

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHRISTIAN... AN OXYMORON

Is a Roman Catholic truly a Christian or should the combination of the words "Roman Catholic Christian" be considered an oxymoron?

Webster defines an oxymoron as "a combination of contradictory words." So if we define "Christian" as one who believes the Gospel and a "Roman Catholic" as one who believes the official teachings and traditions of Roman Catholicism, we must conclude that a "Roman Catholic Christian" is indeed an oxymoron. It is utterly impossible to believe two opposing views simultaneously. Biblical Christianity and Roman Catholicism stand in opposition to one another as seen by the following contrasts (paragraph numbers, in parenthesis, are from the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, San Francisco, California: Ignatius Press, 1994).

A Christian believes Scripture has authority over the church. *All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness* (2 Timothy 3:16).

A Roman Catholic is taught its **church has authority over Scripture.** "The manner of interpreting Scripture is ultimately subject to the judgment of the Church which exercises the divinely conferred commission and ministry of watching over and interpreting the Word of God" (119).

A Christian is born again by the Word of God

and the Spirit of God. *For you have been born again, not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit* (1 Peter 1:23,3:8).

A Roman Catholic is born again **by water.** "The water of baptism truly signifies our birth into the divine life" (694).

A Christian is **eternally justified once through faith in Jesus Christ.** *But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness* (Romans 4:5, 8:30).

A Roman Catholic must be justified repeatedly by works and sacraments because "mortal" sins bring condemnation. "Those who die in a state of mortal sin descend into hell" (1035). "The sacrament of penance offers a new possibility to convert and to recover the grace of justification" (1446).

A Christian is saved by God's **unmerited grace.** *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast* (Ephesians 2:8-9).

A Roman Catholic is saved by **meriting** the graces needed for salvation. "We can merit for ourselves and for others the graces needed for...the attainment of eternal life" (2010).

A Christian is saved for good works. *For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them* (Ephesians 2:10).

A Roman Catholic is saved by good works. A

treasury of prayers and good works makes it possible for Catholics to attain their own salvation and at the same time cooperate in saving their brothers (1477).

A Christian believes salvation is **in Jesus Christ.** *In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace* (Ephesians 1:7).

A Roman Catholic believes salvation is **in the Roman Catholic Church.** The Council teaches that the Church, a pilgrim now on earth, is necessary for salvation. **Anyone refusing to enter it or remain in it cannot be saved** (846).

A Christian is purified only by the **blood of Jesus.** *The blood of Jesus purifies us from all sin* (1 John 1:7).

A Roman Catholic is purified by the fires of Purgatory. "After death they undergo purification [in Purgatory], so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven" (1030).

A Christian believes the Lord's Supper is a **memorial of Christ's finished work.** *Do this in remembrance of Me* (1 Corinthians 11:24-25).

A Roman Catholic believes the Lord's Supper is a **sacrifice of Christ that continues the work of redemption.** "The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice...the same Christ who offered Himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross is contained and offered in an unbloody manner...for the sins of the living and the dead" (1367, 1414).

A Christian receives Jesus **permanently, spiritually in the heart**. God put His spirit in our hearts as a guarantee (2 Corinthians 1:22).

A Roman Catholic receives Jesus **frequently, physically in the stomach**. The body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ...is truly, really, and substantially contained" in the Eucharist (1374-78).

A Christian is **a priest and a saint**. You are "a royal priesthood," a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him that called you out of darkness in to His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9, Ephesians 1:1, 2 Corinthians 1:1).

A Roman Catholic **needs a priest and is not a saint unless canonized by the pope**. "In the forgiveness of sins, both priests and sacraments are instruments which our Lord Jesus Christ ...wills to use to efface our sins and give us the grace of justification" (987).

A Christian is **condemned by the Roman Catholic Church**. The Councils of Trent and Vatican II pronounced over 100 anathemas on Christians who believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The anathemas are still in effect today.

A Roman Catholic is **condemned by God's word**. He who rejects me and does not receive my sayings, has One who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him on the last day (John 12:48). If any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received let him be accursed (Galatians 1:9).

In conclusion, it is clear that a Christian, who has believed God's Word, has the assurance of eternal life: "A Roman Catholic, who has rejected God's Word in favor of the teachings of men, has only a false hope of being saved from God's wrath. While there may be born-again Christians who worship in the Roman Catholic Church, by definition they are no longer Roman Catholics. Eventually the Spirit of Truth will lead them out when they begin discerning truth from error and true worship from idolatry.

It is our prayer that God may grant Roman Catholics repentance, leading to the knowledge of the truth, that they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil (2 Timothy 2:25-26).

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