

Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

September/October 2017

“Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love” (2 John 1:3). The main article this month is long and the content is important for the days in which we live; please take the time to read it. I pray that you will be blessed.

You are Invited: We are having non-denominational Bible studies on Saturday evenings in Kansas, Oklahoma. We meet at 5:30pm for a light supper followed by music and a Bible study. All of our friends and neighbors are invited to join us. We hope to see you there, and bring a friend! Contact us for more info.

WHY THE PROTEST?

by Lynnford Beachy

There is a worldwide protest that has drawn a lot of media attention lately. But what is the protest about, and why has it been going on for so long?

October 31st, 2017 marks the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther writing his *95 Theses* in Wittenberg, Germany. This event is credited as the start of the Protestant Reformation in which large numbers of people left the Catholic Church. But what is a Protestant? The name

comes from the word protest. It stands for a protest of the teachings and practices of the Roman Catholic Church.

Luther's Protest

It was normal for professors like Martin Luther to nail theses to church doors, which served as bulletin boards to call for academic debates. He had nailed another thesis to the door just a few months earlier, but it did not generate nearly as much popularity as his *95 Thesis*. This thesis was not a call for a protest against, nor for a separation



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by Thomas Finch

from, the Catholic Church. It was written in a humble manner, calling for a debate on the selling of indulgences. Luther had concerns that the way indulgences were being sold could hurt the Catholic Church and bring slander to the pope. Luther himself did not want to hurt the church nor protest against it. Instead, he was attempting to protect the Catholic Church.

He sent his thesis to Albert of Brandenburg, the archbishop of Mainz, not realizing that without God's intervention this would seal his fate. The archbishop of Mainz had recently borrowed a large sum of money to gain an influential position in Mainz. To pay back the loan, he had obtained permission from Pope Leo X to sell indulgences in his diocese as long as he would send half the proceeds to the pope to rebuild St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. Luther was seen as a threat to this money-making scheme, so he quickly became a target who was excommunicated from the Church, and whose writings were burned. He would have been burned at the stake if he had not been mercifully kidnapped by Frederick the Wise of Saxony and hidden in Wartburg Castle.

Indulgences

Luther's main concern was over the selling of indulgences. He stated, "They preach only human doctrines who say that as soon as the money clinks into the money chest, the soul flies out of purgatory" (Martin Luther, *95 Thesis*). In the 12th century, the Catholic Church invented the unbiblical doctrine called "purgatory," a supposed intermediate state between the time of death and entering heaven.

Purgatory was claimed to exist because each sin was thought to require a certain amount of purging before a person could enter heaven. This was thought to be done either by good works or by punishment. If a person died before he had atoned for the sins he had committed, then he would have to go to purgatory to be purified more completely until he was ready to enter heaven. This belief gave rise to the church making a profit by selling indulgences to people who could supposedly pay for their dead relatives to get out of purgatory immediately or reduce their time there. Gruesome stories of dead relatives suffering in purgatory were shared, and then people were given the option to give money to the church to shorten their stay in purgatory. To see how much money was raised in this manner, look at pictures of St. Peter's Basilica which was built with the money earned in this way.

Over the years the Catholic Church has invented many other unbiblical teachings that have no clear support in the Bible. Catholic leaders do not see a problem with this because they rely on other sources for divine guidance. You see, the Catholic Church derives their doctrines partially from the Bible, partially from tradition, and partially from the sayings of popes, which they believe to be infallible when the pope claims to speak with authority ("ex cathedra"). Because of this, they feel at liberty to teach things contrary to the Bible.

The Catholic Church boldly proclaims, "The Pope has power to change times, to abrogate laws, and to

dispense with all things, even the precepts of Christ. The Pope has authority and has often exercised it, to dispense with the command of Christ” (*Decretal, de Tranlatic Episcop*).

In the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, a book designed to teach new converts the doctrines of Catholicism, we read, “Sacred Scripture is the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit.... Holy Tradition transmits in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles... As a result the Church, to whom the transmission and interpretation of Revelation is entrusted, ‘does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the holy Scriptures alone. Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence.’” (www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p1s1c2a2.htm).

The idea that the pope is able to dispense with the law of God and that tradition is equal to the Bible sets the Catholic Church at variance with most Protestants. Anyone who accepts the Bible and the Bible alone as the basis for all doctrines will naturally disagree with many of the teachings of the Catholic Church. Please do not misunderstand me, the Catholic Church teaches many things according to the Bible, but at the same time they teach many things that directly contradict the Bible, some of which are very dangerous. To this day, the Catholic Church teaches the doctrine of purgatory and indulgences, but the *Council of Trent* (1545-1564) clarified that “evil gains” should not be acquired by the sale of

indulgences. Yet, recently the church granted indulgences for anyone attending the Catholic World Youth Day, in Rio de Janeiro in 2013, or following Pope Francis on Twitter. It is taught that if you climb the “Sacred Steps” in Rome, you can take seven years off of your time in Purgatory.

Even with these teachings, it is still possible to be a Christian in that system. Some of the most sincere and godly people I have met have been Catholics.

Catholic Teaching on Justification

Soon after Luther’s *95 Theses* were written, how a person is justified became the primary point of debate between Protestants and Catholics. Catholicism teaches that a person is justified (made just before God) through a process beginning with:

- A sorrow for sin
- Confession to a Catholic priest
- Eating the body of Christ in the Eucharist (a small cracker that is supposedly transformed into the literal body of Jesus when a priest blesses it)
- Performing the prescribed amount of good works assigned by the priest. (These works can include giving money to the needy, saying a certain amount of prayers, reciting the rosary beads, going on a pilgrimage, etc.)

The merit earned through penance is thought to counteract the negative effects of sinful actions. Extra merit earned is supposedly able to be transferred to others to atone for their sins, even if they have already died.

The Catholic Catechism says, “Moved by the Holy Spirit and by charity, we can then merit for ourselves and for others the graces needed for our sanctification, for the increase of grace and charity, and for the attainment of eternal life.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, “Merit” paragraph 2010, www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_P70.HTM).

Justification in the Old Testament

At the beginning of sin in this world, God instituted a method for people to be forgiven of their sins. It was always through faith in God providing a sacrifice, Jesus Christ. Yet, as a symbol of that gift, when a person sinned he was required to offer an animal sacrifice as a sin offering so he could be forgiven. Sadly men started incorporating pagan practices in their worship of God. After nearly 2,000 years, God added the ceremony of circumcision to help identify God’s people. This was a requirement in order to be accepted by God (Genesis 17:10-14).

After more years of the corruption of paganism, more ceremonies were added to distinguish God’s people. Through Moses, God instituted the sanctuary, its services, the Levitical priesthood, and annual feast days, which were required to be observed by God’s people. In this system each sin must be confessed over an animal, and the priest was to take the blood and sprinkle it on various parts of the sanctuary. There were strict instructions for the clothing the priest wore and the services they performed. All

of this was part of God’s requirements for His people to be forgiven of their sins in those days. Paul wrote of these things, “Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation” (Hebrews 9:9, 10).

These ceremonies had their purpose for that time, but they were designed to be temporary until Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, would come to offer Himself as the real sacrifice for our sins. “...we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Hebrews 10:10). “...now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Hebrews 9:26). This sacrifice only occurred once, and paid the price for the sins of all people who have ever and will ever live upon the earth.

Justification through Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is now our High Priest in heaven. “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25). No longer do we need to be circumcised or participate in the temporary ceremonies of the Old Testament.* We do not have to offer sacrifices, nor do we have to go before an earthly priest to have our

* God’s eternal, moral law was also taught in the Old Testament, and that will last forever.

sins forgiven. We can now “come boldly unto the throne of grace” to obtain mercy and forgiveness (Hebrews 4:16). “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

The old system was only “for the time then present.” It served its purpose to point people to Christ and explain the plan of salvation, yet it came to an end; it was never designed to bring perfection (Hebrews 7:1, 19; 9:9; 10:1). Sadly, there was a tendency for people living in that system to think the actions of circumcision, killing animals and performing other rituals were what brought salvation. But they were never designed to bring salvation; they were just symbols to lead people to Christ.

With the idea that their works make them righteous, the Jewish leaders instituted their own extra traditions that were taught as requirements as well (Mark 7:1-13). When the Son of God came to this earth to live among men, the Jewish leaders thought He was sinning because He did not follow their man-made traditions. “For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God” (Romans 10:3). They did not understand true righteousness, so when they saw Jesus, the epitome of righteousness, they rejected Him (John 1:11, 12).

Jesus came to demonstrate righteousness. His sermon on the mount (Matthew 5-7) pointedly revealed the distinction between God’s righteousness and man-made righteousness based upon works. He said you must

be born again, and clean the inside first, so that the outside can be clean (John 3:1-7; Matthew 23:23-28).

God raised up the Apostle Paul to preach the gospel in its clarity. Paul preached, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8, 9). Paul taught the Gentiles that they did not need to be circumcised, nor keep the law of Moses (Acts 15:1-29; 21:20-25). Many Pharisees who were “zealous of the law” contended with Paul. They were worried that this new teaching would undermine their traditions and cause the Gentiles to become lawless. It was hard for them to accept that a man can be justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

You can see the controversy on this point all through Paul’s writings. He was opposed by Jews almost everywhere he went, and the accusations against him were that he was making the law and traditions of none effect by preaching so much about righteousness by faith. Paul contended with them, “Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love” (Galatians 5:4-6).

This is the message of the New Testament. Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). He also said, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his

only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). Paul wrote, “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” (Romans 10:9). Salvation is obtained by believing God loves us so much that He gave His only begotten Son to die for us, then confessing our sins to God and receiving Jesus Christ to live in our hearts. “He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (1 John 5:12).

Friends, salvation is a free gift, and is simple enough for a child to understand. There is no amount of good works that need to be done to obtain forgiveness. “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Titus 3:5). Notice that there is a cleansing process. We are washed by the renewing of the Holy Spirit. God promises to “cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). That is not a condition for receiving forgiveness and a new life; rather, it is a result of it. When Jesus Christ comes to live in your heart, cleansing will take place. You cannot stay the same when you are born again. (For a thorough study on being born again, please contact us and request a copy of the study, *You Must be Born Again!*)

Pagan Practices Came in

Just as pagan worship was creeping into the worship of God in the Old Testament, it also started to come into the New Testament church. In the first

couple hundred years of Christianity, it remained fairly pure, this was partially because most Christians had to be very dedicated to their belief since it often was accompanied by torture and death. The pagan Roman government was not friendly to Christians. Nero and other Emperors killed millions of Christians in horrendous ways in the Roman Coliseum, but that time came to an end.

In 311AD, the Roman Emperor, Constantine, saw a vision that convinced him to stop fighting against Christians. He marched his army through a river and declared them baptized. Constantine had a great desire to unite the Roman Empire which consisted of many pagans, and a growing number of Christians. He used his civil powers to try to force unity. It was during his rule that the first Sunday law was passed in 321AD, along with a controversial pronouncement on the identity of Jesus at the Council of Nicea in 325AD. (For an explanation of this, contact us to request the free booklet entitled, *The Formulation of the Doctrine of the Trinity*.)

Constantine desperately wanted unity between pagans and Christians. This began a merging of paganism with Christianity to try to make both groups feel comfortable. The famous statue of St. Peter in St. Peter’s Basilica in the Vatican, according to the *Catholic Encyclopedia* “was originally, in all probability, an ancient consular statue [deified Roman ruler] which was transformed into a representation of the Prince of Apostles” (*Catholic Encyclopedia*, article: Portraits of the Apostles, online at www.newadvent.org/cathen/12294b.htm). Millions of Catholics

have kissed the feet of this statue thinking it was an image of Peter, when in reality it is a pagan statue.

Along with items from pagan temples, came pagan teachings as well. When Constantine became the first “Christian” Emperor of Rome, there began a union of church and state known as the Papal Roman Empire. (For a detailed explanation of the merging of paganism and Christianity read *The Two Babylons*, by Alexander Hislop, available as a pdf for free here: ldolphin.org/PDFs/The_Two_Babylons-Alexander_Hislop.pdf) The papal power ruled the world during the Dark Ages, a time in which it is estimated fifty million Christians were tortured and killed in an effort to maintain papal power. When the church controls the state bad things will happen. The Protestant Reformation can be thanked to a large degree for the light that brought to a close the Dark Ages. Yet, according to Bible prophecy fierce persecution of God’s people is going to arise again, and this time it will be worse than ever before (Daniel 12:1; Matthew 24:21). (For more information on the last days and how to be prepared, request the studies, *Thriving in the Last Days*, and *The Mark of the Beast*.)

Paganism is riddled with the mentality that men must appease an angry god. With that mentality mingled with Christianity, a system based upon works and an earthly priesthood was formed. Nowhere in the New Testament will you find instruction to confess your sins to a priest in a confessional, do a prescribed amount of good works to earn forgiveness, petition dead saints or Mary to pray for you, nor recite rosary

beads. To recite the rosary beads one time you have to say, “Holy Mary, Mother of God” 153 times. Jesus said, “But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking” (Matthew 6:7).

Salvation does not depend upon that system at all. Salvation is found in Jesus Christ alone, by grace alone, through faith alone. Through faith in Him and His sacrifice, you can be free. Jesus came to “save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John 8:36). Praise God!

The Augsburg Confession

After Martin Luther wrote his 95 *Theses* in 1517, many people became open to investigate the teachings of the Catholic Church, and the Protestant Reformation was born. In 1530, the Roman Emperor, Charles V requested the Protestants to explain their beliefs. On June 25, 1530 the Protestant Imperial States of the realm met at the Diet of Augsburg, and presented the Roman Emperor with the *Augsburg Confession* describing the doctrines and practices of Protestants. Martin Luther was not at this gathering, for at the Diet of Worms in 1521 he had been declared a heretic by the Roman Empire who issued a warrant for his arrest and his death decree.

The *Augsburg Confession* boldly proclaimed justification by faith and not by works. It stated in part that Protestants: “...teach that men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works, but are

freely justified for Christ's sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor, and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, who, by His death, has made satisfaction for our sins. This faith God imputes for righteousness in His sight. Rom. 3 and 4" (*Augsburg Confession*, Article 4, Of Justification, You can read the entire *Augsburg Confession* here: bookofconcord.org/augsburgconfession.php).

The idea that men are justified by faith alone apart from any works of their own was difficult for the Catholic leaders to accept. It contradicted so much of their traditions. Their rituals were based upon the idea that their own works were necessary to atone for their sins. If this was not the case, then purgatory would be useless, selling of indulgences to get people out of purgatory would have to stop, their monastic vows, holy days, fasts, and other rituals would not help to atone for sins. The ideas laid out in the *Augsburg Confession* really undermined the whole system. It claimed that the Catholic Church does not have the right to institute extra-biblical laws, nor persecute with civil powers those who do not agree with them. "Neither must we submit to Catholic bishops if they chance to err, or hold anything contrary to the Canonical Scriptures of God... They refer to the Sabbath-day as having been changed into the Lord's Day, contrary to the Decalog, as it seems. Neither is there any example whereof they make more than concerning the changing of the Sabbath-day. Great, say they, is the power of the Church, since it has dispensed

with one of the Ten Commandments!... Now, it is against Scripture to establish or require the observance of any traditions, to the end that by such observance we may make satisfaction for sins, or merit grace and righteousness" (*Augsburg Confession*, Article 28: Of Ecclesiastical Power).

The Catholic Church claims to have the authority to change God's Law and institute its own laws. In *A Doctrinal Catechism* 3rd ed., by Stephen Keenan, p. 174, we read: "Question—Have you any other way of proving that the church has power to institute festivals of precept?

"Answer—Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her, she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday, the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday, the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority."

The *Augsburg Confession* questioned the authority of the Catholic Church to change God's Law and institute their own. In a little over a month, the *Confutatio Augustana* (Refutation of Augsburg), which called for a return to Catholic doctrines, was written and read before the Protestants. The Protestants could not agree to this, and were not allowed to have a written copy of the *Confutatio* unless they promised not to respond. This they refused to do, so they were not given a copy. Fortunately, some Protestants had transcribed it as it was read. Melancthon wrote a response called, *The Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, which contains a very detailed explanation of the Protestant view of justification.

The Council of Trent

This *Apology* states in part: “If we merit the remission of sins by these elicited acts [that spring from our mind], of what benefit is Christ? If we can be justified by reason and the works of reason, wherefore is there need of Christ or regeneration... For the heart, truly feeling that God is angry, cannot love God, unless He be shown to have been reconciled. As long as He terrifies us, and seems to cast us into eternal death, human nature is not able to take courage, so as to love a wrathful, judging, and punishing God... faith is the true knowledge of Christ, and avails itself of the benefits of Christ, and regenerates hearts, and precedes the fulfilling of the Law. And of this faith not a syllable exists in the doctrine of our adversaries. Hence we find fault with the adversaries, equally because they teach only the righteousness of the Law, and because they do not teach the righteousness of the Gospel, which proclaims the righteousness of faith in Christ.” (*The Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, Article 4, Of Justification, You can read it here: bookofconcord.org/defense_4_justification.php.)

In reading these dialogs it becomes clear that the same type of issues that existed between Paul and the Jewish Pharisees of his day was going on between the Protestants and Catholics. The Pharisees and Catholics were proclaiming righteousness through outward obedience to laws and traditions, while Paul and the Protestants were emphasizing faith and love from a pure heart which results in obedience to God’s law out of love for God and for our neighbors. This is true righteousness!

From 1545-1563, the Catholic Church held *The Council of Trent* to address the concerns of the Protestant Reformation. This council issued condemnations of what they called heresies of Protestantism. The Council concluded, “If any one saith, that the sacraments of the New Law are not necessary unto salvation, but superfluous; and that, without them, or without the desire thereof, men obtain of God, through faith alone, the grace of justification;... let him be anathema” (*The Council of Trent*, Seventh Session, Canon 4. You can read all the canons and decrees of the Council here: traditionalcatholic.net/Tradition/Council/Trent/index.html).

Justification, according to the Catholic faith, requires participation in the services of the Catholic Church. According to this teaching, justification cannot be accomplished by confessing your sins to God, believing Jesus died for you, and inviting Him to live in your heart (the new birth).

This Council also concluded: “If any one saith, that the justice received is not preserved and also increased before God through good works; but that the said works are merely the fruits and signs of Justification obtained, but not a cause of the increase thereof; let him be anathema” (*The Council of Trent*, Sixth Session, Canon 24). This idea is the opposite of reality. Jesus said, “Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the

mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things” (Matthew 12:33-35). Good works are a result of having a good heart, they do not produce a good heart.

The Council also concluded, “If any one saith, that the just ought not, for their good works done in God, to expect and hope for an eternal recompense from God, through His mercy and the merit of Jesus Christ, if so be that they persevere to the end in well doing and in keeping the divine commandments; let him be anathema” (*The Council of Trent*, Sixth Session, Canon 26). Paul wrote, “For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh [to establish his own righteousness] is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not [to establish his own righteousness], but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” (Romans 4:2-5; Compare with Romans 10:3). Expecting that God owes us for our good works is contrary to the gospel.

The *Augsburg Confession* stated that Protestants “teach that this faith is bound to bring forth good fruits, and that it is necessary to do good works commanded by God, because of God’s will, but that we should not rely on those works to merit justification before God. For remission of sins and justification is apprehended by faith, as also the voice of Christ attests: When

ye shall have done all these things, say: We are unprofitable servants. Luke 17:10. The same is also taught by the Fathers. For Ambrose says: It is ordained of God that he who believes in Christ is saved, freely receiving remission of sins, without works, by faith alone” (*Augsburg Confession*, Article 6: Of New Obedience).

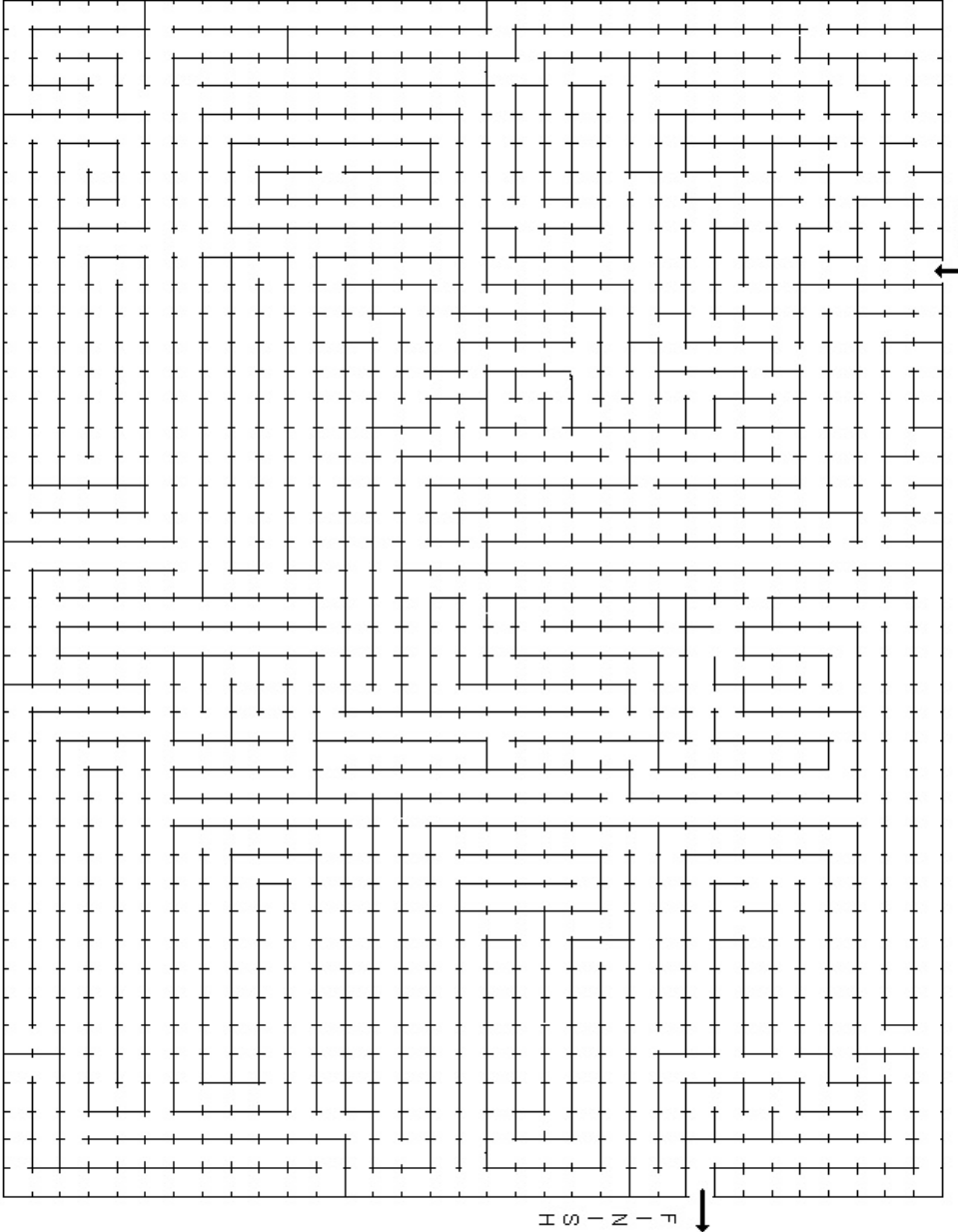
Protestants taught the need for good works, but clearly emphasized that this is a result of justification, not the cause of it.

The Catholic Church stated, “If any one saith, that, after the grace of Justification has been received, to every penitent sinner the guilt is remitted, and the debt of eternal punishment is blotted out in such wise, that there remains not any debt of temporal punishment to be discharged either in this world, or in the next in Purgatory, before the entrance to the kingdom of heaven can be opened (to him); let him be anathema” (*The Council of Trent*, Sixth Session, Canon 30).

In the Catholic system, sins must not only be forgiven, but temporal punishment must be discharged on the sinner to make him ready for heaven. With this idea, sins are not fully dealt with at confession, but there remains a debt that must be paid either by good works or by punishment. Some have willfully punished themselves by flagellation; wearing painful things under clothes or whipping themselves. Mother Teresa and Pope John Paul II utilized these punishments regularly. This was done because they saw it as a way to make them more holy, closer to God, and somehow pay back the debt of sin. It is thought

"Suffer the little children to come
unto me, and forbid them not: for of
such is the kingdom of God."

Jesus - Mark 10:14



Bible Word Search

**Find the
underlined
words...**

“Therefore
being justified by
faith, we have
peace with God
through our Lord
Jesus Christ. By
whom also we
have access by
faith into this
grace wherein we
stand, and rejoice
in hope of the
glory of God”
(Romans 5:1, 2).

Y Q M V Z H T E L B N Z T H Z R W U H W
A R R F B K O J G F X C P S S W Q H J P
C Z Z H D H R P R X Z F T H O T Y C O E
C X T B S R K R E D A A H P M Y A C D M
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M N L S Y S Q O F S I D H J J J U H R U
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R J P A B Q A O X A T R G Q V B E I N G
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O O H J C U Z A Y H D Y S K D M X E V L
R S F E A L S O F D L G C H R I S T S E

YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN

JOHN 3:1-17



And as it was in the days of
Noe, so shall it be also in the
days of the Son of man.

Luke 17:26

*I am not alone,
because
the Father
is with me.*

John 16: 32 (KJV)

Present Truth - Kids' Korner

Bible Study Crossword - Personality of God - Part 3

(The King James Version is required.)

➤ "And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be ____ unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." 1 Corinthians 15:28—**8 Down**

➤ "But I would have you know, that the ____ of every man is Christ; and the ____ of the woman is the man; and the ____ of Christ is God." 1 Corinthians 11:3 (1 word)—**5 Across**

➤ "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the ____ of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him." Ephesians 1:17—**2 Down**

➤ "And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou ____ of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not." Mark 5:7—**10 Down**

➤ "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the ____: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:" Luke 1:32—**5 Down**

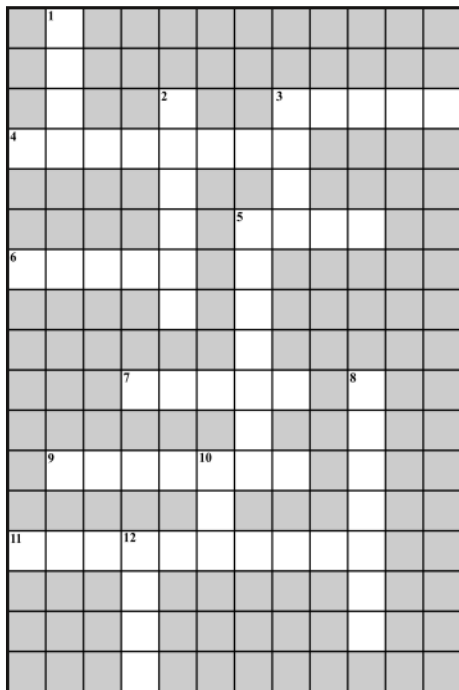
➤ "One God and Father of all, who is ____ all, and through all, and in you all." Ephesians 4:6—**6 Across**

➤ "These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his ____ to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:" John 17:1—**12 Down**

➤ "As thou hast given him ____ over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." John 17:2—**7 Across**

➤ "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only ____ God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." John 17:3—**3 Down**

➤ "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have



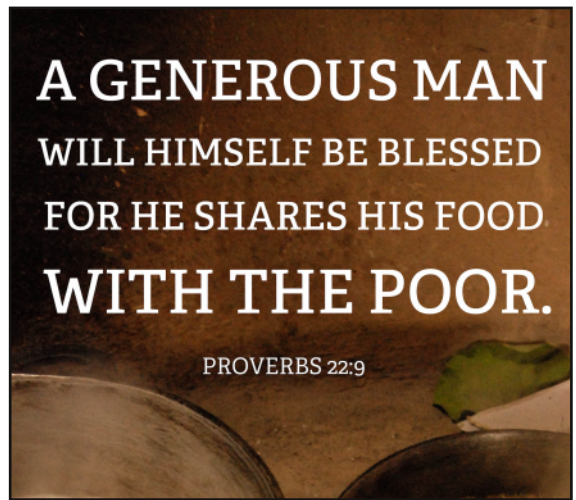
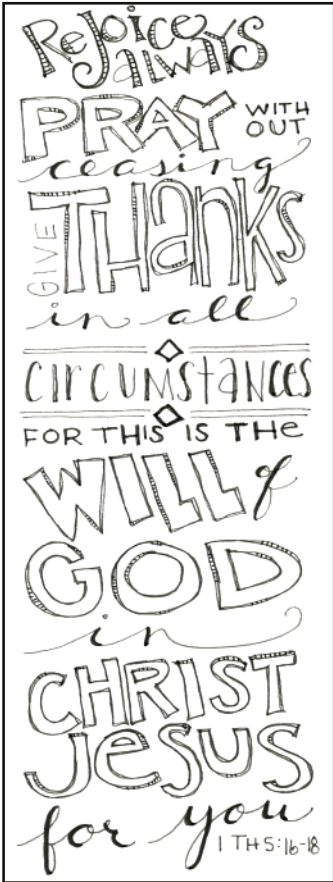
such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the ____ in the heavens;" Hebrews 8:1—**9 Across**

➤ "A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true ____, which the Lord pitched, and not man." Hebrews 8:2—**11 Across**

➤ God "...will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the ____." 1 Timothy 2:4—**3 Across**

➤ "For there is one God, and one ____ between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;" 1 Timothy 2:5—**4 Across**

➤ "As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is ____ other God but one." 1 Corinthians 8:4—**1 Down**



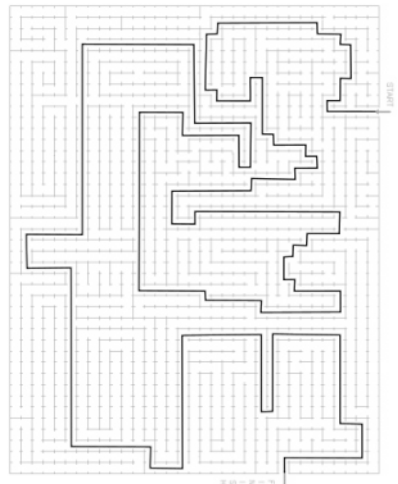
Answers



Bonus

How many times can you find the word "Justification" in the first article? _____

Answer for the Last Issue:
Compassion 23



that the more good works or punishment received in this life will lessen the time spent being punished in purgatory after death.

A Concern

Many of the condemnations of *The Council of Trent* illustrate the fact that Catholics were concerned that basing justification on faith alone and eliminating the need for good works as part of our salvation would cause people to live wicked lives and never be fully transformed. There were some Protestants who taught things that have led to the belief that a person can go to heaven without being transformed, but it was not the most prominent view.

One modern preacher stated, “We take the position that a Christian’s sins do not damn his soul! The way a Christian lives, what he says, his character, his conduct, or his attitude toward other people have nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul.... All the prayers a man may pray, all the Bibles he may read, all the churches he may belong to, all the services he may attend, all the sermons he may practice, all the debts he may pay, all the ordinances he may observe, all the laws he may keep, all the benevolent acts he may perform will not make his soul one whit safer; and all the sins he may commit from idolatry to murder will not make his soul in any more danger.... The way a man lives has nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul” (Sam Morris, *Do A Christian’s Sins Damn His Soul?*, Stamford, TX, First Baptist Church).

The apostle Paul would have taken issue with this, for he wrote, “Now the

works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:19-21). He also wrote, “For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Romans 8:13; See also, 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; Ephesians 5:5, 6; Revelation 21:27; 22:15).

Jesus said, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Luke 9:23). He did not say, “If you want to go to heaven, say the sinners prayer and continue living the way you were.”

In the *Augsburg Confession*, endorsed by Martin Luther, it states, “They [Protestants] condemn the Anabaptists, who deny that those once justified can lose the Holy Ghost” (*Augsburg Confession*, Article 12: Of Repentance). The Protestantism expressed in the *Augsburg Confession* shared the concern of Catholics about people accepting forgiveness of their sins by faith, and then continuing to live their wicked lives as before.

Catholic theology proposes a way for humans to become fully transformed before entering heaven. It teaches that every sin has to be atoned for, not only by confession of sins, but also by good works or punishment. The merit one attained in this way had to be

enough to counteract the sins committed. Most people would not atone for their sins completely in this life, so the remaining debt of sin was to be purified after death in the fires of purgatory.

Neither good works for salvation, nor purgatory are taught in the Bible, but at least their theology proposed a way for a man to be purified to be fit to enter heaven. Their desire for total transformation is good, yet their method of getting this accomplished will never work. Total transformation must begin with the new birth, Christ living in the heart so His righteousness will flow out in our thoughts and actions.

Transformation

Being fully transformed is a requirement for entering God's kingdom, for "there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Revelation 21:27). It is evident that this transformation does not come from doing good works, nor by burning in a supposed purgatory.

Though Luther rejected transformation by works, he clearly taught the necessity of being transformed. The Protestants stated, "Now, repentance consists properly of these two parts: One is contrition,... Then good works are bound to follow, which are the fruits of repentance" (*Augsburg Confession*, Article 12: Of Repentance). They taught that a transformed life is the result of being justified, not the cause of it. In this scenario, transformation still occurs.

Some Protestants have denied transformation altogether by maintaining

that Jesus lived a holy life so that we don't have to. They say His righteous life is viewed by God instead of our sinful lives, so God calls us righteous even though we are not. In other words, God pretends that we are righteous right now, even though we remain corrupt sinners. This idea does away with transformation.

The Bible is clear that justification results in being transformed. The Bible says, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). The Bible also says, "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified" (Romans 2:13). Justified people are "doers of the law." Therefore when God justifies us by faith, He transforms us into "doers of the law." When He pronounces us righteous, we actually become righteous (Romans 3:19-28).

It is absolutely amazing what God has done for us. The Bible declares that Jesus came to this earth "To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Galatians 4:5, 6).

God didn't just cover us with a cloak of pretended righteousness; He gave the Spirit of His Son in our hearts to transform us. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness

of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Romans 8:2-4).

God gave His Son to us so that we can be transformed to the image of His Son. “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Romans 8:29).

The Bible says, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17). Paul urges us, “That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Ephesians 4:22-24). “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Romans 12:2).

God has provided everything for us to be renewed, to be transformed, to be new creatures, conformed to the image of His Son. Praise God!

Salvation is accomplished “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Titus 3:5). Our salvation includes being washed, being regenerated, which means, “new birth, reproduction, renewal, recreation, regeneration, hence renovation, regeneration, the production of a new life consecrated to God, a radical change of mind for the better”

(*Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*, See also Colossians 3:10; 2 Corinthians 3:18).

Grace Alone through Faith Alone

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8). Salvation is accomplished not by any works on our part, but by grace alone, through faith alone. Salvation is a free gift. That means we cannot earn it by any amount of works. God does not owe us for our good works. Grace is unmerited favor, “the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life” (*Strong’s Greek Lexicon*).

This gift frees us from the responsibility of earning our salvation by our own works. This takes a great load off of us. Something I have become more aware of lately is that our acceptance with God—our identity as children of God, is not based upon our accomplishments.

You are a child of God because He gave His Son to buy you, along with your sins. “Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father” (Galatians 1:3, 4). Jesus Christ “...gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:14). He gave Himself “for our sins,” and “for us.” That means He owns all of us, including our sins. We are His!

Your value is not based upon what you have done, but upon what God has given for you. That means you are

extremely valuable. You don't pay \$500,000 for a \$1,200 car. God paid an amazing price for you just as you are, because you are worth it to God. He sees your potential. He knew what He was getting when He paid the price, and He is happy with you. He thinks He got a good deal, because you are worth everything to Him. That is what makes you valuable, not what you do or have accomplished.

Don't place your value on what you have done. Some people have the idea, "If you knew who I was, you wouldn't talk to me like that." "Do you know who you are talking to?" This comes from a place of basing value on accomplishments or status. Do not sell yourself short by basing your value on what you have done, or what people think of you. That is not where your value

lies. If you do that, then what happens when people change their minds about you? Or your success rate fails? You can't afford to place your value on temporary things. Jesus didn't live that way. If He did, what would have happened when all His friends forsook Him, and the people He healed cried, "Crucify Him, Crucify Him"?

Don't let your accomplishments define you. You are better than that! You have been bought with the highest price heaven could pay. Don't let your ministry define who you are, let who you are define your ministry. Minister to others based upon what God has done for you, not based upon what you have done for

God. I have begun more steadfastly focusing on God's love for me, and the amazing things He has provided in the gift of His Son. It is incredible what God has done for us by giving His Son. And it is all spelled out in the Bible. "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through

the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Peter 1:2-4).

God's promises were not given to us so that we could have the nicest houses, the best clothes, or fancy cars. No! God's

promises are given to us so that we can be like Him, partakers of His divine nature; thinking, feeling, and acting like Him, because He is living in us. That is what the promises are for. When you pray and claim God's promises, don't "ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (James 4:3). Instead, pray that you can be like Him, that He can fill you with His love, peace, gentleness and goodness. Plead for the attitude to pray for those hurting you, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

God paid the highest price for us, not so that we can be covered in a pretend righteousness, but so "that the

Your value is not based upon what you have done, but upon what God has given for you.... He knew what He was getting when He paid the price, and He is happy with you. He thinks He got a good deal.

life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh” (2 Corinthians 4:11). Let Him live, let Him shine in you, right now, today. Invite Him in, believe that He is living in your heart (Revelation 3:20; Ephesians 3:17), and your life will never be the same. Your life will not be a life filled with your own works, but, “This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent” (John 6:29). Don’t settle for a partial fulfillment of this gift, but accept Him in His fulness, “...that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God” (Ephesians 3:19).

This transformation is real and complete, not like the supposed transformation accomplished by good works and punishment in purgatory.

Current Protestants

Protestants are named such because of their protest of papal abuses and false teachings. As we near the 500th anniversary of Protestantism, there is a large push to stop protesting. “The Protest is Over” said Tony Palmer, an Anglican bishop striving to unite Catholics and Protestants.

Unifying the body of Christ is a good idea. This is what Jesus prayed for right before His crucifixion. He petitioned His Father, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.... for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent

me.... I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me” (John 17:17-23).

Jesus wants His body to be united, sanctified, perfected, and work together to spread the gospel. Yet this can only be accomplished “through the truth.” We must be preaching the same gospel. Even while the Bible was being written, there were some who were teaching other gospels. Paul wrote, “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:8).

Peter wrote, “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of” (2 Peter 2:1, 2).

It is a sad reality that not everyone professing to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ is actually teaching the real gospel. Some of the things false teachers say are damnable heresies that can bring destruction. For this reason, we must be diligent to study the Bible for ourselves. Paul wrote, “For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you” (1 Corinthians 11:19). Paul explained that there is a positive result of having heresies among us; to manifest those who are approved. Paul admonished, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a

workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15).

One reason heresies will exist all the way to the end of this world is so that we will study the Bible for ourselves and be approved, “rightly dividing the word of truth.” The bottom line: Study the Bible for yourself. Do not accept the sayings of me or any man as truth without investigating the Bible for yourself (Acts 17:11). Otherwise you could be deceived so thoroughly that you will miss out on eternal life. I don’t want that to happen to anyone. God wants “all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4; see also 2 Peter 3:9; Ezekiel 33:11).

Reformation

The reason for the protest is reform. Protestants have called for change in the Catholic Church. There are some serious erroneous teachings of the Catholic Church that must be changed for true unity to exist between Protestants and Catholics. Surely we can all unite on humanitarian efforts to better our world, but deep, lasting unity can only exist when we are agreed on at least the basics of the gospel and Christianity. “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” (Amos 3:3).

On October 31, 1999 representatives from the Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation signed the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*. This is very significant and illustrates the changes in thinking from 500 years ago. In this document the Catholic view on justification has been stated in ways that make it sound very similar to the Lutheran view. You

can read this online at www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_31101999_cath-luth-joint-declaration_en.html.)

The document concludes, “The teaching of the Lutheran churches presented in this Declaration does not fall under the condemnations from the Council of Trent. The condemnations in the Lutheran Confessions do not apply to the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church presented in this Declaration.”

This is remarkable, since the basic teachings of the Catholic Church have not changed. They still teach the same doctrines that sparked the Protestant Reformation in the first place. How can there be unity then? To say the protest is over would indicate either that the reformation of the Catholic Church has been accomplished, or the Protestant Reformers have stopped reforming and moved backward toward the Catholic Church.

Conclusion

There is a good reason for the protest against Catholic doctrines. Until these doctrines are changed, the protest will not be over. Some Catholic teachings that started the Protestant Reformation are:

- The primacy of the pope over the scriptures.
- Salvation by works and punishment
- Added traditions as laws that must be obeyed, like Sunday, Lent, and other “holy” days
- Purgatory
- Indulgences
- Intercession of Mary and dead saints

- Veneration of saints and images
- Sacraments like the mass
- Transubstantiation (changing the bread and wine into the literal body and blood of Jesus)
- Confession to priests instead of God

This is just a sample of the doctrines that started the Protestant Reformation. These doctrines have not substantially changed since Luther's day. Instead, more have been added like the immaculate conception of Mary (1854), her bodily ascension into heaven (1950), her status as "co-Redeemer with Christ" (1965), and the infallibility of the pope (1870).

Since her doctrines are not based solely on the Scriptures, who knows what will be added next. The tendency has been to move further away from the Bible, not closer to it.

It is interesting to note the foundation of all of these doctrines. On page 11 of the book, *Handbook for Today's Catholic*, we read,

"The mystery of the Trinity is the central doctrine of the Catholic Faith. Upon it are based all the other teachings of the Church...

"The Church studied this mystery with great care and, after four centuries of clarification, decided to state the doctrine in this way: in the unity of the Godhead there are three Persons,—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit..."

Many Protestants have taken the doctrine of the Trinity as solid biblical doctrine, yet the Catholic Church boldly claims it is their own invention, "Our opponents [Protestants] sometimes claim that no belief should be held dogmatically which is not

explicitly stated in Scripture.... But the Protestant churches have themselves accepted such dogmas as the Trinity for which there is no such precise authority in the Gospels..." (*Life Magazine*, October 30, 1950).

It would be well for every Protestant to seriously investigate this doctrine, especially since it is claimed that all the doctrines of Catholicism are based upon it. Read Daniel 11:36-39 and see if it is not a clear prophecy of the Trinity coming into the Catholic Church.

We should examine all the doctrines that have been handed down to us through the Catholic Church. Accept the Bible and the Bible alone as the rule of our faith. (If you would like to study the Trinity further, request the free book, *God's Love on Trial*.)

We have seen that salvation is a free gift, not based upon any of our own works. The protest over justification is still justified. For Protestants to abandon the protest and work closely with the Catholic Church is a fulfillment of Bible prophecy in Revelation 13, so it is not surprising, yet it is troubling at the same time.

An Appeal

God is inviting you now to accept Jesus to live in your heart so you can be transformed into the image of His Son. Don't hesitate to invite Him in, and believe He is in your heart, for He dwells there by faith (Ephesians 1:17).

May God bless you and keep you, and cause His face to shine upon you and give you peace (Numbers 6:24-26).

»



Letters from our Readers



"I want to thank you for the extra books I received. The other books you gave me I have given them all away. I want to invite you to come to Ashland, AL and visit the church that God built. It is on Owens Road, off of Highway 77. Please let people know they can come to our non-denominational church. God bless you all richly."

Nursing Home Resident in Alabama

"Thank you for your *Present Truth* booklet. This issue came on time to press upon my heart I must be born again. Thank you for a thorough study of this subject and this Bible study.

The Spirit of the Lord constrained me to understand how to deny self, take up my cross, and follow Him. Blessings to you! I do not know how you got my name and address, but I give God the glory for your work. Enclosed is a small token of love for keeping this work going. Please send the same copy to my daughter. Thank you."

Tennessee

"Hi Lynnford, I was so blessed by your compassion sermon. That is the heart of the gospel. Best I have ever seen. Thank you! I shared it Sabbath with my family."

Montana

November 17-19, 2017

The Counsel of Prophecy Chapel
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Wichita, KS 67209
316.943.2181

God's Greatest Gift Revival Weekend

We will be hosting a special revival weekend at our chapel. The guest speakers for this event will be Lynnford Beachy with

Present Truth Fellowship and Nader Mansour with **Revelation 14:12 Ministries**. We will also have a special guest, Karen Stoeckert,

with **Keep the Word Ministries** for sacred music that weekend. For those wishing to visit Wichita, Kansas for this event, plan now!

Schedule

Friday

6:00 pm – Music Concert
6:30 pm – Nader Mansour

Sabbath

9:30 am – Demario Carter
11:00 am – Lynnford Beachy
1:30 pm – Lunch
4:00 pm – Nader Mansour
5:30 pm – Lynnford Beachy
7:00 pm – Ques. and Answ.

Sunday

9:30 am – Lynnford Beachy
11:00 am – Nader Mansour
12:30 pm – Lunch
Dismissal

Contact: 316-202-0134

A Testimony from Prison

by Thomas Finch

I have done a lot in my 17 years that I am not proud of. I have stolen from a lot of people. God knows I have used my powers for evil more than once. I have done more bad than good it seems a lot of times. But I found my salvation on the cross and my salvation's name is Jesus. Amen! I have for sure broken every one of the Ten Commandments.

"You shall have no other gods before me." I am ashamed to say, but I have played with God before. In the past I have taken God's love for me for granted. To be honest with you, there has been times when God should have given up on me.

"You shall not make to yourself any graven image." For a long time I have put myself before a lot of things including God.

"You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain." I have cursed God's name more times than I can count.

"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." I used to hate Sundays because the stores stopped selling beer.

"Honor your mother and father." I have lied, stolen, hit, and just plain disrespected both of my parents for most of my life.

"You shall not kill." I have never killed anyone, but my anger has

gotten so bad in the past that I have coveted against people before. So I have sinned against number 6 by number 10.

"You shall not commit adultery." I am human, and we have lust and we feed it sometimes.


"You shall not steal." Theft was one of the worst addictions I have ever had. To this day I still don't know what it was about it that I loved so much. It never got me anywhere in life.

(Read Job 33:27, 28. Praise the Lord for this testimony. *Editor*)

"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." I have told countless lies in my 17 years for countless reasons. I am glad God knows all because I don't know how I would be forgiven without His wisdom of all things. Amen!

"You shall not covet." Lust can be an evil thing if you don't control it. Lust has led me into some dark places, jail being one of them. Satan loves to tempt us with lust. If there is one thing I can tell you it is, "Be led by your faith, not by your lust."

Anyone who looks at Exodus 20:1-17 could be overwhelmed, but that is why it is important to keep Jesus alive inside of you. As humans, we were born into sin. But through rebirth we are given salvation. Amen!

I am very thankful to Mr. Lynnford Beachy for helping me understand this. Keep growing into Christ and let your light shine... God bless! 

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Note: If you move, please send us your new address. If you inadvertently get deleted from our mailing list, without your request, please write us and verify your valid address.

Editor: Lynnford Beachy, PO Box 315, Kansas, OK 74347, **phone: (304) 633-5411.** Jim Raymond, phone: (407) 421-6025, e-mail: newsletter@presenttruth.info.

Present Truth Fellowship

PO Box 315
Kansas, Oklahoma 74347
U. S. A.

“For God so loved the world, that he
gave his only begotten Son, that
whosoever believeth in him should not
perish, but have everlasting life.”

John 3:16

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“And this is life eternal, that they might
know thee the only true God, and Jesus
Christ, whom thou hast sent.”

John 17:3