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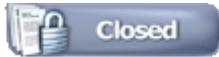
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Are Catholics Christians? -- Bible John vs. seeps

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January 28, 2007, 12:31 AM

#4126480 / #1

[KnightWhoSaysNi](#)
Moderator--FD&D, FDP

Join Date: September 2001
Location: Calgary, Canada
Posts: 3,641

Are Catholics Christians? -- Bible John vs. seeps

This thread has been set up for a formal debate between **Bible John** and **seeps** who will debate the following resolution:

"Resolved: that a true Catholic cannot be a true Christian."

Bible John will affirm and **seeps** will oppose. The debate will have 4 rounds and **Bible John** will go first, per the [parameters](#).

A [Peanut Gallery](#) is set up in the *General Religious Discussions* forum for the rest of us to comment on the debate.

Enjoy the debate!

- KWSN, FD Moderator

Addendum (Feb. 25):

Bible John and seeps have agreed to adjust the word limit

of their statement to 4000 words. They had also previously agreed to change parameter #8 from their debate setup.

Last edited by KnightWhoSaysNi : February 25, 2007 at 07:12 PM.



January 30, 2007, 11:04 PM

#4134743 / #2

Bible John

Veteran User

Join Date: September 2005
Location: SF Bay Area California
Posts: 623



Round I

Hello everyone and I want to welcome you to the debate. First before we start I want to introduce myself. The names John Wolf and I run the ministry Church Education Resource Ministries, which can be found at www.cerm.info. I am of the Reformed Baptist/Baptistic Fundamentalist tradition, and I wanted to make that 100% clear before we started. In previous debates I have only said that I was Fundamentalist, and in doing so have possibly confused others. First I'm sure you are aware of the many King James Version Only Armenian Fundamental believers, which all too often get confused with reformed. A KJVO church is really much different than a Reformed Fundamental church. Second despite what some in the peanut Galleries may say, I never once stated that all Armenians were unsaved.

In this debate I will try to be as sensitive to my opponent as possible for many reasons. When I was at school I had a friend who was attracted to liturgical churches, and eventually left the Reformed Baptist Fundamental Bible Church that we both were attending. He left our church to attend some Catholic, Lutheran or other liturgical environment. I feel sorry for him, as this in my view was his first step down the slide to theological liberalism. But in some ways I could understand why he did what he did. This friend was very excited about Theology, and gravitated very much to the many great Theologians of the past. The Reformed Baptist Fundamental Bible Church did not teach anything other than the Bible and they valued the bold Bible preaching and Teaching of the Word of God. What historical Theologians had to say meant almost nothing at this church. My opponent like my friend values Theology and I want to respect those that value the study of Theology. My old church (also like my current one) does not seem to care about anything other than Biblical Theology, and in some ways I regret their positions. But it's really not uncommon in Fundamentalist Churches. A poster from the Peanut Galleries messaged me and told me that Fundamentalists were poor theologians and the best Theologians were in liturgical churches. I won't argue with his views.

In this debate I will explain why the doctrine of **Justification** in the Catholic tradition is unbiblical, and next I will explain why the Catholic worship of Mary is unbiblical. I am afraid that I will not have enough time nor space to cover the other unbiblical problems in Roman Catholicism. I am not an expert on the subject and will not pretend to be the best opponent for such a debate.

The resources that I will be using in this debate are as follows.

1. **The Bible- Mostly the King James and the New American Standard versions.**
2. **New Dictionary of Theology**
3. **A half dozen websites**
4. **Pastor John MacArthur's exposing Mary worship in Roman Catholicism CD set**

In this round I will be discussing and comparing the Christian and Catholic versions of the Doctrine of Justification. In the next round I will be exposing Mary Worship in the Roman Catholic Church.

The Protestant Doctrine of Justification

Justification is a divine act of God, where God himself declares the sinner to be innocent and free from his or her sins. God declares the sinner righteous and free from the pit of Hell and eternal separation from God. In Christian Theology Justification is only through the Lord Jesus Christ and his sacrifice for the sins of all mankind on the cross at Calvary.

(Rom 5:9 KJV)

Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

In Christian Theology Justification is a gift of grace and not by works.

(Rom 3:24 KJV)

Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

(Tit 3:7 KJV)

That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Justification only comes through Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone.

(Rom 3:28 KJV)

Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

(Rom 5:1 KJV)

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

If someone receives the Lord Jesus Christ into their hearts and accepts His sacrifice for their sins they are justified from their sin. This is quite different from Roman Catholic Theology, which I will be later discussing.

(Joh 1:12 KJV)

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

(1Pe 2:24 KJV)

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

By doing this these are justified in the sight of God. One of the major distinctions between Christian Theology and Catholic Theology is that to the Christian Justification is not by works, but by Grace alone.

The passage below is the most popular of the grace passages.

Eph 2:8-9 KJV

(8) For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

(9) Not of works, lest any man should boast.

You see in Christian Theology, the Bible makes it very clear that man's works alone are nothing but dirty stinky rags before an all-powerful and all mighty God.

Isa 64:6 KJV

(6) But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

God is not in the least impressed with the works of a man. Even the most clean of unbelievers, is dirty before God. Of course I believe in degrees of punishment in Hell and degrees of reward in Heaven. I believe that the most holy of all unbelievers might get a different Hell than an Adolph Hitler, or a Spiritual Terrorist, but still they go to the same Hell.

The scripture below is one passage of many that speaks of degrees of punishment in Hell.

The context in Jude is speaking of the false teachers.

Jud 1:12-13 KJV

(12) These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;

(13) Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is **reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.**

Salvation is a free gift, and cannot be earned. Mankind cannot work his or her way into salvation and freedom from the pit of Hell.

Once in a Sunday school in a contemporary Evangelical church a pastor once told a story that helped explain the doctrine of Justification. The story is below.

Trying to earn your way to salvation is like trying to swim from California to Hawaii. No man or woman can do it. Some may get closer to Hawaii than others, yet no one attempting the feat could ever accomplish it. Olympic swimmers may get the farthest, yet they also will die. Instead of trying to swim to Hawaii, the safest way to get there would be to fly. In the same way, what Jesus did was he provided salvation and freedom from eternal death. Kinda like an airplane will provide freedom from death in the ocean by trying to swim there. Accepting Jesus is like accepting a ride in the airplane as a means to get to Hawaii.

Even one of the **most liberal Evangelical Churches in the Bay Area Peninsula** (whom I mailed John MacArthurs book Ashamed of the Gospel, When the Church Becomes like the World) **agrees with me on the doctrine of Justification.** I have never once called this church a cult, nor have I ever labeled them Spiritual Terrorists. My critics think that I hate all those that disagree with me, but this is a flat out lie. While me and this church strongly disagree on our ministry philosophies, and our theology in many secondary areas, I do realize that many of the attendees at this church, the staff and pastoral team will be in Heaven with me. But until that time, I wont associate with them.

The Roman Catholic Doctrine of Justification

The Catholic version of the doctrine of Justification is quite different. Below are some quotes from Catholic doctrine.

"If any one saith, that thy faith alone the impious is

justified; in such wise as to mean, that nothing else is required to co-operate in order to the obtaining the grace of Justification, and that it is not in any way necessary, that he be prepared and disposed by the movement of his own will; let him be anathema" (From the Council of Trent, Canons on Justification, Canon 9).

"If any one saith, that man is truly absolved from his sins and justified, because he assuredly believed himself absolved and justified; or, that no one is truly justified but he who believes himself justified; and that, by this faith alone, absolution and justification are effected; let him be anathema" (Canon 14).

Do any of you know what the harsh word **anathema** means? According to Roman Catholic Theology it means simply excommunication, or in the Greek it can be translated as accursed and condemned. This language is very harsh, and what I personally use to refer to certain members of unorthodox Christian groups on Usenet Newsgroups. In the same way in Catholic theology, all protestants are unorthodox and anathema. So to put it simply, in Roman Catholic Theology a Christian doctrine of Justification is a false doctrine. To the Catholic Theologian Christianity is false. I think that if Catholics could differentiate between the orthodox and unorthodox Christians, they might have a point. **But the Catholic Theologian can't tell the difference between Reformed Baptist/Baptistic Fundamentalism, OneNess Pentecostalism, or the ecumenical movement of theological liberalism.** I have tried to persuade Catholics that not all Christians are the same, and I have gotten angry with some of them for stereotyping all Protestants as one and the same. I have told some of them that my ministry has no associations with anyone associated with Theological Liberalism, yet they continue to stereo type and put me into the same category as them. I hate stereotypes, yet can't do a thing about them.

The Catholic Church does not state anywhere that salvation comes from grace. Based on my research (and personnel experience with Catholics) I have heard them quoting a verse in the NT which is below.

Jam 2:24 KJV

(24) Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

Catholics believe that works is a part of salvation. I believe they think this because they read James and the entire NT out of CONTEXT. If one were to look at the entire CONTEXT of the book of James they would see that

the contrast in the passage is in reference to **Dead Faith vs. Living Faith**. Dead faith would be only an acknowledgment as Jesus as Lord, but without real and pure Regeneration and progressive Sanctification. When one comes to faith in the Lord Jesus and makes Him their savior and Lord of their life, then Regeneration and Sanctification will be present in their lives. Sadly there are dozens and dozens of professing Christians in the church, that claim Christ, yet do not live a life that glorifies him.

Mat 7:21-24 NASB

[Mt 7:21] "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.

[22] "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?'

[23] "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'

[24] "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock.

As mentioned above in verse 24, Living Faith is a relationship with Jesus Christ (Regeneration) and a turning away from sin (progressive Sanctification).

The entire book of 1 John speaks on Sanctification as the central theme.

1Jo 1:6 KJV

(6) If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

One that claims to know Christ, yet walks in the darkness is a liar and the truth is not in him or her.

Conclusion

Roman Catholicism denies justification by faith alone, and requires human effort in addition to God's grace for salvation. Baptism is one of the first work requirements on a list of requirements that a Catholic has to meet in order to be saved.

Read the quote below from Catholic Doctrine.

"Justification has been merited for us by the passion of Christ. **It is granted us through Baptism.** It conforms us to the righteousness of God, who justifies us. It has for its goal the glory of God and of Christ, and the gift of eternal life. It is the most excellent work of God's mercy,"(CCC, par.2020).

Please do not confuse the statement above with Baptismal Regeneration. Baptismal Regeneration is for the most part a OneNess Pentecostal doctrine. Catholics believe in Baptismal Justification, which is entirely different. But neither Baptismal Regeneration nor Baptismal Justification are taught in the Holy Scriptures. Where Catholics get these teachings in the Bible is beyond me. They get these teachings by their traditions of men, rather than the Bible.

Also where Catholics get the teachings that they have to confess their sins to a priest is also not found in the scriptures.

My only guess (without doing further research on the subject) is that they get this doctrine from this verse (which taken out of CONTEXT) can be interpreted incorrectly.

James 5:16 NASB

Therefore, **confess your sins to one another**, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

This like many other Catholic doctrines are traditions of men, and not of God.

Jesus spoke very harshly of those that kept traditions over the Word of God. I challenge my opponent to show me where in the Bible Baptismal Justification and penance are taught.

In the next round I will explain why the worship of Mary is unbiblical, ungodly, and not a practice of a regenerate believer.

John Wolf
Church Education Resource Ministries
www.cerm.info



February 6, 2007, 02:42 AM

#4151001 / #3

seebs

Moderator--MF&P, GRD

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Location: Saint Paul, MN
Posts: 21,848



The affirmative has started with an argument with three premises and a conclusion.

P1: Protestant teachings about Justification, which are presumed correct, are X.

P2: Catholic teachings about Justification are Y.

P3: X and Y are incompatible.

Conclusion: Catholics are not Christian.

In my rebuttal, I plan to show first that P2 is plainly false -- that the summary given of Catholic beliefs about justification is simply categorically wrong, and is based on misquotes and/or misunderstandings of Catholic teaching. Secondly, I will show that P1 is incoherent; that the given description is self-contradictory, and thus probably wrong. Given these, it can easily be shown that, in most cases, Catholic and Protestant beliefs about Justification are indeed a distinction without a difference; that they differ substantially in choice of terminology, but not at all on the substance.

However, before I get to this, I must point out the even more glaring flaw in the affirmative argument, which is that it is a total *non sequitur*. Even if we simply granted all three premises of the argument, **the conclusion would not follow**. There is nothing anywhere which requires Christians to hold correct, or even coherent, beliefs about Justification. The most crucial aspect of any attempt to determine whether members of a group are "Christian" is a definition of the word Christian, which is entirely lacking in the affirmative's arguments so far. The Bible itself never uses the term; it was coined later, by the early Church's detractors, and later adopted as a badge of pride. However, the term is not defined in the Bible, let alone primarily by the Bible. The word "Christian" is used in many different senses. The most common standards are adherence to creeds or avowal of the discipleship of Jesus of Nazareth, called the Christ by His followers. The former standard shows trivially that Catholics must be Christian, as they are expected to affirm the Nicene Creed, which is widely accepted as the canonical definition of Christianity. Even those who reject the Nicene Creed will generally grant that the Apostles' Creed is adequate, and Catholics certainly affirm this as well. The second definition is more vague, but Catholic teachings on Jesus are unambiguous enough so as to answer the question without difficulty:

"We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy ~~SPirit~~ Spirit he was born of the Virgin ~~Marry~~ Mary, and became man."

To call someone who affirms that text anything but "Christian" is ridiculous on its face.

Catholic teachings on Justification

The claim is made in the affirmative argument that "The Catholic Church does not state anywhere that salvation comes from grace." However, a mere three paragraphs before the quoted paragraph 2020, the Catechism says:

2017 The grace of the Holy Spirit confers upon us the righteousness of God. Uniting us by faith and Baptism to the Passion and Resurrection of Christ, the Spirit makes us sharers in his life.

It goes on:

2024 Sanctifying grace makes us "pleasing to God." [...]

2025 We can have merit in God's sight only because of God's free plan to associate man with the work of his grace. Merit is to be ascribed in the first place to the grace of God, and secondly to man's collaboration. Man's merit is due to God.

The Catholic Church unequivocally ascribes salvation to grace. The problem here is not that the Catholic Church does not correctly recognize the central role of grace; it is that the Catholic Church, like James, recognizes that saving faith necessarily shows fruit. The "works" the Church refers to as a part of faith are not actions which purchase salvation; they are an expression of a salvation already begun.

Theologians have wrestled for years with the relationship of works to salvation. One prominent theologian suggested that works might be significant in the final judgement:

The Gospel According to St. Matthew, Chapter 25, Verses 34-40

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee

an hungred, and fed *thee*? or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee*? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.

How shall we reconcile this with the later claim that the best of man's works are as a "filthy rag"? To understand this, you must understand the transactional system developed by the Pharisees. The Levitical priesthood allowed people to "pay for" sins at a certain rate; a given sacrifice for a given sin. Under this system, however, it became possible for people to begin trying to calculate the amount "needed". To this day, the world is full of people who want to know exactly **how much** they must give to charity to "please" God so that God will be nice to them. This is, of course, entirely pointless. Works undertaken in order to bribe God are ultimately self-serving, and reflect none of the love for neighbor that was asked of us. Because of this, such works are worthless. Indeed, every time Jesus is asked what one must do to obtain Heaven, the answer is over the top and obviously impossible, or ridiculous. Why? Because you can't buy Heaven.

However, the Catholics don't claim you can, so this is not a "problem" with Catholic theology; their terminology is different from the set of buzzwords most commonly used by Protestants, but the net substance is exactly the same. Both groups teach that salvation is given freely by God, not merited or earned or anything like that. This radical message is the "good news" of which Christians once spoke; the news that there is nothing you have to do to bribe God. Both groups teach that certain actions are reasonably expected of you, not because they will coerce God into rewarding you, but because, if you are sincere, you ought to wish to do such things. In short, the Catholic teaching on this issue is **precisely** the teaching that the affirmative argument presents as a "contrast" with it.

Of some interest is Canon 14 of the Council of Trent, which reads:

CANON XIV.-If any one saith, that man is truly absolved from his sins and justified, because that he assuredly believed himself absolved and justified; or, that no one is truly justified but he who believes himself justified; and that, by this faith alone, absolution and justification are effected; let him be anathema.

This has been misrepresented as somehow contradicting the general Christian understanding of "faith alone" as a basis for justification. The error in reading is simple; Canon 14 rejects, not those who believe they are saved because of God's grace, but those who believe they are saved solely on the basis of their own belief. This rejects, not faith in God, but faith in self. It rejects, not trust in God as a basis for justification, but smug self-assurance. It rejects, in short, the very people the affirmative argument later characterizes: "Sadly there are dozens and dozens of professing Christians in the church, that claim Christ, yet do not live a life that glorifies him." This is, once again, an affirmation of the common position, not a divergence from it.

Protestant teachings on Justification

This leads into the criticism I have of the alleged presentation of Protestant beliefs. The discussion of "liberalism" and suchlike suggests that, like nearly every group, many Protestants have developed a list of required behaviors that are necessary to be considered "saved". Like any attempt to codify the natural development of the human spirit in response to grace, these end up being the precise empty legalism Paul so vehemently condemns. How much money must I give to charity to force God to accept me into Heaven? There is no answer to this question; God cannot be compelled. And yet, we turn around and find that one is supposed to follow a whole set of social norms to be "really" saved. From sexual purity standards to a rejection of "traditions of man", there's always something you have to do, or abstain from doing, to keep the genie tame. And, of course, the moment something is offered as part of a *quid pro quo*, it ceases to be evidence of salvation, and becomes merely another attempt to bribe God.

Within moments of decrying the Catholic church's teaching that they expect certain behaviors of people, the affirmative makes the argument that "As mentioned above in verse 24, Living Faith is a relationship with Jesus Christ (Regeneration) and a turning away from sin (progressive Sanctification)." This is exactly what the Catholics have said, even though they use different words. However, it flatly contradicts the previous emphasis on "faith, instead of works". To insist that works are of no importance, but that it is very important that you do one thing and not another, is simply incoherent. The real problem is not at the level of determining whether behavior is significant; it's more often a disagreement about which behaviors matter.

A few examples are hinted at, without any real substance given. For instance, the affirmative refers to the practice of confession, and to the "worship of Mary". As Catholics (at least, those acting according to church teaching) do not "worship" Mary at all, the latter is a non-issue. The affirmative acknowledges unclarity about the origins of the practice of confession, but most interestingly, condemns it as a "tradition of men, and not of God". This is, of course, beside the point; after all, Protestant churches are full of traditions and beliefs about what God wants, all of which are derived from the Bible, but which have grown substantially from the original text. The Catholic practice of confession, likewise, is a development from the original text. Is it right? Is it wrong? The question is totally irrelevant, as there is no reason to believe that being wrong on such a question makes someone cease to be Christian.

Expansion on how exactly one can be required to do certain things (such as "accepting Jesus") can be compatible with the assertion that works are absolutely not part of salvation would be useful.

Compare, contrast, and reconcile

The ultimate story, borne out over and over in dozens of discussions, is that Catholic and Protestant believers alike hold to essentially the same beliefs about the nature of justification. With some exceptions (such as hypercalvinists), they all believe that salvation is a free gift, not a reward given for meritorious action. The "works" Paul spoke against were primarily the works of the Phariseeical legal system, but the same words apply today to the endless set of new rules Christian groups invent; from drinking wine to rock music, there's always something that one is being told to avoid, because it will send you to Hell. These beliefs are, as they were two thousand years ago, a rejection of grace in favor of an attempt to curry God's favor by acting according to a set of rules handed down by the elders of a faith community. They don't work now any more than they did then.

Many Protestant groups feel the need to attack the Catholic Church, but the attacks are consistently based on an unwillingness to understand the written material. The Catholic Church takes extraordinary care to ensure that a written statement of doctrine is not merely coherent, but precisely defined. Of course, once you get into defining terms, it's often useful to define a few words in more precise or specific ways than the general English usage would support; this is especially true when translating material originally written in another language. As a result, most of these attacks are based on treating a

document as though the pages and pages of definitions provided were not present, and using other, contradictory, meanings for the words instead. It is the fallacy of equivocation, writ large, and it shows through clearly in the attacks thus far presented on Catholic beliefs.

Baptism

The concept of "Baptismal Justification" is a red herring, as it is not taught by the Catholics. It's just not part of Catholic doctrine. Baptism is not taught to be a cause of justification, even though participation in the sacrament is expected, just as participation in any other aspect of Christian life is expected of converts. A bit of discussion of baptism may be in order, simply because baptismal regeneration, far from being unique to "OneNess Pentacostal" Christians, has been a foundational tenet of the Christian Faith for as long as anyone has written records. The Creed's "We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins" is definitive, although some Calvinist groups reject it. (This does not make them non-Christian by lax modern standards, although it would have put them firmly outside the Christian faith in 500AD.) However, this quickly becomes fertile ground for a discussion of faith and works. Does Baptism matter? Is it a work? Is it necessary, desirable, or even potentially undesirable? These are important questions, although they may not be significant in determining whether or not someone is Christian. In practice, the debate over Baptism is a debate **among Christians** -- indeed, it is practically a hallmark of debate between Christian groups, and the question is of no interest to anyone else. That two people disagree about Baptism pretty much guarantees you that they are both Christians.

And yet, none of it matters

The above is all interesting, but very little of it speaks to the question of what the word "Christian" means. What, exactly, is the relevance of all this theological maundering? The affirmative argument depends on a hidden premise; "those who have made errors in theology are not Christian". Why? What does that mean? While one can certainly articulate beliefs that are "not Christian", no standard has been suggested which could serve to replace the Creeds -- and Catholics affirm those regularly. What other standard shall we use? The Bible itself doesn't even define the term, and the teachings Jesus offers for His followers haven't got a shred of theology to them. Never does Jesus say "this believe, and thou shalt live", but He does say "this do, and thou shalt live" (Luke 10:28). Jesus never addresses the theology of justification in the

elaborate and formalized forms the affirmative argument seems to rest on. Indeed, He seems to treat the entire concept with contempt, focusing instead on the pragmatic reality of a live of service and love. As the affirmative says, "Jesus spoke very harshly of those that kept traditions over the Word of God."

All this language about justification is human tradition and understanding; it is an attempt to reduce the divine mystery to a set of hard and fast rules we can take advantage of to get the most salvation with the least effort. The Word, by contrast, is Jesus Himself, who came and dwelt among us, and who told us that we would enter the kingdom of Heaven only if we became as little children. I have seen children express compassion and empathy; I have seen them risk their own happiness to help others. I have not seen them develop a detailed and nuanced distinction between justification and sanctification. And yet, doing such things does not make us non-Christian; it merely means we are Christians who have found an interesting hobby which might amuse us during the long winter nights.

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans, Chapter 10, Verses 8-11

But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, *even* in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

This is what it is to be Christian, and Catholics are undeniably and obviously Christian. Even if every other piece of theology the Church has is flagrant error, they are Christians who have a justified hope in their salvation by means of the Lord they have not only acknowledged, but praised and worshipped, for nearly two thousand years.

*Last edited by KnightWhoSaysNi : February 18, 2007 at 09:53 AM.
Reason: fixed typos per seebs's request (in purple)*



February 15, 2007, 01:13 AM

#4176682 / #4

Bible John
Veteran User

 **Round II**

Join Date: September 2005

Hello everyone and welcome to Round II of this debate. Before we start I want to clarify some things. First I want

Location: SF Bay Area California
 Posts: 623



to make it clear that I believe that there are saved Catholics in the Roman Catholic Church. However I will also say that anyone holding to true Catholic doctrines cannot be saved and is not a Biblical Christian as defined by the Bible and what I argue for in this round. I wanted to make that clear as some are led to believe that I have said that all Catholics are condemned, but this I never said. Some Catholics may not worship Mary, some Catholics may have a faith in Christ, and some Catholics may hold to a Biblical view on the Doctrine of Justification. But certainly such Catholics are in the tiny minority in the Roman Catholic Church as a whole.

Quote:

Many Protestant groups feel the need to attack the Catholic Church, but the attacks are consistently based on an unwillingness to understand the written material.

Those that fiercely attack the Catholic Church should understand that there are much better uses of ones time and that Catholics are not masquerading as angels of light inside the Protestant church. Therefore me nor my ministry has any such interest in attacking Catholics.

Please understand this as I have been often falsely accused of hating Catholics. If any Fundamentalist, or conservative/Calvinistic Evangelical Christian reading this debate and has objections to anything I have said in this debate, then please by all means say so in the Peanut Galleries or send me an email on CERM (www.cerm.info). I do not profess perfection and welcome feedback from like-minded believers.

I should note that I added a source that I did not mention in my Introduction. The book is called Watch your Teaching by Stuart Garver. But in this round John MacArthur's exposing Mary Worship in Roman Catholicism CD set will be my primary outside sources that I will be using, on top of my primary source which will be the Bible.

Round II Main Arguments

Quotes from the **Delaguarie's Treatise.**

All you who hunger for the Kingdom of God honor the Blessed Virgin Mary and you will find life and eternal salvation (51).

Another quote

At the Command of Mary, all obey, even God (566).

Another quote

If I love Mary, I will obtain from God whatever I want (40).

Yet another quote

Whoever bears the mark of devotion to Mary, God recognizes as His own (153).

I find it interesting that some Catholics claim that they do not worship Mary. But one has to wonder what the Catholic theologian was saying in the quotes above, if he truly does not believe in Mary worship. Such theologians and other leaders in the Catholic Church have set and stage for the church and have deceived millions of Catholics into Mary worship.

Mary Worship in The Catholic Church

There are millions and millions of statues, pictures, art graphics and such all over the world made after Mary. Millions of Catholics regularly pray to Mary for salvation, pray to her for help, pray to her for peace, pray to her for divine healing, pray for her to find a job, and even pray to her for blessings on animals. One of the most condemning Cathedrals made after Mary exists in Pisa Italy. This statue depicts Mary above Jesus and God the father, whom of which offer their crowns to Mary. All throughout Europe exist Mary statues, and all throughout Europe do people kiss Mary statues, her picture, pray to her, and even some get on their hands and knees to worship her! Also do Mary worshipers pray to their god regularly using the **Rosary**. The rosary is a series of ten prayers, there are five of the tens making 50 prayers, and there are five prayers in between. The 50 are to Mary, the five are to God. There are five "Our Fathers," there are 50 "Hail Marys." For every time you pray once to God the Father, you pray ten times to Mary...for five to God, fifty to Mary.

For more on the Rosary refer to the website below.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rosary>

If this is not Mary worship then I do not know what is.

Catholics worship Mary above the Lord Jesus. Such sins are not okay by any standard and such sins are extremely serious, and very condemning.

Jeremiah 7:17-20 (New American Standard Bible)

17"Do you not see what they are doing in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem?

18"The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead dough to make cakes for the **queen of heaven;** and they (A)pour out drink offerings to other gods in order to (B)spite Me.

19"(C)Do they spite Me?" declares the LORD "Is it not themselves they spite, to their own (D)shame?"

20Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, "**Behold, My anger and My wrath will be poured out on this place, on man and on beast and on the trees of the field and on the fruit of the ground; and it will burn and not be quenched.**"

The Lord God HATES the actions of those that worship other Gods before Him, and those that do will be punished. Sadly Roman Catholicism worships Mary over God, and in doing so practice paganism. Catholics may deny this all they want, but the facts show that they worship Mary. Those that the book of Jeremiah is addressing worshiped other gods before God, and in doing so were punished.

Pope Pius XII said the following.

Quote:

Enraptured by the splendor of your heavenly beauty and impelled by the anxieties of the world, we cast ourselves into your arms, O immaculate mother of Jesus and our mother, Mary we adore and praise the peerless richness of the sublime gifts with which God has filled you above every other mere creature from the moment of conception until the day on which your assumption into heaven He crowned you Queen of the Universe. O crystal fountain of faith, bathe our hearts with your heavenly perfume. O conqueress of evil and death, inspire in us a deep horror of sin which makes the soul detestable to God and the slave of hell. O well-beloved of God, hear the ardent cries which rise up from every heart in this year dedicated to you. Then tenderly, O Mary, cover our aching womb, convert the wicked, dry the tears of the afflicted and the oppressed. Comfort the poor and humble. Quench hatred. Sweeten harshness. Safeguard the flower of purity. Protect the holy Church. In your name resounding harmoniously in heaven, may they recognize that all are brothers and that the nations are members of one family. Receive, O sweet mother, our humble supplications and above all, obtain for us on that day, happy with you that we

may repeat before your throne that hymn which is sung today around your altars, you are beautiful, O Mary, you are glory, O Mary, you are the joy, you are the honor of our people.

I think that the above quote explains itself very clearly. Roman Catholics refer to Mary as **Theoticas** which means the God bearer. They believe that Mary gave birth to God himself, not Jesus Christ in the human nature. God cannot be born, since God has always existed and has no beginning and no end, which is best, illustrated in the scriptures below.

Psa 90:2 KJV Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

Psa 93:3 KJV The floods have lifted up, O LORD, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves.

Mary herself did not consider herself to be worthy of worship (contrary to Catholic Theology) but believed that God was far greater than her.

Luke 1:46-48 (New American Standard Bible)

46And Mary said:

"(A)My soul (B)exalts the Lord,

47And (C)my spirit has rejoiced in (D)God my Savior.

48"For (E)He has had regard for the humble state of His bonds slave;

For behold, from this time on all generations will count me (F)blessed.

If God wanted Mary to be worshiped, then I think the Bible would say so. There was one occurrence in the synoptic that Catholics continually overlook. It was the PERFECT OPPORTUNITY for Jesus to launch Mary worship and the Catholic agenda, but its interesting to see that Jesus did not take this opportunity to please Catholics.

Luke 11:27-30 (New American Standard Bible)

27While Jesus was saying these things, one of the women in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him,

"(A)Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts at which You nursed."

Looks like someone in the crowd wanted to worship Mary. Perhaps this person started the Catholic religion (joke).

Look at what Jesus said in response.

28But He said, "On the contrary, blessed are (B)those who hear the word of God and observe it."

Jesus deterred the worship of his mother, and if He were walking the earth today he might storm into the Catholic headquarters in Rome and might drive out the Pope with a whip, as he did to the money changers whom defiled the temple in the gospels.

Warning to Catholics

The spirit in which I wrote the content below is with gentleness and with respect (1 Pet 3:15). So please do not mistake this.

There are dozens and dozens of passages in the Old and New Testaments that condemn the worship of any other god, but Yahweh himself. While I do not have the space or the time to address every one of these verses, I will focus on a number of important scriptures in both testaments, and I warn all Catholics to take heed to what I am about to say, but more importantly its not what I say that important, its what the Bible teaches that you should listen to.

Exo 20:3-6 KJV Thou shalt have no other gods before me. (4) Thou shalt not make **unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:** (5) Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; (6) And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

Why do Catholics have so many images of Mary all throughout their churches, hospitals, and other fellowships? Think about it. If Catholics do not worship Mary, then they would not make so many images, but the images spell out their intent in their theology, for God is not the central piece to catholic Theology as he is to protestant Theology. Heck even the most contemporary of evangelical churches (which I strongly discourage regenerate believers from attending) have it right in their Theology, while Catholics have a strong misconception of **Theology proper.**

Deu 18:9-12 KJV When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. (10) There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or

his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, (11) Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. (12) **For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee.**

Isa 45:20-24 KJV Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye that are escaped of the nations: **they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save.** (21) Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me. **(22) Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. (23) I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. (24) Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed.**

Why do Catholics worship graven and dead images of a dead woman? Why do Catholics pray unto this dead woman, when she cannot hear them? What chapter and what verse say that Mary should be prayed too? No the issue is not what the Bible says, the issue is more what the church says.

Reminds me of a Jack Hyles style Fundamentalist church I once visited that required all their members to be baptized into a church of like faith and practice. I asked one of the pastors the chapter and the verse that taught that non King James Version Only churches were ungodly to the point that the millions of people that they baptize is not good enough for this church. But the pastor did not answer my questions with the Bible, but rather his Church constitution, which to him seemed to hold more weight than the Bible itself!

Passages from the New Testament condemning the worship of other gods.

Rom 1:23-25 KJV And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. (24) Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to

dishonour their own bodies between themselves: (25) Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and **worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.**

Roman Catholics sound like a fulfillment of this passage of scripture. So many Catholics worship and serve a god (Mary) that is corruptible and is not divine. The Catholic religion is a lie from the devil, or from man, and it's a religion that worships the created things rather than the creator.

1Ti 4:1 KJV Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and **doctrines of devils;**

1Co 5:11 KJV But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an **idolater**, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.

Separation from Catholics is the best approach for the regenerate believer. Another passage that speaks on separation from those that practice lawlessness is below.

2 John 1 (New International Version)

7Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. 8Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. 9Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. 10If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him. 11Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work.

1Co 10:20 KJV But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: **and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.**

1Co 10:14 KJV Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from **idolatry.**

The worship of Mary is idolatry. Its worshipping a person that died, and not the divine creator of that person. Paul commands the Corinthians to flee completely from this.

2Co 6:15-16 KJV And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

(16) And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Eph 5:5 KJV For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, **who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.**

Rev 4:8 KJV And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

Worship should be made to God and him only. There are no other God's but Him, and only He deserves our praise and worship. He is a jealous God.

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

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seebs

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Since there was a brief reference to "Biblical" doctrines of justification, I feel the need to reiterate:

1. Not a shred of evidence that Catholic beliefs about "justification" are contrary to Biblical teaching that has been presented without being rebutted. The claim is, for now, rebutted.

2. Even if Catholic teaching on this matter were clearly and totally wrong, **it would not matter**, because the subject of the debate is whether or not Catholics are Christian, not whether or not they are correct on any specific points of doctrine debated among Christians.

On to the accusations of Mary-worship. The primary source offered is a work called "Delaguarie's Treatise", which I have never previously heard of. It took a bit of searching to figure out what this refers to; the actual title

(translated, of course) is "The Glories of Mary", and it was collected in 1745 by St. Alphonsus de Liguori. It is not exactly an authoritative source of Catholic doctrine, although I believe the Church has formally blessed it as being compatible with Catholic teaching.

A great amount of fuss is made of such comments as "At the Command of Mary, all obey, even God (566)." While this may seem shocking, perhaps a more familiar quote will put it in perspective:

The Gospel According to St. John, Chapter 2, Verses 1-10

And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do *it*. And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare *it*. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: *but* thou hast kept the good wine until now.

In this story, we find that, in fact, Jesus obeys Mary. (Indeed, Jesus could hardly do otherwise without violating a commandment!) If, as Christians believe, Jesus is God, then God obeys Mary. Indeed, we are regularly told that God obeys the righteous; Jesus says:

The Gospel According to St. John, Chapter 16, Verse 23

And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give *it* you.

Should we expect that Mary, who is said to be blessed among women, might receive comparable treatment? With the questionable and out-of-context quotes from a secondary source thus dismissed, we move on to the meat of the matter; Catholic teachings about Mary, and the even more central question of what the word "worship" means.

What is worship, anyway?

The affirmative argument states that "If this is not Mary worship then I do not know what is," in reference to the practice of the Rosary, in which the "Hail Mary" is said more often than the "Our Father". Well, it may be that the affirmative position is based on a misunderstanding of what worship is.

What is worship? Worship is a concept which the Bible refers to often, but does not define very clearly. In general, worship is a kind of veneration and reverence; however, this does not mean that all veneration or reverence is worship! In the Bible, we regularly see that people who interact with angels respond to them with fear or reverence -- but this is not worship!

The Catechism talks specifically about the exclusivity of worship:

2110 The first commandment forbids honoring gods other than the one Lord who has revealed himself to his people. [...]

In fact, they go rather further:

2113 Idolatry not only refers to false pagan worship. It remains a constant temptation to faith. Idolatry consists in divinizing what is not God. Man commits idolatry whenever he honors or reveres a creature in place of God, whether this be gods or demons (for example, satanism), power, pleasure, race, ancestors, the state, money, etc. [...]

~~one Lord who has revealed himself to his people.
[...][[/indent]~~

Given the clarity of this teaching, a claim that Catholics worship Mary is rather unusual. In fact, the Catechism clearly and unequivocally **rejects** an equivalence of Mary to God, or worship of her:

971 *"All generations will call me blessed":*
"The Church's devotion to the Blessed Virgin is

intrinsic to Christian worship." The Church rightly honors "the Blessed Virgin with special devotion. From the most ancient times the Blessed Virgin has been honored with the title of 'Mother of God,' to whose protection the faithful fly in all their dangers and needs.... This very special devotion ... differs essentially from the adoration which is given to the incarnate Word and equally to the Father and Holy Spirit, and greatly fosters this adoration." The liturgical feasts dedicated to the Mother of God and Marian prayer, such as the rosary, an "epitome of the whole Gospel," express this devotion to the Virgin Mary.

The Catechism quotes here from *Lumen Gentium*, a Papal bull. The essence is clear; Catholic teaching **unambiguously** draws a line between devotion to Mary, a mortal who is not God, and the adoration offered only to God.

The Hail Mary and other Marian prayers

Let us compare the Hail Mary to the Biblical text:

Hail Mary,
Full of Grace,
The Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit
of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary,
Mother of God,
pray for us sinners now,
and at the hour of death.

Amen.

Where could we find this? Well, let's start with the Bible:

The Gospel According to St. Luke, Chapter 1, Verse 28

And the angel came in unto her, and said,
Hail, *thou that art* highly favoured, the Lord *is*
with thee: blessed *art* thou among women.

Could we at least tentatively grant that words spoken by an angel may be reasonably hoped to be free of blasphemy? I think we could.

The Gospel According to St. Luke, Chapter 1, Verse 42

And she spake out with a loud voice, and said,
Blessed *art* thou among women, and blessed *is*
the fruit of thy womb.

This is certainly also Biblical. What's left? "Mother of God", I've already addressed. The only parts that could possibly be a problem are "pray for us sinners" and "Amen". I'm inclined to give "Amen" a pass. Is it wrong to ask people to pray for sinners? Not that I've ever heard of. Some people believe you cannot expect dead people to pray for you. Perhaps this is true, but I am unaware of a totally clear teaching on it, and I don't see it as a big issue. God knows what we mean. Given this, it does not seem that the Hail Mary constitutes "worship" of Mary. Veneration? I think it is veneration. To my own tastes, it's a bit more veneration than I am personally comfortable with.

However, we come now to the same essential flaw that was found in the first affirmative argument: Even if every point made were simply granted without demurrals, we would still be no closer to even a hint of evidence that Catholics are not **Christian**. They might be wrong. They might be offending God every day of their lives. However, if they believe that Jesus is Lord, they are Christians.

Nonetheless, the claim that this is "worship" simply falls flat. Veneration, certainly. Obsession, in at least some cases? Yes. But it's not **worship**. The Catholics and Orthodox tend to distinguish more clearly between adoration, which is due to God alone, and veneration, which may reasonably be offered to the saints. Some other groups do not make this distinction. However, this doesn't matter; worship is clearly an act of will and intent, and if the person saying the Hail Mary distinguishes between his love and veneration for Mary, and his genuine worship of Jesus, then he is not worshipping Mary, even if his behavior is outwardly similar to behavior that, in another person, might indicate worship.

The Theotokos

It is true that Catholics claim Mary to be the mother of God. The affirmative argument makes the claim:

They believe that Mary gave birth to God himself, not Jesus Christ in the human nature. God cannot be born, since God has always existed and has no beginning and no end, which is best, illustrated in the scriptures below.

Christian teaching is that Jesus **is** God. Trying to separate the human and divine natures is itself uncertain ground, and makes little sense. The Nicene Creed says:

"We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man."

(Just noticed the typos in this in the previous post. Sorry!) Are we not to accept these claims? If they are true, then Mary is the mother of "true God from true God". Is Jesus eternal? Yes. Is Jesus begotten? Yes. Are these contradictory? Well, they certainly seem that way... But then, so do a lot of things you have to affirm to be a Trinitarian Christian. However, if you read this carefully, you will notice that it is Jesus, true God from true God, who was born of Mary. The title of *theotokos* is simply factually correct if the Christian story of the life of Jesus is correct. In fact, the argument that we must distinguish between the human nature and the God nature is a much more significant theological problem from a Christian standpoint.

Graven Images

The graven images thing probably deserves its own side discussion. The debates over statues and icons have raged for centuries, with Muslim clerics taking the commandment the furthest, often frowning on representational art in general. For all that many Protestant groups push this in general, there's certainly a great deal of variety in interpretation; the Lutheran church I grew up in had beautiful stained glass images depicting a number of figures, including at least a fair number of apostles. What exactly is it that is condemned? Is all sculpture condemned?

No, the condemnation of graven images comes down to **worship**, and as seen above, veneration and respect are not worship. The argument that mere numerosity of images of Mary proves worship is ridiculous. By this argument, video game collectors must "worship" Mario. Perhaps more distressingly, nearly all Americans would "worship" various celebrities. No, I don't think that's a good definition of "worship" to use. Once again, we find that the affirmative argument relies on rhetorical devices to imply or assert that something is "worship", without providing a real or meaningful definition to compare them

with.

Now what?

There are a few significant objections that could be raised to the above, which are worth considering carefully before discarding them. The first, and most significant, is simply the argument that, even if Catholic teaching is to the contrary, many Catholics "actually" worship Mary. However, in the discussion that led to this debate, I offered a concrete definition of "true Catholic", which was accepted without demurrals:

For purposes of the debate, "true Catholic" is described as "a person in full communion with the See of Rome including acceptance of the beliefs described by the Catechism of the Catholic Church".

Since the Catechism unequivocally rejects worship of Mary (or any other entity that is not God) as unacceptable idolatry, the question is resolved entirely. If, indeed, there are members of the Catholic Church who do worship Mary, then they are failing to comply with their own church's teachings in doing so; they are no more evidence that "Catholics" worship Mary than Fred Phelps is evidence that "Baptists" cheer at funerals and sue people who hit them for doing so; indeed, less so, because the behavior is explicitly and clearly condemned, rather than merely being inconsistent with general principles.

A more subtle argument could be made that the Catholics incorrectly believe themselves not to be worshipping Mary, but that in fact they are. This runs straight into the question of what "worship" is; I think it is clear that it requires a conscious act of will, and as such, cannot be done by accident.

However, there is more. Once again, I have to stress the importance of looking at the actual topic. Even if we were to grant that Catholics worshipped Mary, it would not make them non-Christians. It would make them Christians who are guilty of idolatry, **but that does not make them not Christian**. Sinning is not a disqualifier for Christianity; indeed, it is arguably a prerequisite. Quite simply, not only is the accusation of Marian "worship" completely wrong; even if it were true it wouldn't even be a start on an argument for the topic of the debate, which is the assertion that Catholics are not Christians.

Let us close, then, with the Catechism's simple and blunt description of the term:

818 "However, one cannot charge with the sin of the separation those who at present are born into these communities [that resulted from such separation] and in them are brought up in the faith of Christ, and the Catholic Church accepts them with respect and affection as brothers.... All who have been justified by faith in Baptism are incorporated into Christ; they therefore have a right to be called Christians, and with good reason are accepted as brothers in the Lord by the children of the Catholic Church."

Quibbling about Baptism will not avail you; this is a reference to a concept explored at great length elsewhere, and the Catholic teaching does not create the "requirement" or "work" that others sometimes accuse them of. In the end, the affirmative needs to provide a real definition of the term "Christian", and show that this definition is correct, before it will even become possible to begin to show that Catholics are "not Christians".

*Last edited by KnightWhoSaysNi : February 18, 2007 at 01:23 AM.
Reason: ~~strikeout of cut and paste error~~ (in purple)*



February 25, 2007, 06:49 PM

#4208817 / #6

[Bible John](#)

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Round III

Welcome to round III of this debate. Before we start I wish to say that I made a mistake in the introduction round. My mistake was that I did not set a clear-cut definition of a Christian. I believe that this has led to the confusion between me and my opponent. But I will also say that perhaps the confusion that we have is due to the fact that one of us believe that the Bible is the Word of God and that all the Words in it are inspired by God himself (Verbal Plenary Inspiration View, 2 Pet 1:20-21). Certainly the way one argues with that premise would be much different than the way the other argues, since they don't hold that premise as truth in the first place.

WHAT A CHRISTIAN IS

A Christian is someone that is saved from his or her sin by becoming a follower of Jesus Christ. Becoming a follower of Christ is accepting Christ's sacrifice for all mankind on the Cross. A Christian can expect an eternity spent with Jesus Christ and freedom from Hell and the Lake of Fire.

Christians adhere to the following common doctrines (or essential tenants of the orthodox Christian Faith).

- Saved by Faith in Jesus Christ's Atonement, not Works of righteousness (Eph 2:8-9)
- The Bible is the Truth, the Whole Truth and Nothing but the Truth (2 Pet 1:20-21, 2 Tim 3:16)
- God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, the Doctrine of the "Trinity" (1 John 5:7)
- Jesus was both fully God and fully man (John, Col 15)

The Biblical Christian is different than the "Catholic Christian" and why I mentioned the points above. Catholic Theology is not the same as Biblical Theology and what I have been explaining in this debate. Although Catholics may believe in the Trinity, they may believe that Jesus Christ was God, they may believe in the Bible. But they do not believe that the Bible is the only authority, and they also do not believe that salvation comes from faith in Jesus Christ alone, without any sacraments or works of righteousness. The Doctrine of **Justification** is totally different in the Catholic tradition than in the Protestant tradition.

My opponent claims the following

Quote:

Even if Catholic teaching on this matter were clearly and totally wrong, it would not matter, because the subject of the debate is whether or not Catholics are Christian, not whether or not they are correct on any specific points of doctrine debated among Christians.

The Doctrine of Justification is not a secondary issue and is essential. My sister attends a Charismatic Church in the SF Bay Area. I don't want any associations with that church, nor their Ministry Philosophy. However even she and the Church hold to the Biblical Doctrine of Justification. Justification is not secondary. It's a essential doctrine and is not debated among saved Christians.

Christ's death on the cross would not mean much and does not mean much to the Catholic, since a faith in Christ alone is not enough for salvation. The Doctrine of Justification can be explained below.

From the Eastons Bible Dictionary

<http://www.htmlbible.com/kjv30/easton/east2147.htm>

Quote:

Justification - a forensic term, opposed to condemnation. As regards its nature, it is the judicial act of God, by which he pardons all the sins of those who believe in Christ, and accounts, accepts, and treats them as righteous in the eye of the law, i.e., as conformed to all its demands. In addition to the pardon (q.v.) of sin, justification declares that all the claims of the law are satisfied in respect of the justified. It is the act of a judge and not of a sovereign. The law is not relaxed or set aside, but is declared to be fulfilled in the strictest sense; and so the person justified is declared to be entitled to all the advantages and rewards arising from perfect obedience to the law (Rom. 5:1-10).

Some verses that speak on the doctrine of Justification

Quote:

Justification

Ge 15:6; Ro 4:3; Ps 32:2; 71:16; 89:16; Isa 42:21; 45:24-25; 46:12-13; 50:8; 51:5-6; 53:11; 54:17; 56:1; 61:10; Je 23:6; Zec 3:4; Jn 5:24; Ac 13:39; Ro 1:16-17; Hab 2:4; Ga 3:11; Ro 2:13; 3:21-22,24-26,28,30; 4:5-25; 5:1,9,11-21; 6:22; 7:1-25; 8:1,30-31,33-34; 9:30-32; 10:1-21; 1Co 1:30; 6:11; 2Co 5:19,21; Ga 2:14-21; 3:8-9,6,21-22,24; 4:21-31; 5:4-6; Ep 6:14; Phl 3:8-9; Col 2:13-14; Tit 3:7; Heb 11:4,7; Jas 2:20-23,26

See Adoption; Forgiveness; Regeneration; Sanctification; Sin, Confession of; Sin, Forgiveness of

Source: NAVES Topical Bible

When someone is born again (they see themselves as sinners and want to turn from sin, and they ask Christ to come into their lives so they can become pure and clean) then they are born again. Next we will briefly discuss the doctrine of Regeneration which is the end result of being born again.

This most famous chapter of scripture explaining this doctrine comes from the book of John. But below is a

basic definition of the doctrine.

Also from the Easton's Bible Dictionary

<http://www.htmlbible.com/kjv30/easton/east3091.htm>

Quote:

Regeneration - only found in Matt. 19:28 and Titus 3:5. This word literally means a "new birth." The Greek word so rendered (palingenesia) is used by classical writers with reference to the changes produced by the return of spring. In Matt. 19:28 the word is equivalent to the "restitution of all things" (Acts 3:21). In Titus 3:5 it denotes that change of heart elsewhere spoken of as a passing from death to life (1 John 3:14); becoming a new creature in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5:17); being born again (John 3:5); a renewal of the mind (Rom. 12:2); a resurrection from the dead (Eph. 2:6); a being quickened (2:1, 5).

This change is ascribed to the Holy Spirit. It originates not with man but with God (John 1:12, 13; 1 John 2:29; 5:1, 4).

As to the nature of the change, it consists in the implanting of a new principle or disposition in the soul; the impartation of spiritual life to those who are by nature "dead in trespasses and sins."

The necessity of such a change is emphatically affirmed in Scripture (John 3:3; Rom. 7:18; 8:7-9; 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:1; 4:21-24).

When one is born again they are different and their old self-dies and they put on a new self.

Galatians, Chapter 2, Verse 20, New International Version

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Ephesians, Chapter 2, Verses 1-2, New American Standard Version

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons

of disobedience.

Certainly much, much more could be said, but what I have given is a general overview. There are certainly a ton more Bible verses that say the exact same thing, but posting all of them would eat up my word count.

On to the rebuttal of Seeps arguments.

Seeps first refers to John 2:1-10 and says.

Quote:

In this story, we find that, in fact, Jesus obeys Mary. (Indeed, Jesus could hardly do otherwise without violating a commandment!) If, as Christians believe, Jesus is God, then God obeys Mary. Indeed, we are regularly told that God obeys the righteous; Jesus says:

One of the problems with your argument is a lack of a solid Biblical Hermeneutic. You have ripped passages right OUT OF CONTEXT and come to a conclusion that was not meant to be, and have made the Bible say what you want it to say. No saved Born again Christian believes that God obeys Mary. I think its MURDER of the texts and the many Biblical scholars and theologians of the past for you to come to such absurd ungodly conclusions.

First remember that Jesus when he was on earth was submissive to his parents. For if you read the OT law especially the 10 commandments it says to obey your father and your mother. But also remember that Jesus was God in the flesh, and he ultimately obeyed his father, and not His mother nor anyone else. Jesus true authority was not any human authority as shown in the passage below.

Matthew, Chapter 12, 46-50, English Standard Version

While he was still speaking to the people, behold, his mother and his brothers stood outside, asking to speak to him. But he replied to the man who told him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

Jesus did not need earthly relationships and said in the above passage that whoever does the will of God, is His

brother, and sister and mother. Earthly families will be no more in the Kingdom of Heaven, and your argument of God obeying Mary is moot. Jesus is God, does not need to obey Mary, and in Heaven does not obey Mary. Mary worships him, as grace saves Mary and all regenerate Christians.

Quote:

What is worship? Worship is a concept, which the Bible refers to often, but does not define very clearly.

Actually it defines Worship as clear as day.

John, Chapter 4, 20-24, King James Version

Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Worship is a Noun not a Verb. According to the passage of scripture above, worship of God is never isolated to one place. Worship is not about guitars, music, nor is it about raising your hands or getting emotional in a Church service. Worship of God is a lifestyle of spirit and truth to God. Worship for the elect is reading their Bibles, praying, serving the poor, preaching the gospel, etc.. Worship can be music, but the music must be Holy. Contemporary music that has bad theology is not worship. Worship is pure theology, and is a pure reverence for the Holy word of God. For me this debate is a form of worship to God.

Quote:

The Catechism talks specifically about the exclusivity of worship:

This is the difference between you and me. For me there is no other authority besides the Holy Scriptures, and what the Catechism may say, means nothing to me. Why do you think that you can persuade a Fundamentalist by

using doctrines and scriptures from sources other than the Holy Word of God?

I would challenge you to look at the website below to learn the problems with the Catechism.

<http://www.jesus-is-savior.com/False...m/catectoc.htm>

The website appears to be written by a Fundamentalist a bit more harsh than me. But regardless what he writes holds weight on Roman Catholicism and the Catechism.

Quote:

Given the clarity of this teaching, a claim that Catholics worship Mary is rather unusual. In fact, the Catechism clearly and unequivocally rejects an equivalence of Mary to God, or worship of her:

You know as part of my research in this debate I created some questions and phoned 4 random Roman Catholic Churches in the San Francisco Bay Area and asked the following questions below.

- 1. How can mankind receive salvation and is Jesus involved? Or does Mary tell Jesus whom to save?**
- 2. Do you worship Mary?**
- 3. Did Mary beget God the father?**
- 4. Explain the Doctrine of Justification?**

All the priests said that Mary was sinless. But when I then asked if she was divine, they all said that she wasn't. Asking for a chapter and a verse to backup such statements was too much for them, so I did not ask, since I understand that Catholics do not use the Bible as their sole authority. Sadly Catholic tradition, Church leaders, and the Pope seem to hold more weight than the Holy Scriptures. Also none of them would admit that Mary beget God the father, and none of them would admit that salvation comes through Mary. When asked about the doctrine of Justification, what I was told was not Biblical. I was told that obedience to the 10 commandments and the Sacraments was involved in Justification.

Quote:

No, the condemnation of graven images comes down to worship, and as seen above, veneration and respect are not worship. The argument that mere numerosity of images of Mary proves worship is ridiculous.

I asked the priests about all the Mary statues throughout the Catholic world, but some said that the statues do not mean a worship of Mary, but devotion and a reverence to her. So none of them would admit that they worshipped Mary. The priests condemned the Catholics in other regions of the world that kiss Mary statues and bow down to them.

Regardless of what they say, the Catholic Church is in violation of the 10 commandments.

Exodus, Chapter 20, 3-5, King James Version

Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;

The massive placement of thousands of Mary statues throughout the world is a form of making a graven image. Regardless of what any Catholic says, this is Worship. Mary was not sinless and was no better than you or me or any other sinful human.

A quote from the book Watch Your Teaching Pages 102-103

Mary though highly favored among (not above) women, writes Rev. Angelo Lo Vallo, "nonetheless needed to be redeemed from sin by this One who alone is full of grace and truth. She shares the condemnation common to all, since all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Quote:

By this argument, video game collectors must "worship" Mario. Perhaps more distressingly, nearly all Americans would "worship" various celebrities. No, I don't think that's a good definition of "worship" to use. Once again, we find that the affirmative argument relies on rhetorical devices to imply or assert that something is "worship", without providing a real or meaningful definition to compare them with.

Perhaps video game people do worship Mario. Perhaps

Americans do worship celebrities. Many spend countless thousands for the clothing of a celebrity. If that is not celebrity worship, then I do know what is. Jesus clearly defined worship, and worship is only acceptable to God. Worship of Mary is not okay and is not permissible in the sight of a Holy God.

Worship is to be rendered to God only
Ex 20:3; Dt 5:7; 6:13; Mt 4:10; Lk 4:8; Ac 10:26;
14:15; Col 2:18; Rev 19:10

Quote:

However, we come now to the same essential flaw that was found in the first affirmative argument: Even if every point made were simply granted without demurrals, we would still be no closer to even a hint of evidence that Catholics are not Christian. They might be wrong. They might be offending God every day of their lives. However, if they believe that Jesus is Lord, they are Christians.

What Jesus do they believe in? Do you know that Mormons and JW's also believe that Jesus is lord? But the problem is that the Jesus that they believe in is not the Jesus of the Holy Scriptures or the real Jesus.

Oh and your argument that all one has to do is believe that Jesus is Lord and divine in order to be saved is not what the Bible teaches.

James, Chapter 2, 19, New International version

You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

The demons know that Jesus is God, they know that He is Lord, they know that he is the Son of God, and they are not saved. There are many that know whom Jesus is but are not saved, because they have no relationship with him.

Read the following scriptures.

John, Chapter 10, 27-30, King James Version

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck

them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one.

Matthew, Chapter 7, 22-23, King James Version

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

The Sheep of Jesus follow Him and abide by His commands. They have a relationship with Him, and they have been cleansed from their sin, because they believe that Christ alone can take away their sins. They have been born again, and do not follow the flesh, but follow the Spirit.

Quote:

Quibbling about Baptism will not avail you; this is a reference to a concept explored at great length elsewhere, and the Catholic teaching does not create the "requirement" or "work" that others sometimes accuse them of. In the end, the affirmative needs to provide a real definition of the term "Christian", and show that this definition is correct, before it will even become possible to begin to show that Catholics are "not Christians".

Catholic Theology does teach a different way to Heaven than what the Bible teaches. The Sacraments in Catholic Theology are the steps to Heaven.

Steps to Heaven in Catholic Theology from the book So What's the Difference, Page 46, 1967, G/L Publications.

- 1. BAPTISM**
- 2. CONFIRMATION**
- 3. PENANCE**
- 4. HOLY EUCHARIST**
- 5. HOLY MATRIMONY**
- 6. HOLY ORDERS**
- 7. EXTREME UNCTION**

All in all I hope that my opponent will make better arguments in the next round, and arguments that can refute the many Bible verses that I have posted. Although I do appreciate his non-sarcastic tone, and his professionalism that he has demonstrated thus far in the debate.

John Wolf
Church Education Resource Ministries
www.cerm.info

*Last edited by KnightWhoSaysNi : February 25, 2007 at 07:18 PM.
Reason: Added vbb quotes and source to Justification verses (in purple)*



February 25, 2007, 10:34 PM

#4209255 / #7

seebs

Moderator--MF&P, GRD

Join Date: May 2002
Location: Saint Paul, MN
Posts: 21,848



As we've progressed, we've reached a point where we have a number of distinct topics that we're going to have to cover, so I'm splitting this up by headings.

The Word of God

The Gospel According to St. John, Chapter 1, Verses 1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all *men* through him might believe. He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light. *That* was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

The reason I do not believe that the Bible is the Word of God is that the Word is God, and to call a thing which is

not God by that name is to commit idolatry. Since the Bible is not God, it cannot be justly called the Word of God. That title refers to the person of Jesus within the Trinity; it does not refer to a book.

Verbal plenary inspiration

While it is true that, obviously, we disagree on this, I think that works to the advantage of the negative argument. Verbal plenary inspiration is a doctrine that some Christians hold to; it is not a doctrine inherent to Christianity. It could hardly be considered essential, given that Christianity predates the text in question. This is one of many examples of cases in which a doctrine is foundational to a given group's beliefs, but is not foundational to Christianity itself. There were Christians before there were Bibles.

The definition of Christianity

The affirmative provides a proposed definition of Christianity:

A Christian is someone that is saved from his or her sin by becoming a follower of Jesus Christ. Becoming a follower of Christ is accepting Christ's sacrifice for all mankind on the Cross. A Christian can expect an eternity spent with Jesus Christ and freedom from Hell and the Lake of Fire.

Christians adhere to the following common doctrines (or essential tenants of the orthodox Christian Faith). [... list omitted for brevity]

What is missing from this? Any kind of source to explain why these traits, and not other traits, are the definition of Christianity. Jesus teaches many things. Why are these particular things singled out as essential to "being Christian", while others are left by the wayside? No answer is given. The affirmative asserts once again that the doctrine of Justification is essential to Christianity, and that it is "not debated among saved Christians", but no evidence is provided that this is the case. Certainly, the sheer volume of writing on the topic of justification by people who believed themselves Christian is huge. The argument is entirely circular; we are to exclude everyone who disagrees, because they are not Christian, after which we find that the only people we still consider Christian all agree. This could be used for any doctrine whatsoever; it doesn't advance the position at all.

A great deal of material is provided explaining the specific doctrine of justification that the affirmative relies on, but

nothing has been offered to suggest why this should have any significance to a debate of who is, or is not, Christian.

In short, even if the Catholics are indeed wrong on this doctrine, there is nothing to show that this makes them "not Christian".

Jesus and Mary

The affirmative makes two statements which I think summarize my problem with this position:

No saved Born again Christian believes that God obeys Mary.

[...]

First remember that Jesus when he was on earth was submissive to his parents.

If Jesus is God, then the closest I can come to reconciling these is to equate it to "no saved Born again Christian believes the simple truth". Jesus, who is God, was submissive to his parents, one of whom was Mary.

The use of "no saved Christian" is a sufficiently excellent example of the "no true Scotsman" fallacy that I will be unsurprised if, two hundred years from now, a man arguing that no Scotsman can play tennis, who insists that MacDuff, who plays tennis excellently, is therefore not a true Scotsman, is accused of committing the "no true Christian" fallacy. Quite simply, this is begging the question. Rather than advancing an argument for why a position is true, the affirmative tells us that no real Christian believes otherwise. Frankly, the claim is ludicrous; Christians are as capable of error and confusion as anyone else, so it seems fair enough to bet that a fair number of them believe pretty much any stupid thing you could name.

Definition of worship

The Gospel According to St. John, Chapter 4, Verses 20-24

Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall

worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.

The affirmative continues with "Worship is a Noun not a Verb." However, every usage in the quoted text is, in fact, of worship as a verb. That said, the distinction between noun and verb is totally irrelevant. The real problem remains; this passage does not define worship, it simply assumes that the listeners already know what it is.

The affirmative makes a statement I wholeheartedly agree with: "Worship of God is a lifestyle of spirit and truth to God." One of the given examples, that of serving the poor, strikes me as an excellent one. We are assured of the worthiness of this:

The General Epistle of James, Chapter 1, Verse 27

Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himself unspotted from the world.

And yet... Herein lies the core issue. When a Christian serves the poor, the act itself may be an act of devotion to God; an act of worship. When a Christian does any thing for love of God, it is justly considered an act of worship. And this is the thing: Even though the outward form of the action may be one of devotion and service to the poor, no one accuses a server in a soup kitchen of "worshipping" the poor. He is worshipping God, by showing respect and care for the poor.

What, then, of the respect and veneration offered to Mary? If a person can spend his life, day in and day out, devoting his time and effort and attention to the poor, and we understand that the worship of this action is directed to God, even though God never so much as takes a cup of soup from him, then can we not understand that respect for Mary may also be an act of worship, directed not to the obvious mortal and physical thing interacted with, but to God?

Apparently, the affirmative writer took the time to survey some Catholic priests.

Also none of them would admit that Mary begat God the father, and none of them would admit that salvation comes through Mary. [...] So none of them would admit that they worshipped Mary.

To the casual reader, this seems to suggest that it is just as I said; the Catholics do not worship Mary, they do not believe that salvation comes through Mary, and they do not believe that it was the Father that Mary gave birth to. However, the use of "would admit" suggests that the affirmative's position is to declare what people believe, then assert that, if they say otherwise, they not only believe that but lie about it. This is a very poor way to learn truth. I have already demonstrated that many of the claims made about the Catholics are demonstrably in conflict with their teaching. At some point, you have to allow for the possibility that, if every Catholic asserts the same claims, and every Catholic passes these claims to their children, that these claims are the actual Catholic teaching, even though it's not what people on the internet **say** Catholics teach. There is no basis for the kind of conspiracy theory we'd need to explain why every Catholic agrees with the condemnation of Mariolatry, even though they allegedly all secretly practice it. More realistic is the possibility that the people accusing them are mistaken, or possibly in some cases just lying.

Authority of the Catechism

There seems to be some misunderstanding. The affirmative argues "This is the difference between you and me. For me there is no other authority besides the Holy Scriptures, and what the Catechism may say, means nothing to me. Why do you think that you can persuade a Fundamentalist by using doctrines and scriptures from sources other than the Holy Word of God?"

I've already addressed the problem of mistaking the Scriptures for Jesus. However, there seems to be a major misunderstanding here. The term "authority" implies a context. A policeman is an authority in that he can give me a speeding ticket, but he is not an authority, in that he cannot tell me what it is moral for me to do. I have never claimed that the Catechism is a moral authority, or an authority on how Christians should live. However, it is an authority on the question of what Catholics believe.

If what the Catechism says means nothing to you, then you cannot even participate in a discussion of Catholic belief, because you are uninterested in even finding out what Catholics believe! Whether they are right or wrong to believe what it says, the Catechism is offered as a **definition** of Catholic belief. On that subject, it is about as authoritative as any text could ever be; it is certainly infinitely more reliable than internet web sites written by people who are overtly hostile to the Catholics. It is an unfortunate truth of human nature that people are perhaps overly willing to misrepresent things they are hostile to;

anti-Catholic web sites regularly make misstatements about Catholic beliefs.

Whence salvation?

The affirmative makes a couple of claims related to the nature and origin of salvation; I collect them here for discussion. The first is this:

Christ's death on the cross would not mean much and does not mean much to the Catholic, since a faith in Christ alone is not enough for salvation.

As an experiment, I opened the Catechism to a random page; I didn't look at the index or anything, I just pulled the cover and let the pages fall. Here is what I saw:

II. Christ's Redemptive Death in God's Plan of Salvation.

"Jesus handed over according to the definite plan of God."

[...]

"He died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures"

This is the page with paragraphs 599-601, which quite clearly and unambiguously discuss the central and absolutely important meaning of Christ's death on the Cross. I was planning to look this passage up, but it didn't turn out to be necessary. It is not clear at all that the belief that other things are required could make this meaningless, it being the central point of the faith! We do not dismiss a car as "meaningless" for travel because we have to turn the key to start it.

The affirmative makes a further point:

Oh and your argument that all one has to do is believe that Jesus is Lord and divine in order to be saved is not what the Bible teaches.

This, I think, highlights a key communications difference. I have never claimed that holding those positions provides salvation. However, believing those things, and seeking to follow Jesus, seems to be the definition of Christianity. In fact, the moment we start seeing discussions of all the other things that may be required, we are back to the salvation vs. works argument, all over again.

It still doesn't matter

What we need is a definition of "Christian". The word is generally used to denote members of a religion. But what's that mean? There are two common approaches used. One defines Christianity in terms of beliefs, the other in terms of discipleship. The affirmative argument hinges on defining Christianity in terms of beliefs, and then picking beliefs which are not only not found in the historical Creeds, but in some cases contrary to them. This seems undesirable; it replaces the reverent mysteries of the text with the detailed theological speculations and interpretations of men who lived centuries later.

However, it may be that a case could be made for defining Christianity in terms of the followers of Jesus, whom we call the Christ. Jesus spoke about this:

The Gospel According to St. John, Chapter 15, Verses 8-12

Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and *that* your joy might be full. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

Jesus does not refer at any point to a doctrine of justification. He describes one, but He never suggests that it is obligatory to understand it, or to hold to a particular view. Perhaps more problematically for the affirmative's arguments, the doctrine of justification given is one of "keeping my commandments".

The affirmative argument has presented a definition of "Christian", but has not shown that this definition is correct. The mere fact that a doctrine is expounded in the Bible does not mean that one must hold that doctrine to be Christian, even if the doctrine's meaning is widely agreed on. There is simply no theology test described in the teachings of Jesus; our focus on doctrinal correctness is a mere obsession, not a substitute for the Passion.

Here is what Jesus said about the level of theological insight and correctness needed to be saved:

The Gospel According to St. Matthew, Chapter 18, Verses 1-6

At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and *that* he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

Does the little child even know what a "doctrine of justification" is? Of course not. Children don't care about such trivia. The child's insight is not one of theological underpinnings, but of unconsidered love. Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven, says Jesus:

**The Gospel According to St. Matthew,
Chapter 19, Verse 14**

But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

The focus on theology comes at a high price. In this case, it comes at the price of divisions and strife; it comes at the price of rejecting and condemning the Catholics on the basis of what someone else said about them, refusing to take their own descriptions of their beliefs as relevant, and judging them based on hearsay and gossip.

It is no accident that many of the sources needed by the affirmative argument are simply the web sites of anti-Catholic groups, and citations are often impossible to track down; in many cases, the original sources do not say anything like what is said about them. I finally did find a source for the book "*So What's the Difference*". It's a book written by an evangelical aimed at showing the errors in competing belief systems. **It is not a Catholic source.** It is someone else's gossip about the Catholics, and cannot possibly be taken as a primary source for accurate information about Catholic beliefs. The affirmative position is relying on secondary and even tertiary sources both for its definition of Christianity and for claims about Catholic belief. The net result is confusion at best. The affirmative needs to not only define Christianity, but show that the definition is correct; to not only defend doctrines, but to show that they are

definitional to Christianity rather than merely common to many Christians.



March 4, 2007, 09:02 PM

#4232803 / #8

Bible John

Veteran User

Join Date: September 2005
Location: SF Bay Area California
Posts: 623



Round IV

Hello everyone and welcome to the final round of this interesting debate.

The rapid response of my opponent makes me wonder if he is taking this debate seriously, and if he even read my argument. I can't figure out how he could have responded to my argument in 3-4 hours. But regardless I'll rebut his arguments.

Quote:

The reason I do not believe that the Bible is the Word of God is that the Word is God, and to call a thing which is not God by that name is to commit idolatry. Since the Bible is not God, it cannot be justly called the Word of God. That title refers to the person of Jesus within the Trinity; it does not refer to a book.

You are making things too complicated and reading into the Bible and making it say things that you want it to say, rather than what the Bible says. In one sense Jesus is the Word, and another the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God. I think the confusion comes, because you do not understand the Greek, and are ignorant of the Word of God.

The Greek word used to translate Word in John 1:1 comes from the Greek word Logos Strong's 3056. This same Greek word is used in Heb 4:12 which says.

Hebrews, Chapter 4, Verse 12, King James Version

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In this verse, this same Greek word is also used. However the huge difference is the lack of the Capital form of Word. I did a search of the New American Standard Version Translation on my computer, and I saw that only

the passages referring to Jesus use the Capital Word, instead of the lower case word, which sets the clear distinction between the word of God, and Jesus whom is the Word.

I do not have the time nor the space to debunk the rest of your statement, but I would suggest that you go buy yourself the **AMG Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament** and look up the Greek word Logos (Strongs 3056). Then you will see that Logos can be translated more than one way.

Quote:

The affirmative asserts once again that the doctrine of Justification is essential to Christianity, and that it is "not debated among saved Christians", but no evidence is provided that this is the case.

I guess it depends on your connotation of a Christian. It appears that your definition of a follower of Christ is different than what the Bible teaches. You refer to groups like the Mormons and the JW's and believe they are Christian, yet they deny the very essential tenants of Christianity. This is the difference between you and me and why we cant see things straight on this issue. The definition of a Christian that I use, is what the Bible teaches, and therefore not the definition that you teach. It's impossible for anyone to inherit the kingdom of God, whom deny Jesus Christ.

Quote:

A great deal of material is provided explaining the specific doctrine of justification that the affirmative relies on, but nothing has been offered to suggest why this should have any significance to a debate of who is, or is not, Christian.

You still have not grasped the basic definition of Justification, nor have you figured out why Christ's death on the cross was so important for the salvation of mankind. For if it were not for this, then mankind could have no salvation. To put it simply, this is Justification.

1 Peter, Chapter 2, Verse 24, King James Version

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

1 Peter, Chapter 1, Verses 3-5, King James Version

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Sometimes I bang my head against the wall trying to figure out why some people cant grasp the importance of the doctrine of Justification. But the other day ago while I was in the Word the Lord told me the answer.

Romans, Chapter 8, Verses 5-8, New International Version

Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

Quote:

In short, even if the Catholics are indeed wrong on this doctrine, there is nothing to show that this makes them "not Christian".

Oh yes it does as a denial of Christ and His sacrifice on the cross leads to death and separation from God.

Romans, Chapter 3, Verse 23, King James Version

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Romans, Chapter 6, Verse 23, King James Version

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans, Chapter 5, Verses 18-19, King James Version

Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

1 Timothy, Chapter 2, Verses 5-6, New King James Version

For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,

Quote:

Christians are as capable of error and confusion as anyone else, so it seems fair enough to bet that a fair number of them believe pretty much any stupid thing you could name.

Wrong! In regards to the essential tenants of the Christian faith, the elect all agree on the general concepts. The elect all believe that Jesus is God, and the elect all agree that salvation comes only from Him.

Quote:

The affirmative makes a statement I wholeheartedly agree with: "Worship of God is a lifestyle of spirit and truth to God." One of the given examples, that of serving the poor, strikes me as an excellent one.

Thanks.

Quote:

And yet... Herein lies the core issue. When a Christian serves the poor, the act itself may be an act of devotion to God; an act of worship. When a Christian does any thing for love of God, it is justly considered an act of worship. And this is the thing: Even though the outward form of the action may be one of devotion and service to the poor, no one accuses a server in a soup kitchen of "worshipping" the poor. He is worshipping God, by showing respect and care for the poor.

Exactly.

Quote:

What, then, of the respect and veneration offered to Mary?

Yes we should have a respect for Mary, but for goodness, sake many Catholics worship Mary! You and other Catholics may deny this all you want, but your actions speak louder than your words.

Quote:

To the casual reader, this seems to suggest that it is just as I said; the Catholics do not worship Mary, they do not believe that salvation comes through Mary, and they do not believe that it was the Father that Mary gave birth to

It may be possible that my primary source for my Round I and Round II arguments (John MacArthur) ripped Catholic Theology out of context to come to his conclusions. But it also may be true, that John MacArthur is correct, and there are many Catholics that worship Mary. I do not know if I can state that all Catholics are unsaved.

Quote:

However, it is an authority on the question of what Catholics believe.

That's the problem. The Bible is the authority and the only authority. Catholics are behaving like Mormons whom do not view the Bible as the sole authority for their lives. Only the Bible has been inspired by God himself, and only the Bible can lead a man to salvation. There are no other paths to salvation outside of Faith in Jesus Christ.

John, Chapter 14, Verse 6, King James Version

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Quote:

What we need is a definition of "Christian". The word is generally used to denote members of a

religion. But what's that mean? There are two common approaches used. One defines Christianity in terms of beliefs, the other in terms of discipleship. The affirmative argument hinges on defining Christianity in terms of beliefs, and then picking beliefs which are not only not found in the historical Creeds, but in some cases contrary to them. This seems undesirable; it replaces the reverent mysteries of the text with the detailed theological speculations and interpretations of men who lived centuries later.

I don't know if I can say that I care much about the Creeds and Confessions. I mean they are important, but the Bible is the most important. The Bible is what I live by, and the Bible is what I teach.

My opponent quotes John 15:8-12 and then comments.

Quote:

Jesus does not refer at any point to a doctrine of justification. He describes one, but He never suggests that it is obligatory to understand it, or to hold to a particular view. Perhaps more problematically for the affirmative's arguments, the doctrine of justification given is one of "keeping my commandments".

I think the problem here is your lack of understanding of not only Biblical Hermeneutics, but also Dispensationalist Theology.

From the New Dictionary of Theology

Quote:

Dispensational Theology
Dispensationalism rests on the view that God's dealings with men have proceeded through 'well-defined time-periods' (Chafer), i.e. 'dispensations', in each of which God reveals a particular purpose to be accomplished in that period, to which men respond in faith or unbelief. Dispensationalists deny that they teach more than one way of salvation, admitting only that the content of faith varies according to the revelation given in each dispensation. Scriptural support is derived from passages which distinguish between, e.g., past ages (e.g. Ep 3:5; Col 1:26), the

present age (e.g. Ro 12:2; Ga 1:4) and the age to come (Ep 2:7; Heb 6:5), and especially the use of *aiónas* in Heb 1:2 and 11:3.

Dispensationalists differ in identification of the dispensations, but it is fairly general to distinguish those of innocency (Adam before the fall), conscience (Adam to Noah), promise (Abraham to Moses), Mosaic law (Moses to Christ), grace (Pentecost to the rapture) and the millennium. The sharp distinction drawn between Israel and the church (except during the dispensation of grace) is crucial. The systematization of modern dispensational theology owes much to J. N. Darby and the Scofield Reference Bible (1909, by the American Congregationalist, Cyrus I. Scofield, 1843-1921).

The basic hermeneutical principle is literal interpretation, which does not rule out symbols, figures of speech and typology, but does insist that, throughout, 'the reality of the literal meaning of the terms involved' is determinative (Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*, p. 87).

Consequently, the promises of an earthly kingdom given to Israel as a nation must be fulfilled literally in a future, millennial kingdom (on the analogy of the literal fulfilment of the messianic promises relating to Jesus). Dispensationalists accept that believing Jews-as individuals-find their place in the church during the dispensation of grace, but the promises made to the natural seed of Abraham await the premillennial return of Christ with his church for their fulfilment. Then will be initiated the dispensation during which the material blessings promised to Israel will be bestowed-and will be characteristic, though not to the exclusion of the spiritual dimension.

Some details are in dispute among dispensationalists. These include the number and designations of the dispensations and the point at which the dispensation of grace began. The most extreme view is that of E. W. Bullinger (1837-1913) who commenced the church age with the ministry of Paul after Ac 28:28, held that Paul's prison epistles are the only Scriptures addressed primarily to the church, and denied that water baptism and the Lord's Supper are for this age. There is less disagreement over the terminus ad quem of the dispensation of grace, though some believe the rapture of the church (which marks its termination) will not take place until the end (a few say the middle) of the great tribulation.

See also: Eschatology.

Bibliography

L. S. Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 8 vols. (Dallas, TX, 1947); A. H. Ehlert, 'A Bibliography of Dispensationalism', BS, passim (1944-46); C. C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today* (Chicago, 1965); E. Sauer, *From Eternity to Eternity* (Exeter, 1954); J. F. Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom* (Findlay, OH, 1959).
H.H.R.

You see, the way Salvation came before Christ's death is not the same as the way it comes in the day of Grace. As Ephesians says, its by Grace that you have been saved, and not by works. I think the problem with your argument, is that its rooted in law and not in Grace.

Quote:

The affirmative argument has presented a definition of "Christian", but has not shown that this definition is correct. The mere fact that a doctrine is expounded in the Bible does not mean that one must hold that doctrine to be Christian, even if the doctrine's meaning is widely agreed on. There is simply no theology test described in the teachings of Jesus; our focus on doctrinal correctness is a mere obsession, not a substitute for the Passion.

1 Corinthians, Chapter 1, Verses 23-25, King James Version

But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Quote:

The focus on theology comes at a high price. In this case, it comes at the price of divisions and strife; it comes at the price of rejecting and condemning the Catholics on the basis of what someone else said about them, refusing to take their own descriptions of their beliefs as relevant, and judging them based on hearsay and gossip.

I never said that all Catholics were not Christians. What I am saying is that Catholics that are true to official Roman doctrine are not Christians.

Quote:

It is no accident that many of the sources needed by the affirmative argument are simply the web sites of anti-Catholic groups, and citations are often impossible to track down; in many cases, the original sources do not say anything like what is said about them. I finally did find a source for the book "So What's the Difference". It's a book written by an evangelical aimed at showing the errors in competing belief systems. It is not a Catholic source. It is someone else's gossip about the Catholics, and cannot possibly be taken as a primary source for accurate information about Catholic beliefs. The affirmative position is relying on secondary and even tertiary sources both for its definition of Christianity and for claims about Catholic belief. The net result is confusion at best. The affirmative needs to not only define Christianity, but show that the definition is correct; to not only defend doctrines, but to show that they are definitional to Christianity rather than merely common to many Christians.

You think I am harsh? You think that I was mean to Catholics in this debate? If so then read this quote from the following website.

<http://www.jesus-is-savior.com/False...m/catectoc.htm>

Quote:

The Catholic religion is an enemy of God's word. It's doctrines are the exact opposite of those in the Bible. The perversions are so readily evident that the Catholic religion must convince its adherents that they MUST equate Catholic tradition with the Bible. If the poor Catholics were trained to read the Bible independent of their leaders, they would instantly see that their religion is a house made of toothpicks ... a prisonhouse of religion. One slight breeze of truth from the word of God and the whole thing falls to its destruction. **Hell has a lot of Catholics in it.** If you are Catholic, swallow your pride and take a good look at what your religion asks you to believe in light of the word of God. Flee from

Romanism as fast as you can and into the arms of Jesus.

I cant say that I agree with all the hyper-fundamentalist approaches of the author (including his attack on the NIV) but I am not second guessing his Catholic scholarship, which appears to be authentic.

His website created a few questions that I want my opponent to answer in the next round.

1. Holy Spirit

In the Catechism it says

"Confirmation perfects Baptismal grace; it is the sacrament which gives the Holy Spirit in order to root us more deeply in the divine filiation, incorporate us MORE FIRMLY into Christ, strengthen our bond with the Church.." (#1316, p. 367)

But the Bible does not teach this. Can you explain? The Bible teaches that all Christians have the Holy Spirit. The Bible does not teach that one has to follow a Catholic doctrine to get the Holy Spirit, nor does the Bible teach that one has to be Baptized in the Holy Spirit (a common Pentecostal doctrine).

2. Eucharist

In the Catechism it reads.

"For this reason the Eucharist cannot unite us to Christ without at the same time cleansing us from past sins and preserving us from future sins:" (Pg. 390, #1393

"By the same charity that it enkindles in us, the Eucharist preserves us from future mortal sins." (Pg. 390, #1395)

But the Bible does not teach this. Can you explain? The Bible teaches that Jesus cleanses the believer from their sins.

In the Catechism it also reads.

"The Eucharistic sacrifice is also offered for the faithful departed who 'have died in Christ but are not yet wholly purified, so that they may be able to enter into the light and peace of Christ.'" (Pg. 382, # 1371

"In the Eucharist, the Church expresses her efficacious

communion with the departed..." (Pg. 469, #1689)

Likewise the Bible does not teach this. Can you explain? The Bible teaches that the dead will face judgment, and there is unfortunately no hope for them. Mormons may also (like Catholics) teach that the dead can be saved, but the Bible does not teach this. What chapter and what verse teach this?

3. Baptism

The Catechism reads

"The Lord himself affirms that Baptism is necessary for salvation." (Pg. 352, #1257)

"The Church does not know of any other means other than Baptism that assures entry into eternal beatitude..." (Pg. 352, #1257)

"The faithful are born anew by Baptism.."(Pg. 341, #1212).

What chapter and what verse in the Bible teach these doctrines? The Bible does not teach that Baptism is required for salvation. What chapter and what verse teach this?

I suppose that this will be enough, and I hope you spend some time thinking about these questions and make an honest attempt to answer them. Please do not reply 3-4 hours after my post, and claim to have answered all my questions. Please take this debate seriously.

To conclude the debate, I will once again state my premise that I believe that there are saved Catholics in the catholic Church. But anyone holding to true Catholic doctrine is not a born again Christian. The Bible is very black and white, and its really only the devil and his servants that bring confusion.

1 Timothy, Chapter 4, Verse 1, King James Version

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

2 Corinthians, Chapter 11, verse 14, New International Version

And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.

When the devil comes to test you, you better be ready, and you need to know what side are you are on. I know what side I am on, but I cant say for sure what side Seebs is on. Church Education Resource Ministries openly takes the stand against the devil and his servants.

I hope this debate was helpful, and I look forward to my opponent's final statement. I want to thank iidb.org for hosting the debate, NightShade, Pevrey and the other mods for their participation as well.

John Wolf
Church Education Resource Ministries
www.cerm.info



March 5, 2007, 05:50 PM

#4235499 / #9

seebs

Moderator--MF&P, GRD

Join Date: May 2002
Location: Saint Paul, MN
Posts: 21,848



Well, we're nearly done.

Although it's not strictly topical, I'd point out that I have been taking this debate equally seriously all along, and the time I've put into each round has been the same. The affirmative's case rests entirely on existing presentations, all of which are themselves poorly researched gossip and hearsay. None of these arguments are new; I'd seen every one of them within about a month of first hanging around in a forum that had anti-Catholic vs. Catholic debates. All of them are based essentially on gossip, and it doesn't take much to address them.

On the "Word of God"

The affirmative states that "I did a search of the New American Standard Version Translation on my computer, and I saw that only the passages referring to Jesus use the Capital Word, instead of the lower case word, which sets the clear distinction between the word of God, and Jesus whom is the Word." This was exactly my point; it is a grave error to call the Bible the "Word" with a capital W.

The definition of Christianity

The affirmative's case falls down once again at confusing "believing what the Bible teaches about doctrine" for "using the Bible's definition of Christianity". The Bible never states that Christians are those who adhere to a particular doctrine; in fact, every example the Bible gives

defines Christianity predominantly in terms of behavior. All the debate about the doctrine of justification falls into the same trap; even if it's true, it's not significant to the definition of Christianity. If in fact it's true, it is true **no matter what you believe**. The affirmative has presented an argument which relies on the assumption that "Christianity" is a pure placebo effect, functional only if you know about it. We might as well argue that medicine is only effective if you take it from a container with the manufacturer's logo emblazoned on it.

The Bible does not state that you must hold correct doctrinal positions to be Christian. The closest we have is the Creeds, which lay out only a very few doctrinal positions. Obviously, neither addresses the modernist doctrine of Justification the affirmative present, as it wasn't invented for another thousand years or so.

The closest we get to an argument is the assertion that denial of "Christ and His sacrifice" leads to death and separation from God. However, even if the Catholic beliefs about the **mechanism** of justification are incorrect, there is neither doubt nor dispute that they believe that there is **some** mechanism by which Christ's death on the cross and subsequent resurrection are the means of our salvation.

Worship of Mary

The affirmative refers to "You and other Catholics". As has been made clear several times, I am not Catholic. The full sentence is enlightening:

Yes we should have a respect for Mary, but for goodness, sake many Catholics worship Mary!
You and other Catholics may deny this all you want, but your actions speak louder than your words.

This simply confirms that what's really at issue here is gossip, hearsay, and second-guessing. There is nothing of Catholic doctrine at issue; what is at issue is how third parties judge Catholic behavior. As the Bible teaches us, it is God, not Man, who can judge the hearts of others; we see only the outward behavior, **which is not enough to judge**. It is impossible to state with certainty that a given behavior is worship.

Since Catholic teaching unambiguously rejects and condemns worship of Mary, we further find that even if some Catholics erroneously worship Mary, they are excluded from discussion by the very terms of this debate; as the affirmative reminds us, we are discussing "Catholics that are true to official Roman doctrine" -- but

it is precisely those that have been proven **not** to worship Mary.

Sources of Information

The affirmative's position has been based consistently on flawed sources; on the rare occasions when primary sources were consulted, they were discarded whenever they didn't confirm the affirmative's desired position. MacArthur's material was, indeed, misrepresenting Catholic positions, as already shown.

On the discussion of the Catechism, the affirmative once again misunderstands the nature and purpose of the Catechism, misrepresenting it again. The affirmative states that "The Bible is the authority and the only authority." This, coming in the middle of an argument based predominantly on non-Biblical sources, is deep irony. The Catechism is not claimed, by the Catholics, to be a replacement for the Bible, or superior to it. It is ultimately descriptive rather than prescriptive; it describes Catholic beliefs, but does not determine them. Catholic beliefs are developed by the Church largely based on -- wait for it -- the Bible. The Catechism is a **description** of those beliefs; it is never their **source**.

With this in mind, once again, a discussion of Catholic beliefs which flagrantly contradicts the Catechism is gossip at best. The new website presented as a source in the last round exemplifies the problem; the affirmative introduces it thus:

"I cant say that I agree with all the hyper-fundamentalist approaches of the author (including his attack on the NIV) but I am not second guessing his Catholic scholarship, which appears to be authentic."

This is the essential basis of the anti-Catholic position; a willingness to trust a theologian whose work you **already know to be shoddy** when he attacks the Catholics, and to take his word over the words of those he accuses, even though you know he's not a reliable source. How can this work "appear to be authentic" when all it does is parrot and agree with previously debunked claims?

Creeds and the Bible

The affirmative states "I dont know if I can say that I care much about the Creeds and Confessions. I mean they are important, but the Bible is the most important. The Bible is what I live by, and the Bible is what I teach." However,

this misses the point in a couple of significant ways. Since at least one major creed predates the Bible by a century or so, it is crucial to understand that the Bible was selected according to the creeds, not the other way around. But it gets worse; the affirmative then proceeds to present a discussion of dispensationalism.

Dispensationalism is not found in the Bible. It is a model for interpreting the Bible which was developed very recently. While many of the events described by dispensationalists are in the Bible, the construct of "dispensations" is not! It was invented from whole cloth in the early 1800s, mostly by Darby. It is not a Biblical thing at all, unless by "Biblical" we mean "added in the commentary and notes of the Scofield Reference Bible". However, while they are in a book with the word "Bible" on a cover, the notes and commentary added to many consumer Bibles are not part of the sacred Scripture; they are just human speculations about it.

Three new questions.

The affirmative presents three new items for discussion, from a new source. This source, like the others, quote-mines the Catechism as a basis for attacks. It is ironic that, despite all the criticism of the Catechism, it still gets quoted (out of context) in attacks. As always, there is no explanation offered of what any of the alleged errors would matter in terms of whether or not those so erring are Christian. Had the debate topic been "Catholics don't interpret the Bible very well", these might have been interesting lines of argumentation.

The Holy Spirit

Paragraph 1316 of the Catechism reads:

Confirmation perfects Baptismal grace; it is the sacrament which gives the Holy Spirit in order to root us more deeply in the divine filiation, incorporate us more firmly into Christ, strengthen our bond with the Church, associate us more closely with her mission, and help us bear witness to the Christian faith in words accompanied by deeds.

The affirmative suggests that this contradicts the Biblical teaching that "all Christians have the Holy Spirit". As always, reading even one or two more paragraphs might help. The Catechism refers to a Biblical passage:

**The Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 8,
Verses 14-17**

Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they *their* hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

It appears that the Catholics are merely affirming exactly what the Bible said; that there is a process by which people acquire the Spirit when they become Christian. The affirmative states that "The Bible does not teach that one has to follow a Catholic doctrine to get the Holy Spirit", and the Catechism never contradicts this. The various rituals are described and contrasted, but in the full discussion, it is quite clear that this is viewed as the completion of the Baptism ritual -- and that, in some churches, the two are united.

A Biblical passage seems perhaps relevant:

**The Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 10,
Verse 47**

Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

How can we reconcile the Catholic belief that only Baptism and Confirmation ensure the Holy Spirit, with what see in the Bible, that the Spirit can be received by people not yet baptized? Simple. The Church is stating that the Church can **guarantee** that participation in sacraments will unite one with Christ. The Church does not claim that failure to do so guarantees disunity with Christ. This puts them much closer to recognizing the untamed God of the Bible than people who insist that errors in speculative doctrine inevitably separate one from Christ.

The Eucharist

The affirmative argues that it is wrong for Catholics teach that the Eucharist cleanses believers from sins, stating that it is Jesus who does this. As Catholics believe the Eucharist to be the literal presence of Jesus, the apparent contradiction is immediately resolved. The Catholic practice is easily understood given a literal reading of John 6:

The Gospel According to St. John, Chapter

6, Verses 47-69

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us *his* flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard *this*, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? *What* and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that

thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

The Catholic position on this simply takes this passage more literally than many fundamentalists and evangelicals do.

The affirmative continues on to argue "The Bible teaches that the dead will face judgment, and there is unfortunately no hope for them." Unfortunately, no source for this innovative claim is offered. The early Christian church practiced prayer for the deceased, and many churches continue the practice to this day. To dismiss any prayer for grace as without hope is theologically problematic.

Baptism

The affirmative argues that Baptism is not necessary for salvation. Like the Confirmation discussion above, this revolves around an error of affirming the consequent; the assertion that Baptism leads to salvation does not mean that only Baptism can lead to salvation. The Catholic assertion (pp. 1257) that the Church does not know of any means other than Baptism that assures salvation is not an allegation that Baptism is necessary. A better quote to use, from the same paragraph even, would have been the opening sentence; "The Lord himself affirms that Baptism is necessary to salvation." However, the end sentence of the paragraph, emphasized in the original, tells the full story:

God has bound salvation to the sacrament of Baptism, but he himself is not bound by his sacraments.

The Catechism goes on to explain all the ways in which people who are not baptised may indeed be saved! Had the affirmative gone to a primary source, rather than relying on gossip and hearsay, there would be no need to explain this; the potential for salvation despite lack of physical baptism is absolutely explicit in Catholic teaching.

This serves as the best opportunity, I think, to discuss exactly where the affirmative's argument falls to pieces. Let's look at that deadly quote again: "The Lord himself affirms that Baptism is necessary for salvation."

I don't believe that. Apparently, the affirmative doesn't either. But the question isn't whether the Catholics are right in what they believe; the question is whether they are Christians. The entire section on the Necessity of Baptism starts with that sentence. The first two words, the ones which define the whole doctrine, are "The Lord". At every turn, in every discussion of any point of doctrine,

the Catechism stresses the centrality of Jesus; His life, His teachings, His death, and His resurrection. Reading the section on the "necessity of Baptism", we see this affirmed over and over. Martyrs are "baptized by their death for and with Christ." The section discussing those who die ignorant of the Christian faith begins "Since Christ died for all".

Conclusion

In the end, this is what matters; every last point of Catholic doctrine centers around devotion to Christ. Every teaching is argued for in terms of how it relates to the teachings of Christ. Actions are justified as imitations of Christ's example or obedience to Christ's command. Heaven is an afterthought; what matters is "coming to Christ".

The Catholics may not always be following Jesus correctly; they may have theological errors, they may be mistaken, they may do things which are not what Jesus would like them to do. Even so, they consistently and at every juncture affirm Christ. Every sacrament's purpose is described entirely in terms of Christ; His example, His command, or analogy to His relationship with us as individuals. To call them anything but "Christians" disfigures the word beyond recognition. Are they wrong sometimes? Probably. Do they sin? They admit it themselves. But when they sin, they trust in the grace of God, as expressed in Christ. When they seek forgiveness, they seek it from God; the Catechism's description of the sacrament of penance (widely attacked by anti-Catholics) has an entire heading "Only God forgives sin" -- which stresses that Jesus, having the authority to do so, forgives sins. Again, everything the Church teaches is built around things Christ said or did, in devotion to and imitation of Jesus of Nazareth, called the Christ.

The Catholic practice of sacraments is a reflection of the life and story of Jesus. Baptism and confirmation are a reflection of the anointing that gave Jesus the title "Christ", and it is from this belief and these practices that the term "Christian" arose. No argument has been made that Christ is not absolutely, totally, central to every aspect of Catholic belief and practice. The closest yet seen is an argument that the Catholics sometimes misinterpret the Bible. This is simply irrelevant; we are discussing whether they are followers of Christ, not whether they are followers of the Bible. That their attempts to follow are imperfect is neither here nor there; it is simply irrelevant to the question.

Catholics are Christians. The primary source for

understanding Catholic views affirms this at every turn. The argument that they are not is merely a rehash of unsupported allegations and malicious gossip.



March 5, 2007, 05:57 PM

#4235521 / #10

KnightWhoSaysNi
Moderator--FD&D, FDP



Join Date: September 2001
Location: Calgary, Canada
Posts: 3,641

The formal debate is now complete. We would like to thank Bible John and seeps for their participation. Discussion can be continued in the peanut gallery.

- KWSN, FD Moderator



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