Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

A Timely Critique of the Catholic Church

Scripture: Galatians 1:8–9
Code: B130221

by John MacArthur

Last week Pope Benedict XVI made the historic and unexpected announcement that he will soon retire. As a result, we're about to be inundated with a massive wave of news coverage and public discussion about the Roman Catholic Church, and specifically the search for the new pope.

In the coming days and weeks, you're likely to find yourself in a variety of conversations about the Catholic Church with friends, family, co-workers, and neighbors—each one an opportunity to shed biblical light on a topic that everyone will be talking about. And when the Lord brings those opportunities, I want you to be able to speak with clarity and authority regarding the truth of God's Word and the corrupt idolatry of Roman Catholicism.

The current attitude throughout much of the evangelical church is that we ought to embrace Catholics as true believers in Christ. And it's safe to assume we'll hear even more calls for unity and partnership with the Catholic Church in the days to come.

But reclassifying the pope, the worship of Mary, the idolatry of the mass, and the entire Roman Catholic system as authentic, biblical Christianity isn't that simple. It has massive implications, including overturning centuries of church history, missionary effort, and martyrdom.

The fact is, the most formidable, relentless, and deceptive enemy in Satan's long war on the truth has been Roman Catholicism. It's an apostate, corrupt, heretical, false Christianity—a thinly veiled façade for the kingdom of Satan.

The true church of the Lord Jesus Christ has always understood that. Even in the Dark Ages prior to the Reformation, genuine believers set themselves apart from the Catholic system and were brutally persecuted and punished for rejecting the false, idolatrous teaching of the Roman Catholic Church.

Discerning believers today need to be just as committed to standing firm against the Catholic system. We need to recognize its false priesthood, false revelation, and false tradition. We need to see through its system of twisted sacraments, idolatrous worship, and corrupt authority. Most important, we need to be aware of how the lies of Satan contradict God's Word and be prepared to defend and explain the true gospel of Jesus Christ.

Next week we're going to look at some key facets of Roman Catholic theology and practice and examine how they corrupt and contradict the teaching of Scripture. While this short series won't be exhaustive, I know it will encourage you and be a great help in the coming weeks and beyond. Lots of people are going to be talking about the Catholic Church—I want to help you make the most of those opportunities.

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