



Name Your Article Here by [John T Polk II](#)

All Scriptures and comments are based on the **New King James Version**, unless otherwise noted.

**Question: What is wrong with the Roman Catholic Church? Where did they go wrong?**

**Answer:**

When they departed from the Word of God to establish their own traditions. But it is not with joy that we point this out, for wisdom says,

Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, And do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles; Lest the Lord see it, and it displease Him, and he turn away His wrath from him (**Proverbs 24:17-18**).

Indeed, no religion remains pristine in practice, for even among the disciples, Jesus had Judas (**Matthew 26:21-25**), Paul had Alexander the coppersmith (**2 Timothy 4:14-15**), and the early church faced antichrists (**1 John 2:18-19; 1 John 4:1-6**). Truly, such public turmoil as that created by sexual-predator-priests should give each religion pause for self-examination.

### **THE CHURCH OF CHRIST BEFORE CATHOLICISM**

The Roman Catholic Church, however, is in a dilemma that will not be corrected. *One cannot point to the priests as abusers of their system when their entire system is an abuse and affront to the religion of Jesus Christ!* It is not "a few bad priests" but the entire priest/ confessional structure that is corrupt.

The New Testament is completely inspired by God (**1 Corinthians 14:37**). Scripture is infallible, not some church (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**). The Holy Spirit Himself, not some "church council," determined which books belonged together as Scripture (**1 John 4:1; Colossians 4:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:27; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5; Hebrews 2:1-4; 2 Peter 3:15-16**). The church of Christ is built upon Jesus Christ as the Truth (**Matthew 16:13-20; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2:1-2; 3:11; Acts 2:22-47**). Those who obey the Gospel of Jesus Christ should follow no other (**Mark 16:15-16; John 6:44-45, 63; 8:23-30; 10:1-8; Colossians 3:15-18**).

### **NEW TESTAMENT WARNINGS OF IMPENDING APOSTASY**

Jesus warned of perversion in doctrine:

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits" (**Matthew 7:15-20**).

Changing the New Testament doctrine into anything else is digression and apostasy. To disguise it as though Jesus Christ or His Apostles taught it only makes it devilishly confusing for Christians (**Galatians 1:6-10; 5:1-15**). Paul echoed this when he wrote,

For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works (**2 Corinthians 11:12-15**).

Changed doctrine leads astray and cannot save.

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth (**1 Timothy 4:1-4**).

***Any religious or political doctrine is apostate that makes marriage a blight, establishes regulations concerning "unholy foods," or in any other way ignores, contradicts, or slants teaching away from the Bible!***

Paul warned the elders of the church in Ephesus,

Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears (**Acts 20:28-31**).

Changing this plurality of elders over one local flock to anything else creates apostate church governments. Surely systems with popes, cardinals, area-wide bishops, regional presbyters, parish priests or denominational pastors, qualify for the word "apostate," since none of it is taught in the Word of God.

### **WHY CATHOLICISM WILL NEVER CHANGE**

In adding apostate traditions, Roman Catholicism has added "auricular confession" wherein all Catholics are required to confess every detail of every sin to "the church," represented by parish priests. Such confessionals not only have no historical reference before A.D. 1215, but also are against Scriptural principles. Jesus said a "private room" confession is for God to hear, not men:

"But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly" (**Matthew 6:6**).

Since there is "one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus" (**1 Timothy 2:5**), God never commands regular confession of all personal sins to anyone not directly involved with those sins (Cf. **Mark 11:25-26**).

It is only after repeated refusals to repent that those personal sins must be told to "the church" a.k.a. "the assembly" (**Matthew 18:15-17**). The Catholic Church twists Jesus' teaching to mean that confessing personal sins to an individual ("priest") is confession to "the church" and that all sins are considered "against the church." Pharisaical hypocrisy is the root doctrine behind confession booths:

Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known (**Luke 12:1-3**).

There is no surreptitious doctrine or practice in the church of Christ. Any doctrine that gives any human(s) power and control over the innermost thoughts and desires of another is of the Devil, for it relegates the intimacies due only to God to a fallible person (Cf. **1 Peter 5:6-7**). This inherent perverseness of power was questioned in the early centuries as Roman Catholicism developed. **Chrysostom** wrote in the fourth century:

It is not necessary that anyone should witness your confession. Recognize your iniquities and let God alone, without anyone knowing, hear your confession. I exhort and entreat you to confess your sins to God. I do not tell you to reveal them to men, God alone sees your confession.

Scribes spoke the truth when they asked, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" Jesus' response was,

'But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins'—He said to the paralytic, 'I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.' Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, 'We never saw anything like this!'" (**Mark 2:5-12**).

1. Only God can forgive sins, Cf. **Isaiah 43:24- 25**. Every person or church who claims to be able to "forgive sin" has abrogated a right of Deity. If Jesus was not Deity He was a blasphemer; if He was Deity, then He must be accepted as God's Son (**John 5:16-19**). Without miracles to prove otherwise, no church saves, so the church of Christ is made up of those saved by Jesus Christ.
2. This miracle was God's endorsement of Jesus' claim to forgive sins. There is no church since the 1st century that can (or has) demonstrate(d) miraculous power by the Holy Spirit. Confirmatory miracles ceased with the completion of the New Testament in the 1st century (**Jude 3**).
3. No Apostle or Christian ever claimed to forgive sins, but preached Jesus as the Forgiver, Cf. **Acts 2:36-38; 8:22; 10:43**.
4. No one has seen "anything like this" since. No Catholic priest can perform the first miracle to prove he can "forgive sin." Not in Catholic, Protestant, Millennialist, Jewish, Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Evolutionist, nor any other religion have miracles

accompanied its claims to save. No religious system other than Jesus Christ's can save (**Hebrews 9:23-28**)!

In the year 2000, the Catholic "pope" confessed his church's sins against Jews, other "Christian faiths," women, the poor and various ethnic and racial groups. As of this writing, evidently the "pope" doesn't feel he must confess the sins of predator/ priests who use confessionals to find their next "weak" victim, or of cardinals and bishops who have sought to hide those sins committed against young boys! It is obvious the "pope" must not think Catholicism has sinned in this manner.

We urge everyone to come to Christ.

[Why not leave – *JTPII*] the commandments and doctrines of men? These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh (**Colossians 2:20-23**).

**—John T Polk II**

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