through apostolic succession the popes, cardinals, bishops, and priests are invested with the power to absolve the sinner who confesses, as stated here:

“Question: Does St. Ambrose say that priests have the power to forgive sins? Answer: St. Ambrose says, ‘It seems impossible for sins to be forgiven by penitence, but Christ granted this to His apostles, which has been from the apostles transmitted to the ministry of the priests.’” - Roderick MacEachen, Complete Catechism of Christian Doctrines, Revised edition, pp. 120, 121.

“The Church teaches that our Lord conferred on the apostles a true priesthood, when He gave them power to offer the sacrifice of the mass and the power to forgive sins. By the possession of these two powers the apostles were constituted true priests, or mediators between God and man.”-Francis J. Butler, Holy Family Catechism, No. 3, p. 277.

If what the Catholic Church teaches is true, what happened to all those souls who had not confessed their sins to a priest for forgiveness during the first 1,200 years of the Christian era? The auricular confession was not made an article of faith until the Fourth Lateran Council (AD 1215). How were the sins of those who lived during the 4,000 years before Christ expiated without the confessional, absolution of a priest, and the imposed penance?

## **God Alone Forgives Sins**

Proverbs 28:13

Confessing and forsaking sin was taught in the Old Testament. To whom were sinners to confess? Let us review some Old Testament scriptures.

Psalm 51:1-15

David confessed to God but never to human beings.

Psalm 51:16, 17

David did not have to perform penance. A broken and contrite heart is all God requires.

Isaiah 43:25

“For mine own sake.” Through the blessed name of Jesus our sins are forgiven.

St. Luke 5:20

The Savior forgave the sins of a paralytic.

St. Luke 5:21

God alone can forgive sins. Christ was God; therefore He could forgive sins. Were He not God, but only one assuming the prerogatives of God in absolving sinners, He would have been guilty of blasphemy.

## **St. Peter and the Auricular Confession**

Acts 8:18-21

Simon the sorcerer wanted to purchase with money the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 8:22

Peter told Simon to “repent” and pray to God that his sins would be forgiven. Why didn’t Peter hear his confession, give him absolution, and impose penance? Peter had no knowledge of the doctrine of auricular confession, nor of any authority invested in him to absolve a sinner. It is also evident he was unaware of the Sacrament Penance.

Acts 2:37

“What shall we do” to be saved? was the question asked of Peter and the other apostles.

Acts 2:38

Peter said, “Repent.” Why didn’t he tell them to kneel at the apostles’ feet and have them forgive their sins and impose the penance? None of this was ever taught by any of the apostles, including Peter.

## **St. John and the Auricular Confession**

1 John 1:9

The Apostle John, like Peter, knew nothing about confessing to a man. Sins are confessed to God, who then forgives and cleanses. How the heart of our blessed Lord must feel when we resort to a human being instead of going to Him and confessing our sins! There is no record in Holy Writ that Christ ever set up a confessional box to hear confessions, nor that He gave His disciples instruction to do this. This innovation came into the church in AD 1215. No intimation is given in all of St. John’s writings that such a dogma was ever to be introduced in the Christian church.

## **Remitting Sins**

St. John 20:23

The Catholic Church teaches that on this occasion Christ gave the disciples unmitigated power to sit in judgment on the sins of those who confess. Here is a daring declaration: “God has given him [the priest] the right to sit in judgment on the sins of men and release them from the debt they owe to His [Christ’s] offended majesty. ‘Go, show yourselves to the priest,’ He said, ‘he is My representative on earth, holding in his hands the power of God. No matter what your sins may be, no matter how numerous or repeated times without number, if only he [the priest] forgives you, so shall I. His authority, his right to forgive is absolute, for I

have said to him: "Whatsoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven."

"Confident in that promise, for 'God is faithful and cannot deceive,' the poor sinner kneels at his confessor's feet.... He hears the words: 'I absolve thee from thy sins in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,' and the hideous load of sin drops from his soul for ever."-William Doyle, *Shall I Be a Priest?* pp. 14, 15.

What did Christ mean by the statement, "Whose so ever sins you remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose so ever sins you retain, they are retained." With a subject of so great importance as releasing and binding human souls, surely He would have given instruction about how it was to be accomplished. Never having seen it done before, the disciples surely would have needed advice. Why did they not ask counsel? The answer is that such rights were not entrusted to them, as we shall see on further study.

Revelation 3:7

Christ alone has the power to admit to or debar a soul from heaven. Thank God, He has never given to another the jurisdiction over the souls of mankind. Pity us all if that were the case! A king or priest claiming this divine right is not sanctioned by Heaven.

## **Circumstances of Binding and Loosing**

St. Matthew 18:15, 16

Christ instructs church members on how to deal with one another when difficulties arise between them.

St. Matthew 18:17

If the offender remains unrepentant after the entreaty of the "witnesses," then appeal should be made to the church, which is the final court. Christ gave the church membership the official authority to deal with outward unlawful acts committed toward each other. The church was also given authority to deal with all who violate her standards. Should the offender refuse to take the counsel of the church body, then his name is to be dropped from the record.

St. Matthew 18:18

When the church follows divine instruction, the course it takes regarding its obstinate and disobedient members will be ratified in heaven by God. The one who refuses the united decision of the church in his behalf must be regarded as a heathen. What attitude should the church assume toward those who are outside the fold? It should work to bring them in. This is Christ's instruction to His body. What a sacred responsibility!

St. Matthew 18:17

"Tell it unto the church." He did not say that one should tell it to the priest or to any other clergyman, for that matter. It is the body of believers that God recognizes. The disciplinary acts of binding and loosing were never invested in either the disciples or the clergy. God has a church that follows our Lord's prescribed method in dealing with its members when difficulty arises. But we must never forget that the one who is dropped from church membership is dear to the heart of God, and that His love should actuate the church body.

Jeremiah 3:12-14

God appeals to the backslider to return. "I am married unto you." This is a lie that God does not want severed. He has a claim on those who were once members but have left the fold, and this is how the church is to regard these former members. May we regard every soul as our Savior did. He had a deep love for every human soul and was willing to sacrifice for that soul's salvation.

## **11. The Sacrifice Of The Mass**

### **Information For Lesson 11**

In the first part of the ninth century a man named Paschasius Radbertus, who was a Benedictine monk, began to advocate the presence of Christ in the bread and wine. In 831 he wrote a treatise, "Concerning the Body and Blood of Christ."

Here is a brief summary of the doctrine which Paschasius advanced: "After the consecration of the bread and wine in the Lord's supper, nothing remains of these symbols but the outward figure, under which the body and blood of Christ were locally present. While the bread may have the appearance of bread, it is now, after the priest utters the words: "This is my body, the real body of Christ. The cup, after the priest blesses it, is no longer wine, but the real blood of Christ."

Paschasius further claimed that the body and blood of Christ thus present in the Lord's Supper was the same body which was born of the Virgin Mary, which hung and suffered on the cross, which was buried and rose from the dead.

This new doctrine, when first advocated, was bitterly opposed. Rabanus Maurus, Archbishop of Mainz, took definite issue with the new concept and perversion of the Lord's Supper. He wrote the following in reply: "Some persons, of late, not entertaining

a sound opinion respecting the sacrament of the body and blood of our Lord, have actually ventured to declare that this is the identical body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; the identical body, to wit, which was born of the Virgin Mary, in which Christ suffered on the cross, and in which He arose from the dead. This error we have opposed with all our might.” -Rabanus Maurus, Epist. Ad. Heribald, c. 33.

A protracted battle was fought over this new teaching. However shocking and preposterous this invented tenet was to clergy and laity of the ninth century, transubstantiation and the worship of the elements bread and wine were never mentioned by any of the contenders.

Many fierce verbal battles were fought by the bishops over the “real presence” until the Fourth Council of Lateran, 1215, when transubstantiation was made a dogma of the church. Pope Innocent III officiated at this Council. The decree issued on the dogma is as follows: “The body and blood of Christ are contained really in the sacrament of the altar, under the species of bread and wine, the bread being transubstantiated (changed) into the body of Jesus Christ, and the wine into His blood, by the power of God.” -Council Lateran, IX, cap. 1.

Because transubstantiation, or the changing of the bread and wine into the real body and blood of Christ, was now made a dogma by the Lateran Council, it could no longer be contested. To oppose or even doubt would be heresy. The alleged power of the clergy to create God from the elements of bread and wine has never ceased to claim the veneration of the admiring and credulous worshippers. This dogma gives the priesthood sacerdotal influence and emolument. But what does it do to our Lord?

The Council of Trent, 1545-1563, in one of its sessions confirmed what the Fourth Lateran did in 1215 on the question of transubstantiation. Note the following: “This holy Council declares-That by the consecration of the bread and wine, there is effected a conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord, and of the wine into the substance of His blood; which conversion is fitly and properly termed by the holy Catholic Church, Transubstantiation.” - Council Trident, Session XIII, cap. 4.

The Catholic Church today accepts and practices the doctrine of transubstantiation. The faithful members of the church believe what they have been taught.

The Roman Catholic Mass is designed to be a dramatic representation of our Lord’s passion. The priest at the altar performs the part that the Savior went through from the time He entered the Garden of Gethsemane until He arose from the tomb.

The principal part of the Mass is reached when the officiating priest allegedly transmutes, or changes, the bread and wine into the real “body and blood, soul and divinity of our Lord.” When this act is accomplished, transubstantiation is effected, so the church claims.

## **The Institution of the Lord’s Supper**

St. Luke 22:14, 15

For 1,500 years the slaying of the Passover lamb by the Jews pointed to the death of Christ. This Passover was the last ever to be observed, for the true Passover Lamb was to die the next afternoon. All sacrifices were to end, and consequently the human priesthood was to cease. Desiring to leave a memorial of His death, one that would ever keep in mind the two great events-His death and His second coming-Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper.

St. Matthew 26:26

“Jesus took bread.” The unleavened bread was on the table. He took this bread and blessed it, or as St. Luke 22:19 says, “gave thanks,” and then broke it, saying, “Take, eat; this is my body.” This was Thursday night. If this were His real body, as the Catholic Church declares, then He died on Thursday night.

St. Matthew 26:26

“This is my body.” He did not transmute the bread into His real body. Would we charge our Lord with creating Himself out of a literal piece of bread? Had He not previously used symbols with which to illustrate a specific truth He was teaching? For example, He had referred to Himself as “the door” (John 10:9), the “vine” (John 15:1), “the light” (John 8:12). If we apply the logic used by some in interpreting Christ’s statement “This is my body,” is it not possible by the same mode of interpretation to say that Christ is changed into an actual “door,” “vine,” and “light”? If it holds good in one instance, it must hold good in others.

St. Matthew 26:26

Christ broke the bread, a figure which He left to represent His broken body. He did not give them a whole, round wafer.

St. Matthew 26:26

“Take, eat.” The disciples took the bread in their hands. Christ did not place the bread on their tongues. The bread was to be eaten, not dissolved on the tongue of the receiver.

St. Luke 22:19

“Remembrance”-a reminder, or a memorial, of the great sacrifice of our Savior. The word remembrance is given in the Douay Version as “commemoration.” In the revised New Testament the term “remembrance” is used by the Roman Catholic translators.

St. Luke 22:19

One text says “gave thanks,” and one says “blessed.”

St. Matthew 26:26

Thus the words “blessed” and “gave thanks” are synonymous. The Catholic Church teaches that blessing the bread resulted in its having been changed into His body.

St. Matthew 26:27

Taking the cup, He “gave thanks.” Christ left on record an example for every Christian to follow, in thanking God for the food He provides. This is why we offer thanks at our tables and ask Him to bless the food which we are about to eat.

St. Matthew 26:27

He gave them the cup and told “all” to “drink.” The Catholic Church withholds the cup from the laity. The officiating priest alone drinks the wine. At the Council of Florence in 1439 the cup was withdrawn from the laity. Consequently the communicant receives only half of the Sacrament. Of course it is accepted, without proof, that a miraculous innovation is wrought by the priest. At the moment of consecration the wafers are supposedly infused with blood. Each round wafer is allegedly a whole Christ, “body and blood, soul and divinity.” This doctrine was not taught in the upper room where this great Sacrament was instituted.

St. Matthew 26:28

The wine was to represent His precious blood, shed for the sins of the world. What a symbol He left to remind us of His supreme sacrifice! The new covenant was ratified, the plan of salvation made secure.

St. Matthew 26:29

It was unfermented wine which was in the cup. Ferment is a type of sin. There was “no sin” in the life of Christ. The wine used on the Roman altars is fermented, but the bread is unleavened. Some Protestant churches use leaven in the Communion bread. The symbol is marred and the pure, sinless Christ insulted. How does He feel when He sees His professed followers offering in the holy Communion service emblems which denote sin? This service was designed by Christ to keep before the people His sinless, spotless character. The pure juice of the vine, untouched by fermentation, and bread which contained no leaven, were fitting symbols of His unblemished life.

1 Corinthians 11:23-29

The Apostle Paul wrote this twenty-eight years after the institution of the Lord’s Supper.

1 Corinthians 11:23

“I have received of the Lord.” He received it by inspiration. He outlines how this service was to be conducted. It was to be done in “remembrance” of our Lord, not as an act or a drama.

1 Corinthians 11:26

This service was to point back to His death.

1 Corinthians 11:28, 29

“Let a man examine himself.” It does not say to go to any human being and have him examine you. Before one partakes of this Sacrament, there must be a searching of the heart before God, confession of all sin, and deep repentance, to be worthy to eat and drink at the Lord’s table.

## **Christ’s One Sacrifice Sufficient**

Hebrews 10:10

Christ died “once” for all. The Catholic Church, through the sacrifice of the Mass, reiterates Calvary, for each time Mass is offered, Christ is slain, according, to their teaching. But the Word says He was offered once.

Hebrews 10: 11, 12

This text reveals the utter futility of repetitious sacrifice, which can never take away sin. Christ offered “one sacrifice for sins for ever.” He is on the right hand of His Father as our High Priest.

Hebrews 10: 14

“One offering. . . perfected for ever.” The reiteration of Calvary in the Roman Mass is a denial of the full atonement made by Christ. When He died, He said, “It is finished.” St. John 19:30. The price of redemption was paid by that one death. All animal sacrifices were ended, the human priesthood forever abolished.

Revelation 1: 18

“I am alive evermore.” This Jesus declared to John years after He went to heaven. Who would want to put our blessed Lord to death again? When the divine Word is followed, the Lord’s Supper is a most beautiful and meaningful service. It is symbolic of the new earth, where all will sit at the table when the marriage supper of the Lamb will be celebrated.

St. Matthew 26:29

This promise will then be fulfilled. What a blessed hope we have!

## **12. The Virgin Mary**

### **INFORMATION FOR LESSON 12**

The Catholic Church teaches that the Virgin Mary was conceived without original sin. Being thus born without sin, or tendency toward sinning places her in a class by herself, superior to the rest of the human family. In fact, she remained without one stain of sin throughout her life, the Church declares.

Here is a brief resume or abridgment of the history which led to her veneration and worship. There was a protracted controversy before her Immaculate Conception and her Assumption to heaven became dogmas of the church. On December 8, 1854, Pope Pius IX proclaimed Mary immaculately conceived. This is now accepted as an authentic dogma of the Church. Not until November 1, 1950, did Pope Pius XII declare her Assumption into heaven a dogma. It means that soon after her death, her resurrection took place, uniting her body with her soul in heaven.

Of course these doctrines were taught through the ages, but one did not have to believe them. However, after they were proclaimed as dogmas, it would be heresy to disbelieve them. Therefore it is a rare thing to find a Roman Catholic who does not believe in the Virgin Mary, even if he is not a firm believer in other dogmas of the Church.

So many miracles are attributed to “Our Lady” by her devotees, and so many prayers supposedly answered, that it is rather difficult to get her ardent adherents to cast her aside and pray directly to God. This is the reason utmost caution should be taken when dealing with this point of Catholic doctrine.

### **Steps Leading to the Beatification of Mary**

About the close of the third century and the beginning of the fourth two schools of thought arose over the origin of Christ. These schools were known as Arianism and Orthodoxy.

Arius and his followers believed that Christ had a beginning. The Orthodox believed Christ existed from eternity and was coequal with the Father.

It became apparent that a council would have to decide the matter. In AD 325 the Nicaean Council, the first of a series of general councils, was held. The question of Christ’s beginning was considered. Was He, while in human flesh, still the Son of God? Was He begotten, or was He self-existing?

Arianism was condemned, and the Orthodox beliefs were adopted. The Council took the position that because Christ had two natures--human and divine--the Virgin Mary, in a certain sense, could be said to be the mother of God-Theotokos (Greek title).

It was far from the intentions of the Council to beatify or glorify Mary. Nothing in authentic church history teaches that the title “Mother of God” had any official encyclical confirming the new title of Mary. However, in Egypt a school of thought developed concerning the mystery of the Incarnation of Christ. Consequently discussions arose regarding the Virgin Mary as the “Mother of God,” which the Nicaean Council stated.

During the latter part of the fourth century and the first part of the fifth violent disputes arose about the nature of Christ. Patriarchal rivalries played an important part, and these could be settled only by political intervention. Cyril and Nestorius were two leading churchmen involved in the much-disputed question on the nature of Christ, and also over Mary, who gave Christ His human nature.

Cyril, Archbishop of Alexandria, took the position that the two natures of Christ before their union were distinct entities, but after the union they became one nature only. It would therefore be accurate to say that the Virgin Mary should be given the title “Mother of God.” The archbishop had quite a following and many loyal supporters.

Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople, refused to accept the formula of the Nicaean Council regarding Mary as the “Mother of God.” Finally both parties made an appeal to Emperor Theodosius II to settle the dispute. In AD 431 the emperor called the Council of Ephesus. The delegates from Egypt and Asia Minor were present, as they did not have far to come. The Antioch

delegates, who were favorable toward Nestorius, were delayed. Even the Roman delegates did not arrive on time, The result was that Cyril opened the Council without the full delegated body present, and against the opposition of the emperor's representative.

Nestorius refused to appear at the Council and was excommunicated and deposed from his clerical status. The Council lasted only one day. The Virgin Mary was honored as the "Mother of God" by the Cyril delegates. A great celebration followed; torches were lighted, and amid great acclamation Mary was hailed the "Mother of God."

It will be remembered that in this same city of Ephesus the Apostle Paul had difficulty with the worshipers of the goddess Diana. (Acts 19:23-28.) The orgy that was held in Ephesus on this occasion was four hundred years later, but was it not similar? The world worshiped Diana as a goddess in Paul's day; but now the Virgin Mary was classified as the "Mother of God"-the mother of her Creator. What higher claims could be made for a mortal human being?

The opposition delegation arrived after the Council, which was held under the leadership of Cyril, had excommunicated Nestorius and proclaimed Mary the "Mother of God." When John, the Patriarch of Antioch, with his delegation learned what had been done by the Council, he proceeded to call for a counter-council. He stated that the work done by the former Council was illegal inasmuch as one of the involved parties was absent.

John's wish was granted, and another Council convened with all delegates present, including the Roman delegates who were too late for the first Council. The emperor's representative was also in attendance. The Council excommunicated Cyril but the papal delegates had the first Council reconvene to reconsider the action relative to the Virgin Mary. The first Council's decision was approved, and Mary was the Theotokos, "The Mother of God." This date, AD 431, marks the time when Mary was in the ascendancy, and her veneration and worship began.

Many erroneous claims were made over the years regarding the life of Mary. About the middle of the fourth century, according to Jerome, Augustine, Gregory, Epiphanius, and others, teachings came in regarding virgins who had taken the vows of sanctity and chastity and who devoted their byes to the service of the Temple at Jerusalem. Among these virgins was Mary, who had consecrated her life to God by taking the vow of perpetual virginity. It was declared that her marriage to Joseph was formal, and that she continued a virgin until her death. This was the new teaching, and it caused Ion. debated arguments as to whether Mary actually was a perpetual virgin. The other phase of the new teaching was that Mary was the "Mother of God" and was therefore entitled to devotion and honor. These extravagant honors conferred on Mary led to the development of a sect called Collyridian, derived from the word Collyridae, the cakes which were offered to the virgin. This sect regard Mary as worthy of divine worship. Thus the floodgates were opened for the beatification of the virgin. Today she is regarded by the Church as the "Queen of Mercy."

Note the following: "Mary, although a Queen, is not a queen of justice, intent on the punishment of the wicked, but a queen of mercy, intent only on commiserating and pardoning sinners. And this is the reason for which the Church requires that we should expressly call her 'the Queen of Mercy.' . . . The kingdom of justice he reserves for himself, and that of mercy he yielded to Mary, ordaining at the same time that all mercies that are dispensed to men should pass through the hands of Mary, and be disposed of by her at will. . . 'The kingdom of God consists in power and mercy; reserving power to himself, he, in some way, yielded the empire of mercy to his Mother. When the Blessed Virgin conceived the Eternal Word in her womb, and brought him forth, she obtained half the kingdom of God; so that she is Queen of Mercy, as Jesus Christ is King of Justice.'" - St. Alphonsus M. de Liguori, *The Glories of Mary*, pp. 37, 38.

Also note this supposed voice from the throne to Mary at her assumption: "Of the church militant thou art the empress, queen, mistress, protector, advocate and mother. Thou shalt be the friend, patroness and protector of all our friends, the just. Console them, fortify and fill them with every good, if by their devotion they render themselves worthy. Thou art the depository of all our divine benefits, the treasury of all our graces. Into thy hands we remit the help and favor of our grace, so that thou may dispense them. For we will grant nothing to the world but what shall pass through thy hands, and We will refuse nothing which thou may desire to grant. Grace shall be spread abroad on thy lips, for all that thou shall wish and ordain in heaven and on earth. Angels and men shall obey thee in all places, because all that is Ours belongs to thee, as thou has always belonged to us, and thou shall reign with Us for all eternity." - Boullan, *The Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, pp. 431, 432.

What an injustice to our blessed Lord and Savior to have all the merits of redeeming love, for which He paid such an infinite price, passed into the hands of a poor deceased human being! Today multitudes are being taught to implore Mary for mercy and thus ignore the God of all grace and mercy. We must do all we can to enlighten those who know not the truth about our merciful God. It should be done in love and patience. Do not get discouraged when the beclouded Catholic mind does not at once grasp the full import of the Holy Bible on this subject.

## Mary Worship

Mariolatry is practiced by every devout Roman Catholic. All over the world millions of churches and altars are erected to Mary, and all pay her homage. Prayers are offered to her, and unbounded confidence is expressed by those who implore her, as the following prayer indicates: "O Mary, we poor sinners know no other refuge than thee, for thou art our only hope, and on thee we rely for our salvation. Thou art our only advocate with Jesus Christ; to thee we all turn ourselves." - St. Alphonsus M. de Liguori, *The Glories of Mary*, p. 121. Does the Written Word support the doctrine of the immaculate conception of Mary? Some teach that an

immaculate mother had to be provided, alleging that Christ would not consent to become incarnate in flesh defiled by sin. Such teaching strikes at the very heart of the gospel.

If Mary was immaculately conceived, she would not have given Christ a body “in the likeness of sinful flesh.” (Romans 8:1) Furthermore, He could not have been tempted as we are by Satan, and therefore He could not sympathize fully with us. Let us consider what the Holy Scriptures have to say on this vital subject of Mariolatry.

The Virgin Mary was a beautiful character. She was the woman entrusted to give birth to our blessed Savior. She was the one who reared I-Em and taught Him the Holy Scriptures. She is a model for all womanhood. But was she to be venerated, worshiped, and esteemed as a sinless being? The Catholic believes that Mary never sinned, nor could she have sinned, because, as the church teaches, she had an immaculate conception. The answer can be found only in the Bible. We must approach this subject with an open mind and in the spirit of prayer.

## **The First Messianic Prophecy**

Genesis 3:15

In this text we find the first promise of our Redeemer. Adam and Eve had turned from obeying God and His word. They had delivered themselves into the hands of Satan and consequently were unable to extricate themselves from his power.

Our Lord made known to Satan in the hearing of Adam and Eve that the “seed,” Christ, would “crush” the head of the enemy and thus enable man to be restored to his former position. The plan of redemption is revealed in this text.

Was it Christ or was it Mary who crushed the head of Satan? The Douay Version reads thus: “I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel.” Genesis 3:15. The literal translation of the Hebrew Old Testament reads thus: “he shall bruise” - not “she” shall bruise.

Catholic theology does not always go according to the Latin Vulgate’s interpretation on the *ipsa conteret* as referring to Mary. The Hebrew “progeny” is masculine and not feminine, and it therefore should be translated “he shall bruise thy head,” referring to our Lord and not to Mary.

Galatians 3:16, Douay

“And to thy seed, which is Christ.” Christ is the seed. He alone was the One who crushed the head of Satan. Why should anyone want to take away the glory from our Lord and give it to any mortal being?

Isaiah 42:8

The Word declares that God will not give His glory to another, nor praise to a graven image. Man is doing that which God frowns upon—worshipping the creature rather than the Creator. (Romans 1:25.)

## **God’s Professed People Worshiped a Goddess**

Jeremiah 7:18

Hundreds of years before the Virgin Mary was born, the pagan world had a goddess, a queen. She was known by different names in various countries—Semiramis, Astarte, Cybele, and Themis, Mother of the Gods, Maker of Investigations, Dove, and Goddess of Justice. These and many other names and titles were given to the “Queen of Heaven.”

Jeremiah 44:15-19

The people of Judah, in the days of Jeremiah, had gone so far back from serving the true God that they gave themselves up to worshipping the Queen of Heaven, Ashtoreth, the Phoenician goddess. The people told the prophet Jeremiah that they would neither hearken to nor heed the Word of the Lord. They felt sure of being provided for as long as they burned “incense,” made “cakes,” and poured out “drink offerings” to the Queen of Heaven.

Jeremiah 44:20-23

The enemy of God presented this rival goddess to the people, who were thus deceived by her so-called miracles. How did God regard all this? He could no longer bear with them. They were taken captive by Babylon for refusing to obey His voice, His law, and His testimonies.

## **St. Paul and the Goddess Diana**

Acts 19:23-28

In the days of the Apostle Paul all Asia and the then-known world were given over to the worship of “the great goddess Diana.” St. Paul taught the people of Ephesus that the silver images of Diana which they were worshiping should be destroyed, and he further stated that “they be no gods, which are made with hands.” He thus led the people away from image worship back to keeping the first and second commandments, which they had been breaking. The people who made their living by image-making opposed Paul’s doctrine. Demetrius and his craftsmen were put out of business by Paul’s teaching. If Paul were living today, what attitude would he assume toward the craft of image-making? Would he not cry out for its destruction as he did in Ephesus?

## **A Virgin Shall Conceive**

Isaiah 7:14

The prophecy of Isaiah was given over seven hundred years before our Lord was born. The sign was that a virgin would give birth to a son, Emmanuel, God with us. The young woman chosen by God was the Virgin Mary, a pure, noble character. Would that all women would follow her example of purity, and all mothers would train and educate their children according to the Word of God.

## **Does Beatification Lead to Deification?**

St. Luke 1:42

Elisabeth’s blessing upon the Virgin Mary did not elevate her to the status of beatification. The text does not indicate that she would be invoked by her admiring devotees. She was blessed “among” women. She was not, as we shall see, the only woman blessed in the Bible.

Judges 5:24

Jael was blessed “above” women by the prophetess Deborah. Mary was only blessed “among” women. Being blessed “above” women did not make Jael different from any other human being. There is no record in Holy Scripture that Jael was ever venerated following Deborah’s blessing upon her. The Bible gives no intimation that the Virgin Mary was regarded with any reverential respect, either at the time of Elisabeth’s blessing or at any subsequent time. Devotion to Mary was unknown to the early church. The apostles give no suggestion in any of their writings that devotion or worship had been given to Mary.

## **Three Forms of Worship**

Revelation 19:10

The Scriptures clearly teach that only God should be worshiped. Note the reaction of the angel Gabriel to John’s worship: “See thou do it not: ... worship God.” This experience is left on record for our admonition. If the highest angel refused to be worshiped, why should any of the human family dare to accept such homage?

The Catholic Church teaches that there are three forms of worship: latria, the worship due alone to God; dulia, the veneration or worship given to saints and angels; hyperdulia, the worship, adoration, and homage given the Virgin Mary. These are all Latin terms which the average layman has difficulty in defining and equating.

## **Ave Maria**

The “Ave Maria,” better known as the “Hail Mary,” did not come into use, according to the Catholic Dictionary, until “the end of the twelfth century.” Words were added to the prayer by the Franciscans about the middle of the fifteenth century. The whole Ave Maria as it now stands was decreed by Pope Pius V in 1568.

## **The Virgin Mary Not Sinless**

St. Luke 1:46, 47

Mary rejoiced in her Savior. If she could not sin, what need did she have for a Savior?

Romans 3:23

“All have sinned.” St. Paul evidently knew nothing about the Immaculate Conception of the virgin Mary, or of her sinless state.

Romans 3: 10

If Mary was what the Catholic Church claims, how could Paul write that “none,” not even “one,” is righteous.

Romans 8:3

Christ was made “in the likeness of sinful flesh.” He “condemned sin in the flesh” by living a life in perfect conformity to the Ten Commandments. He never sinned, not even by a thought. What a Savior we have! But the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary gives us a Christ who could not sin. Such teaching strikes at the very heart of the atonement.

## **Satan’s Fallacious Claims Refuted**

Satan claimed that no human being could keep the Ten Commandments. For 4,000 years his charge went unchallenged. Then the Son of God came to this earth in human flesh and demonstrated before Satan and the universe that through the power of God the Ten Commandments could be kept.

Hebrews 2:14

Christ partook of the same flesh and blood as the human family.

Hebrews 2:16

He did not take the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham.

Hebrews 2:17

“It became him.” In other words, it was necessary for Him to be “made like unto his brethren” in order for Him to be our High Priest.

Hebrews 2:18

This is a very comforting text. Our Savior can sympathize with us because He was tempted as we are.

Hebrews 4:15

Had He taken the flesh of an immaculate mother, He could not “be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.” The teaching of the Immaculate Conception gives us an entirely different Christ from the Christ of the Holy Scriptures.

Hebrews 5:7

How did He keep from sinning? He wept and prayed to His heavenly Father for the power to be kept from sin. Satan was constantly pursuing our Lord to tempt Him. If only he could induce Him to commit just one sin, then the whole world would be lost. But, thank God, our Savior never once yielded to the enemy. We, too, through His power can be kept from sinning.

Hebrews 5:8, 9

He was God while in human flesh, but He never used any of His divine power in combating sin. The power to meet the enemy He received from His Father. His divine power was used in healing the sick, raising the dead, forgiving sins, and feeding the 5,000 with five loaves and two fishes.

## **How Did Christ Regard His Mother?**

St. Luke 2:41-47

At the age of twelve He attended His first Passover. As He watched this service, the mystery of His own mission was revealed to Him.

St. Luke 2:48, 49

It is evident from the reply Christ gave His mother that she did not understand His mission as the Messiah.

He disclaimed Joseph as His father and started His Son ship with God.

St. John 2:14

A fond mother’s pride hopes for a miracle from her Son on this happy occasion. “They have no wine.-These words were a suggestion for Him to supply the need. What was His reply? “Woman, what have I to do with thee?” This form of address, “Woman,” was in keeping with the Oriental custom. “Mine hour is not yet come.” Here again we find that even Mary did not have a right conception of Christ’s mission.

St. John 2: 5

Even though Mary did not fully understand the full import of Christ's mission, yet she had profound regard for His Word. Mary did not say, "Whatsoever I say unto you, do it," but "Whatsoever he said." What "he said" can be found only in the Holy Scriptures. Therefore, Mary says to do what the Scriptures teach. This is the only counsel she ever gave. How wonderful if all, both Catholic and Protestant, would adhere to her admonition!

St. Matthew 12:46-50

The tie of kinship in no way placed Mary on vantage ground. Her connection with Jesus placed her in no different spiritual relation to Him from that of any other human being. All who receive Christ by faith and do the will of His Father are closer than human kinship could make them.

St. Luke 11:27, 28

Here again we have the attitude Christ assumed toward His mother when a woman called her "blessed." His reply clearly states that all who hear and keep the Word of God will be blessed. Mary had no divine merit because of her maternal relationship to the Savior. She could find salvation only through the Lamb of God and in doing the will of God.

## **The Testimony of Peter, Paul, and John**

Acts 4:12

St. Peter knew nothing about the virgin and her power to save.

1 Timothy 2:5

St. Paul says there is only one mediator between God and man. It is "the man Christ Jesus," and not the woman Mary, who stands between God and man to intercede.

1 John 2:1

The Advocate with the Father is Jesus Christ, says St. John. If Mary were the Queen of Heaven, the mediatrix, the advocate of sinners, John would have known, for he took Mary to his own home after the death of the Savior. (St. John 19:26, 27.)

1 John 4:2, 3

St. John, as a prophet of God, tells of the two concepts which would be held regarding the human nature of our Lord. Some would believe and confess that He came in "the flesh," not from a so called immaculate mother. This is the correct position and "is of God." Others would teach that He came not in the "likeness of sinful flesh," but from a sinless mother. This teaching he declares is the "spirit of antichrist."

Acts 1:13, 14

This is the last time Mary's name is mentioned in Holy Scripture. The disciple's are first mentioned, next the women, then Mary. She evidently did not hold the preeminence at this important gathering.

## **Mary's Only Counsel**

St. John 2:5

In respect to what has been presented from the Inspired Writings, should we not give Christ His rightful place as the God of both justice and mercy?

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