The Pope and the Papacy
Scripture: Selected Scriptures
Code: 90-291

And for tonight I want to talk about the Pope and the Papacy because it's been in the news so much. This isn't really going to be a sermon, I'm just going to try to take you through a little bit of an understanding of it. I want to talk about the Pope himself, and then talk about the Papacy in general. I'm going to tell you at the beginning what is at stake because of what I am going to say will surely offend those who are devout Catholics. It will surely offend those who believe that Catholics are brothers and sisters in Christ. Some will read it as unkind and unloving but nothing is more loving than the truth. To let somebody perish in a false system isn't loving at all. To rescue people out of a damning and false religion is the only loving thing to do.

And there's a lot at stake here. Not too many years ago some evangelical Protestants got together, Chuck Colson and some others, Bill Bright and some others and they met with some Roman Catholics and they came up with a document called "Evangelical and Catholics Together." And in that document they celebrated a common faith and a common mission. And they said we need to embrace each other and carry out this gospel mission together. This was shocking, to put it mildly, to many...to all of those people who affirm clearly a biblical gospel. There was immediately a counter to that and all kinds of things brought to bear upon the signers of E.C.T. Perhaps the most notable, at least in my experience, was a special private session called in Florida where I was locked up with a very formidable group of people for a period of seven hours, including those on the other side, J.I. Packer, Charles Colson being the notable ones, Bill Bright from Campus Crusade. It was myself and R.C. Sproul, Michael Horton representing the biblical side a reformed theology and for seven hours we talked about this...what is the gospel? Are the Catholics saved or not saved? That's really important. It became a discussion of are the Anglicans saved or not saved? Does everybody who is within quote/unquote Christendom automatically saved? Are they saved because they're baptized? Are they saved because they quote/unquote believe in Jesus? It was a very heated discussion at many points.

What was at stake? I'll tell you what was at stake. What was at stake is whether or not we evangelize Roman Catholics, that's what's at stake. One billion of them in the world. Are they a mission field? Or are they our co-laborers for Christ? That changes everything..everything. On the other side, one of the leading evangelicals said, "I think it's so wonderful that we can now see Catholics as Christians

because that means millions and millions of people are Christians." As if somehow by them deciding they were Christians they became Christians. I was absolutely incredulous, almost fell off my chair. It was like what a monumental meeting this is, we just redeemed millions of people without leaving the room. But that is what is at stake in this.

Are Roman Catholics the mission field, or do we embrace them as fellow believers in Jesus Christ? The mood at evangelicalism today is to embrace them. That's what all the spokesmen, self-appointed spokesmen for evangelicalism keeps saying in the media. Some of them evangelists, most of them evangelists by their own definition. If these people are our brothers and sisters in Christ, indeed the Pope is our brother in Christ, indeed the Pope is the greatest spiritual and moral leader in the last hundred years in the world, is the Pope in heaven? Of course the Pope is in heaven. He was good and he suffered, etc.

Reclassifying the Pope, reclassifying the Roman Catholics as believers isn't that simple. It has massive implications. It has implications that literally overturn centuries of missionary effort. It has massive implications that overturn centuries, if not millennia of martyrdom. In the long war on the truth, the most formidable, relentless and deceptive enemy has been Roman Catholicism. It is an apostate, corrupt, heretical, false Christianity, it is affront for the kingdom of Satan. The true church of the Lord Jesus Christ has always understood this. And even through the Dark Ages from 400 to 1500, prior to the Reformation, genuine Christian believers set themselves apart from that system, and were brutally punished and executed for their rejection of that system. It's not my purpose tonight to go into all that is Roman Catholicism and we will do that in the fall, we will do that. We'll take a look at it from many angles. But those believers throughout those centuries along with genuine and discerning believers today understand this is a false system. It has a false priesthood. It has a false source of revelation, tradition and the magisterium. It has illegitimate power granted to it by this magisterium, this papal curia. It engages in idolatry by the worship of saints and the veneration of angels. It conducts a horrific exaltation of Mary above Christ and even God. It conducts a twisted sacrament of the Mass by which Jesus is sacrificed again and again. It offers false forgiveness through the confessional. It calls for the uselessness of infant baptism and other sacraments.

Motivated by money, it has invented Purgatory. And by the way, Purgatory is what makes the whole system work. Take out Purgatory and it's a hard sell to be a Catholic. People hang in there because of the deception of Purgatory. Purgatory is the safety net, when you die, you don't go to hell. You go there and get things sorted out and finally get to heaven if you've been a good Catholic. Take away that safety net, that's a hard sell because in the Catholic system you can never know you're saved, you can never know you're going to heaven. You just keep trying and trying, as the priest said on the television program the other night, we are all engaged in a long journey toward perfection. Well if you're engaged in a long journey toward perfection, it's pretty discouraging. People in that system, guilt-ridden, fear-ridden, no knowledge of whether or not they're going to get into the Kingdom, the threat of a mortal sin which throws you back out again. And the only thing that makes it work is

Purgatory. If there's no Purgatory, there's no safety net to catch me and give me some opportunity to get into heaven. It's a second change, it's another chance after death. I can't buy into this. So they had to invent Purgatory. It's just too much without it.

The harm of indulgences, selling forgiveness for money. The false gospel of works. You participate in your salvation by your good works. The abomination of idols and relics, prayers for the dead, the perversion of forced celibacy. And so it goes. But at the top of the pile of all of this is the amazing, amazing Papacy. And the Pope is the one at the top of the Roman Catholic Church who has, in a word, usurped the headship of Christ over His church. The Reformers have always understood this, with unashamed boldness they understood this and they declared this and they faced death for it. Martin Luther, 1483 to 1546, Luther proved by the revelations of Daniel and John by the epistles of Paul, Peter and Jude, says the historian, Daubenier(??) that the reign of Antichrist predicted and described in the Bible was none other than the Papacy. And all the people said amen. A holy terror seized their souls. It was Antichrist whom they beheld seated on the pontifical throne. This new idea which derived greater strength from the prophetic descriptions launched forth by Luther in to the midst of his contemporaries conflicted the most terrible blow on Rome. Based on his study of Scripture, Martin Luther finally declared, quote: "We here are of the conviction that the Papacy is the seat of the true and real Antichrist. I owe the Pope no other obedience than that I owe to Antichrist." Luther said, "I am persuaded that if at this time St. Peter in person should preach all the articles of holy Scripture and only deny the Pope's authority, power and primacy and say that the Pope is not the head of all Christendom, they would cause him to be hanged. Yet if Christ Himself were again on earth and should preach without all doubt, the Pope would crucify Him again." John Calvin, 1509 to 1564, "Some persons think us too severe and censorious when we call the Pontiff Antichrist, but those who are of this opinion do not consider that they bring the same charge of presumption against Paul himself after whom we speak and whose language we adopt. I shall briefly show that Paul's words in 2 Thessalonians 2 are not capable of any other interpretation than that which implies them to the Papacy." They saw in the Antichrist the Papacy, the Pope.

Why? Because they had some special insight that in fact the final Antichrist was actually to be a Pope? No. Because the Pope personified everything that the Scripture described the Antichrist to be. John Knox, 1505-1572, great Scottish Presbyterian, sought to counteract the tyranny which the Pope himself had for so many ages exercised over the church, he himself said, "The Papacy is the very Antichrist, the Pope being the son of perdition of whom Paul speaks." Thomas Cranmer(?), one of the great martyrs in England died in 1556 said, "Whereof it follows Rome to be the seat of Antichrist and the Pope to be the very Antichrist himself. I can prove the same by many Scriptures." The Westminster Confession was written in 1647, the Westminster Confession, the Confession of the Reformers says, "There is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ, nor can the Pope of

Rome in any sense be head thereof, but is that Antichrist, that man of sin and son of perdition that exalted himself in the church against Christ and all that is called God."

And again I say, it isn't that he is the final Antichrist but he is in his time and in this age the very embodiment of Antichrist. And there are, says John, many Antichrists in the world before the final one. Cotton Mather(???) again an American Puritan died in 1728, "The oracles of God foretold the rising of an Antichrist in the Christian church. And in the Pope of Rome, all the characteristics of that Antichrist are so marvelously answered that if any who read the Scriptures do not see it, there is a marvelous blindness on them." And Spurgeon, "It is the bound and duty of every Christian to pray against this Antichrist and as to what Antichrist is no sane man ought to raise a question. If it be not the popery in the church of Rome, there's nothing in the world that can be called by that name." Again I say, John said there are many Antichrists, here is the supreme embodiment of it to these great leaders, these great Reformed leaders through the ages. Spurgeon went on to say, "Popery is contrary to Christ's gospel and is the Antichrist and we ought to pray against it. It should be the daily prayer of every believer that Antichrist might be hurled like a millstone into the flood and for Christ because it wounds Christ, because it robs Christ of His glory, because it puts sacramental efficacy in the place of His atonement and lifts a piece of bread into the place of the Savior and a few drops of water into the place of the Holy Spirit and puts a mere fallible man like ourselves up as the Vicar of Christ on earth. If we pray against it because it is against Him who shall love the persons though we hate their errors, we shall love their souls though we loathe and detest their dogmas. And so the breath of our prayers will be sweetened because we turn our faces toward Christ when we pray."

It was 1553 to 1558, a terrible five years in England, the reign of Bloody Mary, it all began seven years after Luther's death. And Mary came in to England and restored the Pope's authority in England. Immediately all Bibles were removed from the churches, all Bible printing ceased and was forbidden, became a capital crime. Eight hundred English ministers fled to Geneva. Three hundred Protestants were burned at the stake. The first martyr to Mary was John Rogers, a London minister who translated the wonderful Tyndale-Mathews Bible. I've held one of those first editions in my own hand. Ridley and Latimer, the two famous martyrs, burned at the stake at Oxford, and William Tyndale, blessed William Tyndale chased for years and finally martyred for the crime of translating the Bible into English.

All this under the leadership of...and for the satisfaction of the Roman system and the Pope. Luther in The Small Called Articles wrote this, "All things which the Pope from a power so false, mischievous, blasphemous and arrogant has done and undertaken have been and still are purely diabolical affairs and transactions for the ruin of the entire holy Christian church and for the destruction of the first and chief article concerning the redemption made through Jesus Christ." Luther didn't mince words. He

said further, "The Pope is the very Antichrist who has exalted himself above and opposed himself against Christ because he will not permit Christians to be saved." Further Luther said, "It is nothing else than the devil himself because above and against God he urges and disseminates his Papal falsehoods concerning Masses, Purgatory, the monastic life, one's own works, fictitious divine worship which is the very Papacy and condemns, murders and tortures all Christians who do not exalt and honor these abominations of the Pope above all things, therefore just as little as we can worship the devil himself as Lord and God, we can endure his apostle the Pope. For to lie and to kill and destroy body and soul eternally, that is wherein his Papal government really consists."

Back to Spurgeon. "Of all the dreams that have ever deluded men, and probably of all blasphemies that ever were uttered, there has never been one which is more absurd and which is more fruitful in all manner of mischief than the idea that the Bishop of Rome can be the head of the church of Jesus Christ. No. These Popes die, and how could the church live if its head were dead? The true head ever lives and the church ever lives in Him." And Spurgeon said, "A man...this is very interesting...a man who deludes other people by degrees comes to delude himself. The deluder first makes dupes out of others and then becomes a dupe to himself. I should not wonder but what the Pope really believes that he is infallible and that he ought to be saluted as His Holiness. It must have taken him a good time to arrive at that eminence of self-deception. But he's got to it, I daresay by now, and everyone who kisses his toe confirms him in this insane idea. When everybody else believes a flattering falsehood concerning you, you come at last to believe it yourself. Or at least to think it may be so. But the Pharisees being continually called the learned, rabbi, father, the holy scribe, the devout and pious doctor, the sanctified teacher believed the flattering compliments. They used very grand phrases in those days and doctors of divinity were very common, almost as common as they are now and the crowd of doctors and rabbis help to keep each other in countenance by repeating each other's fine names until they believed they meant something. Dear friends," says Spurgeon, "it's very difficult to receive honor and expect it and yet to keep your eyesight for men's eyes gradually grow dull through the smoke of the incense which is burned before them. And when their eyes become dim with self-conceit, their own great selves conceal the cross and make them unable to believe the truth."

Spurgeon said, "Christ did not redeem His church with His blood so the Pope could come in and steal away the glory. He never came from heaven to earth. He never poured out his very heart that he might purchase his people. That a poor sinner, a mere man should be set upon high to be admired by all the nations and to call himself God's representative on earth, Christ has always been the head of His church." Spurgeon knew what the Reformers knew what any true student of Scripture knows that the Pope stood at the top of an illegitimate system and particularly and specifically at the top of an illegitimate priesthood, and Spurgeon wrote this: "When a fellow comes forward in all sorts of curious

garments and says he's a priest, the poorest child of God may say, 'Stand away and don't interfere with my office, I am a priest. I know not what you may be, you surely must be a priest of Baal.' But the only mention of the word vestments in Scripture is in connection with the temple of Baal. The priesthood belongs to all the saints. They sometimes call you laity, but the Holy Ghost says of all the saints, 'You are God's *cleros(??)*, you are God's clergy. Every child of God is a clergyman or a clergywoman, there are no priestly distinctions known in Scripture. Away with them...says Spurgeon...away with them forever'." The prayer book says, "Then shall the priest say..." What a pity that word was ever left there. The very word priest has such a smell of the sulphur of Rome about it that so long as it remains the church of England will give forth an ill savor. Call yourself a priest, sir. I wonder men are not ashamed to take the title. When I collect what priests have done in all ages, what priests connected with the Church of Rome have done, I repeat what I have often said, I would sooner a man pointed at me in the street and called me a devil than call me a priest. For bad as the devil has been, he has hardly been able to match the crimes and cruelties and villianese(???) that have been transacted under the cover of a special priesthood. From that may we be delivered. But the priesthood of God's saints, the priesthood of holiness which offers prayer and praise to God. This we have because Thou hast made us priests."

That is what the saints are. The Roman Empire then is in the view of these men of God through the ages a front line for Satan. And for Spurgeon, Rome was a deadly enemy, first of all, as well as a mission field. Spurgeon said, "We must have no truce and make no treaty with Rome." He said this, "War, war to the knife with her. Peace there cannot, she cannot have peace with us, we cannot have peace with her. She hates the true church and we can only say that the hatred is reciprocated. We would not lay a hand upon her priests. We would not touch a hair of their heads. Let them be free but their doctrine we would destroy from the face of the earth as the doctrine of devils. So let it perish, O God, and let that evil thing become as the fat of lambs, into smoke. Let it consume. Yea into smoke let it consume." You can just hear him preaching that in the tabernacle in London. He went on to say, "We must fight the Lord's battles against this giant error, whichever shape it takes. And so must we do with every error that pollutes the church. Slay it utterly. Let none escape. Fight the Lord's battles, even though it be in error that is in the evangelical church, yet we must smite it." We stand on those shoulders.

What is our response to this current issue, a truce with Rome? Are we going to betray the martyrs? Are we going to betray the history of our faith? Are we going to betray those who lived and died to get us the truth? Are we going to betray the Tyndales and the Luthers, Calvins and all the rest? Are we so senseless? Are we so blind? Are we so ignorant? Are we so faithless? Are we so cowardly that we will not fight?

The doctrinal ignorance of the evangelical church is shocking, matched only by its cowardice, I fear. That has certainly been revealed to everybody in the recent response to the death of the Pope and the installation of his successor. The promotion of Catholicism that we've seen in the media in the last couple of months has had no equal in history. This is the single greatest promotion of the Roman Catholic system in the history of that system. The world media has set aside the sickening pedophilia, the abuse issues to parade the pomp and circumstance of this false system as if it were truly all glorious. It is a classic illustration of the old story of the Emperor's New Clothes, spiritually it's naked. And here we are at the very time when Roman Catholicism is receiving through the devil's medium since he controls both, its greatest exposure. It is perpetrating on the world its greatest seduction. It is bringing to the world its damning delusion as never before. And Protestants and Evangelical representatives are just embracing it and its damnable heresies. The media, have you noticed how uncritical they are? Have you noticed how they don't ever bring up the scandal of the priests? We hear people say, "Well, Catholicism is a different denomination." Catholicism isn't a different denomination. It's a different religion. I don't think people know the difference between the denomination and a religion. Has Rome changed? No. O Rome morphs, Rome is a chameleon, whatever it needs to be in any nation in any time it will become. Whatever it takes. That's how the devil always works. He moves, changes to become whatever wins over people.

But here is Protestant/evangelicalism abandoning sound doctrine, shaming the name of Christ. And all in bold relief so the whole world can see. And the world was watching the death of Pope John Paul II in an unrivaled spectacle of worship given to a man. And the question came up, is the Pope in heaven? And you hear all these people say, "Yes, yes, yes." People have asked me, "Is the Pope in heaven?" And my answer is, "Is the Pope Catholic?" Isn't that the answer? I think he is, I think the Pope is Catholic. Does he believe Catholic theology? Yes. He is the guardian of Catholic theology. Do you get to heaven by works, by Mary, by Penance, by Baptism, by confession, by Rosary? No. This is another gospel. This is not the true gospel.

A couple of weeks ago two messages, we talked about the nature of saving faith, and we reminded you salvation is by faith alone. Not in Catholicism. It's by a combination of grace and faith and works. But we know what the New Testament teaches, "No one," Romans 3:20 says, "will be declared righteous in God's sight by observing the Law." Romans 3:26, "God justifies those who have faith in Jesus." Faith alone, Christ alone. Romans 3:28, "We maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the Law." Romans 4, Abraham was justified not by works, if he was justified by works, he had something to boast about. But what does Scripture say? He believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness. Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift but as an obligation. However, to the man who doesn't work, but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith

is credited as righteousness. Romans 4, it was not through the Law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise, verses 13 and 14, it was through faith. Romans 9 verses 30 and 32, "The Gentiles who didn't pursue righteousness have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith." Romans 10:4, "Christ is the end of the Law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes." Romans 11:5 and 6, "There's a remnant chosen by grace and if by grace it is no longer by works. If it were, grace would no longer be grace." Galatians 2:16, "A man is not justified by observing the Law but by faith in Jesus Christ. So too we have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith, not by observing the Law because by observing the Law no one will be justified." Galatians 3:10, "And all who rely on observing the Law are under a curse because cursed is everyone who doesn't continue to do everything written in the book of the Law." The righteous will live by faith. Ephesians 2:8 and 9, "For by grace are you saved through faith, that not of yourselves, the gift of God not of works so that no one can boast." Paul in Philippians 3 gives his testimony, he says, "Not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the Law, but a righteousness that is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God and is by faith." Titus 3, "God saved us not because of righteous things which we have done, but because of His mercy. Having been justified by His grace we have become heirs in the hope of eternal life." You know all those verses.

Salvation is by faith alone through Christ alone through God's grace alone. When you put your trust in Jesus Christ, God declares you righteous. Not because you are, but because He imputes the righteousness of Christ to you, because He imputes your sin to Him. Christ bears your sin, you receive His righteousness. This is the glory of the great doctrine of justification.

Roman Catholicism doesn't believe that. The Council of Trent, 1545 to 1563, came out with statements. Listen to some of them. "To those who work well unto the end, and trust in God, eternal life is to be offered." That doesn't sound like anything I just read. To those who work well unto the end, and trust in God, eternal life is to be offered. Listen to this. "It is given as a reward, promised by God Himself to be faithfully given to their good works and merits. By those very works which have been done in God, fully satisfied the divine law according to the state of this life and to have truly merited eternal life." Eternal life in the Catholic system is something you earn by your works, you merit it and you receive it because of your merit. That is absolute and total contradiction. That is another gospel.

There are hundreds of canons that came out of the Council of Trent. I'll just share a few. I did a few of these two weeks ago, but some of the canons, just listen to it. This is what Trent, this is Catholic dogma. "If anyone says that the sinner is justified by faith alone," meaning that nothing else is required to cooperate, "in order to obtain the grace of justification and that it is not in any way necessary that he be prepared and disposed by the action of his own will, let him be anathema." And

they pronounce damnation on anybody who said salvation was by faith alone. These were directed directly at the Reformers. Another one, "If anyone says that justifying faith is nothing else than confidence in divine mercy which remits sins for Christ's sake, or that it is this confidence alone that justifies us, let him be anathema." And they keep saying it again and again. Another one, "If anyone says that the righteousness received is not preserved and also not increased before God through good works, but that those works are merely the fruits and signs of justification obtained and not the cause of its increase, let him be anathema." In other words, the Reformers understood the Bible as well, as all true believers had, that works are the result of justification, not the cause. But if you say that, you're cursed by Roman Catholicism, the Council of Trent. Here's a final one. "If anyone says that the good works of the one justified are in such manner the gifts of God that they are not also the good merits of him justified or that the one justified by the good works that he performs by the grace of God and the merit of Jesus Christ whose living member he is does not truly merit an increase of grace, eternal life, and in case he dies in grace, the attainment of eternal life itself and also increase in glory, let him be anathema." The idea is you keep doing more works, more works, more works, you increase grace, you...God increases grace, you increase works and together you achieve a higher and higher rate of sanctification which they call justification until finally you have attained eternal life. That's what it says, the attainment of eternal life. If you don't believe that you attain your eternal life by your works, you're cursed.

Did Pope John Paul II believe that? Of course he believed that. Why? Because the Church is infallible. Catholic theology can't be amended because it's infallible. And he is the faithful guardian of that system. We should grieve for that man because he gained the whole world and lost his soul. The most loved and admired men are Catholics in the world, blinded by the prince of this world, never saw the light of the true gospel. I grieve for the many who are deceived by this Pope and his religion and it breaks my heart to see so many people in that system who can't discern truth from error, or genuine Christianity from its counterfeit. And my heart really breaks to hear from Protestant evangelicals that this man was a true Christian leading others to true Christianity. The religious corruption of Rome has been on constant display for the whole world to see. Admittedly the splendor and pageantry are extraordinary...people standing in long lines for hours to virtually worship a dead man with a rosary in his hand a twisted crucifix by his side. And one man said on the television, one Catholic bishop, "We prayed for him and now we're going to pray to him." Meaningless repetition of prayers which are an abomination to God. Twenty-six years in that position, never knew the truth and the princes underneath him in all their purple and scarlet robes are disguised as angels of light along with him. The magnificence and grandeur of this corrupt religion that has become so rich at the expense of people, at the impoverishing of people, has bewitched the gullible world. They preach another gospel. How can we not see that? And for any man to be called "Holy Father," and accept it...Jesus called God Holy Father in John 17 in His high priestly prayer, Jesus said, "Call no man father," as if any man

is the source of spiritual life, "Call no man father," and yet the whole priesthood, they're all called father...occasionally I'm even called father which is no small offense to me. He is called Holy Father, he's usurped the title intended for God. He's called the Head of the Church, he's usurped a title intended for Christ. He's called the Vicar of Christ, vicar connected to the word vicarious, the one who stands in the place of Christ and he has stolen that from the Holy Spirit. He has set himself in the place of God, he has set himself in the place of Christ and he has set himself in the place of the Holy Spirit, and that is overstepping your bounds. I don't think Jesus or God the Father or the Holy Spirit would go to a meeting with Muslims, say they share a common spiritual bond and kiss the Koran.

I'm reminded of Luke 16 where there's a rich man dressed in purple and fine linen, living in splendor every day and he dies and finds himself in Hades, tormented and begging for people to go back and warn them. I think the Pope is in that very situation.

But what did he actually believe? What did he actually say, this Pope John Paul II that was just buried? We know that he believed salvation was not in Christ alone and therein is another gospel that damns. But let me ask the question, what did he believe about Mary? In Christ alone, we heard it and we sang it. After the death of his mother when he was eight-years-old, Carroll Voitia(???) is how you say his name, the Pope that died, after the death of his mother when he was eight, he developed an intense devotion to Mary. When he became Pope in 1978 he formally rededicated himself and his whole Pontificate to Mary. He traveled around the world making visits to numerous Marian shrines around the world so that he could venerate her in the fashion that Catholic theology calls him to, that's *hyperdulia*(??) which is a higher *dulia*or a higher veneration than for angels. His example in his preoccupation and his devotion to Mary motivated thousands if not millions of Roman Catholics to make Mary the primary focus of their lives, the primary focus of their prayers. He had a Papal crest developed and it was a simple coat of arms and in the middle is a huge M for Mary. When he died, his coffin was decorated with a large M. His personal slogan which he embroidered into all his Papal robes in Latin, *Totus tuos ego sum maria*, I am totally yours, Mary. *Totus tuos ego sum*.

By the way, those are the opening words in his last will and testament and in that will and testament after devoting himself to Mary, he said, "I place this moment...referring to the moment of his death...in the hands of the mother of my master, *totus tuos*. In the same eternal hands I leave everything and everyone to whom I have been connected by my life and my vocation, in these hands I leave above all the Church and also my nation and all of humanity." He put his own life, the Church and the whole world in the hands of Mary. That is ridiculous, that is ludicrous. He says, "Each of us has to keep in mind the prospect of death. I too take this into consideration constantly, entrusting that decisive moment to the mother of Christ and of the Church, to the mother of my hope." That's paganism. That would nauseate Mary if she knew about it, and she doesn't, she never heard a prayer from anybody ever...neither did any other saint. In notes included in his will, John Paul II quoted the words of a former Polish cardinal, "Victory when it comes will be a victory through Mary."

And if you closely follow the preaching of this man, you can see that intense devotion to Mary in a message to the general audience, May of 1997. John Paul said, and I quote, "The history of Christian piety teaches that Mary is the way which leads to Christ." When the assassination attempt, you remember, failed in 1981, I think it was, he credited Mary with saving his life. On the anniversaries of that assassination attempt, 1992, 1994, he made special pilgrimage to the shrine of our Lady of Fatima in order to offer ceremonial prayers of thanksgiving to Mary. He wrote a book, John Paul II's Book of Mary. The ad copy inside the book says the book is for people, quote: "Who seek a deeper relationship with Jesus and His mother." And the table of contents list all the titles that the Pope applied to Mary, "Gate of heaven, Mediatrix of all graces, Mirror of Perfection, Mother of the Church, Mother of mercy, Pillar of faith, Seat of wisdom."

Let me just tell you what some of the things in the book say. I'm quoting him, "Mary shares our human condition but in complete openness to the grace of God. Not having known sin, she is able to have compassion on every kind of weakness." Not having known sin...why then in her Magnificat did she call God her Savior? He says, "She understands sinful man and loves him with a mother's love. Precisely for this reason she is on the side of truth and shares the Church's burden in recalling always and to everyone the demands of morality." He says, "For every Christian, for every human being, Mary is the one who first believed and precisely with her faith as spouse and mother she wishes to act upon all those who entrust themselves to her as her children. And it is well known that the more her children persevere and progress in this attitude, the nearer Mary leads them to the unsearchable riches of Christ." And again, here's this whole life of effort and effort and you're trying to get to Christ and you can't...trying to get to Christ and it's hard to get to Christ, and Christ is a tough guy, but He can't resist His mother so you get to His mother and she gets on His case about you and you get in. That's it. He says further, "According to the belief formulated in the solemn documents of the church, the glory of grace referred to in Ephesians 1:6 is manifested in the mother of God to the fact that she has been redeemed in a more sublime manner. As Christians raise their eyes with faith to Mary in the course of their earthly pilgrimage, they strive together to increase in holiness. Mary the exalted daughter of Zion helps all her children wherever they may be and whatever their condition to find in Christ the path to the Father's house." The Father's house is really hard to find, Christ knows the way, but you can't get Christ's attention so you work on His mother and He can't resist her and that's how the whole deal works. He further says, "Nobody else can bring us as Mary can into the divine and human dimension of the mystery of the gospel."

Let me stop here and say, Mary has nothing to do with the salvation of anybody. This Pope wrote, "We can turn to the Blessed Virgin, trustfully imploring her aid in the awareness of the singular role entrusted to her by God, the role of co-operator in redemption which she exercised throughout her life in a special way at the foot of the cross." And this new Pope, Benedictus XVI, Ratzinger is his given name, in his first statement as Pope said, "I place the Church and myself into the hands of Mary." Both of them make Mary responsible for everything. If you go to Catholic Churches around the world,

I've been to them all over the place in the world, you'll see the paintings or the decor and at the top is always Mary. Rarely ever God, image of God, rarely ever Christ, almost always Mary.

What about...what about the issue of salvation? How did Pope John Paul II view salvation being an informed Catholic? Well he was a modified universalist, okay? A modified universalist. He stopped short of saying plainly that he believed everybody in the world would eventually be in heaven. But he used the phrase "universal salvation" hundreds of times in his writings. And he often expressed uncertainty about whether any human being would ever really go to hell. In a message to the general audience, July of 1999, the Pope said this, "The images of hell that sacred Scripture presents to us must be correctly interpreted. They show the complete frustration and emptiness of life without God." So he transports hell into now and says hell is just a way to describe living your life now without God. "Rather than a place," this is his book, this is what he said in his speech, "Rather than a place, hell indicates the state of those who freely and definitively separate themselves from God who is the source of all life and joy." So hell is your life now without God. He went on to say, quote: "Eternal damnation remains a real possibility, but we're not granted without special divine revelation the knowledge of whether or which human beings are effectively involved in it." We have no idea who's going to go there. It is a possibility but we have no idea who's going to go there. And then he said this, "The thought of hell must not create anxiety or despair." Well isn't that kind? That is so kind. And you know the devil would want to minimize hell, wouldn't he? Make it go away.

In his encyclical titled, *Redemptoi Mater*the Pope said, "The eternal design of God the Father, His plan of man's salvation in Christ is a universal plan. Just as all are included in the creative work of God in the beginning, so all are eternally included in the divine plan of salvation." That sounds like universalism to me. In a 1995 message he said, "Christ won universal salvation with the gift of His own life. For those, however, who have not received the gospel proclamation as I wrote in Encyclical *Redemptorus Meseo,(??)*, salvation is accessible." These are people who never heard the gospel, "Salvation is accessible in mysterious ways. Inasmuch as divine grace is granted to them by virtue of Christ's redeeming sacrifice, without external membership in the Church, it is a mysterious relationship, it is mysterious for those who receive the grace because they do not know the Church and sometimes even outwardly reject her." Wow, so you don't know the Church, you don't know the gospel, but in some mysterious way you get saved. There are evangelicals who have written books and said the very same thing.

The Pope wrote, quote: "Followers of other religions can receive God's grace and be saved by Christ apart from the ordinary means which He has established." From this same document about *Redemptorus Meseo*, he says, "The redemption event brings salvation to all." He says, "The Holy Spirit offers everyone the possibility of sharing in the pascal mystery in a manner known only to God.

Salvation always remains a gift of the Holy Spirit, requires man's cooperation, both to save himself and to save others."

So what you have is this, salvation by works in which you cooperate with God but not necessarily knowing the gospel or knowing about Christ. So he denies the exclusivity of salvation through Christ, affirms a universal kind of salvation by which people can get there by doing good in whatever way they know to do good.

This is something else he says, just amazing. "The universality of salvation means that it is granted not only to those who explicitly believe in Christ. Since salvation is offered to all, it must be made concretely available to all, but it is clear today as in the past, many people do not have an opportunity to come to know or accept the gospel revelation, or to enter the Church. Since Christ died for everyone and since the ultimate calling of each of us comes from God and is therefore universal, we are obliged to hold that the Holy Spirit offers everyone the possibility of sharing in this pascal mystery, again in a manner known only to God."

One of his best known books is called Crossing the Threshold of Hope, an aggressive ecumenical and universal manifesto, really. He said this, "The Muslims worship the one true God. Hinduism is another means of taking refuge in the one true God. Buddhists have God's help in reaching true enlightenment." He said, "There is much that is holy and true in all false religions and even animism can prepare a person's heart to receive the truth of Christ." Basically he said God helps every man create his own personal salvation by doing good and the Holy Spirit, he says, operates in every religion. Boy, this is the message everybody would like to hear, right? Stay where you are and do your best.

You see...you say, "But how could he ever draw this conclusion out of Scripture?" It doesn't come out of Scripture. If you want to know what he believes about Scripture, that I'll give you a little of. John Paul II, like all Roman Catholics since the Council of Trent, flatly deny that Scripture is the supreme authority in all matters of faith, conduct and doctrine. The words of Vatican II, quote: "The Roman Catholic Church does not draw her certainty about all revealed truth from the holy Scriptures alone, but both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with equal feelings of devotion and reverence."

What it really comes down to is you deny what the Scripture says, you twist and pervert what the Scripture says, and you invent another religion based upon tradition. The Catholic Church says tradition is equal to Scripture and the Catholic Church determines what is tradition. She also says, does the Church, that the Popes determine the true meaning of Scripture and they alone know the

true meaning of Scripture. And the meaning that they determine to be the true meaning is infallible. So you have a man who claims to be the head of the Church, the Vicar of Christ. He arrogates to himself an authority that belongs to God alone. He feels free to interpret Scripture any way he wants to and it is infallible. And in the process, of course, abandons the plain sense of Scripture that teaches Christ alone is the way to salvation by faith alone.

Well, enough about him. Let me kind of conclude with just looking at the Papacy itself because he's representative of it. Oh, he's not as deadly as some Popes have been, not as immoral as some Popes have been. He's a nobler soul, humanly speaking, than many. But let me just talk about what the Papacy affirms for itself, and I had a source for this, The Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma by Ludwig Ott written in 1952 and into English translated in 1955, it's been a staple in my own understanding of Catholic theology for years.

Here are statements of Catholic dogma from that primary source. "The Pope possesses full and supreme power of jurisdiction over the whole Church, not merely in matters of faith and morals, but also in church discipline and in the government of the Church." The Vatican Council declared interpreting that, "If anyone shall say that the Roman Pontiff has the office merely of inspection and direction and not a full and supreme power of jurisdiction over the universal Church, not only in things which belong to faith and morals, but also in those which relate to the disciplining government of the Church spread throughout the world, or assert that he possesses merely the principle part and not the fullness of this supreme power, or that this power which he enjoys is not ordinary and immediate, both over each and all the Churches and over each and all the pastors and the faithful, let him be anathema." You question his authority in any sense, and you're cursed, it's a mortal sin. He's unassailable.

It goes on to say, "A true power, a universal power, a supreme power and a full power is possessed by any Pope who can...quote:...Rule independently on any matter without the consent of anyone else, he himself is judged by nobody because there is no higher judge on earth than he." He's the king of the earth. That's why the Vatican is its own nation because he can't submit to any monarch. He is the king of the world.

Further, Catholic dogma says, "The Pope is infallible when he speaks *ex cathedra*," *ex cathedra...cathedra*is chair, seat...*ex...*when he speaks out of his seat, when he speaks as Pope he is infallible. Catholic dogma says, "God in heaven will confirm the Pope's judgment. In his capacity of supreme doctor of the faith, he is preserved from error." By the way, Papal infallibility was voted in in 1870, that was convenient. It was voted in by a split vote, interesting. They had to vote several times to finally get it through and it never was unanimous.

John Paul II apologized for the historic failings of Catholics in a very vague way, because when he was confronted with some of the issues of the past, some of the embarrassing things like forced conversion and antisemitism and some of the horrible things that were done, he apologized in a vague way. And you have to understand this, now how can you apologize if you're infallible? How can an infallible Church apologize? But listen to what they believe. They do not believe that the Church consists in the laity. The Church does not consist in the laity. The laity are the sons and daughters of the Church but the Church is the Roman curia, the Papal court of cardinals, bishops and priests. And when John Paul II apologizes for the historic failings of the Catholics...of the Catholics, he is not meaning the infallible Church that consists in the Papacy and the curia, they are not guilty for they are always to be held as immaculate. The sins have been committed by the sons and daughters of the Church who make up the laity.

This is absolutely ridiculous, given the sexual perversion of the priesthood which even Benedictus XVI tried to sweep under the rug with a silly comment about, "Well the percentage of perverted priests...and he wouldn't use that word, but the percentage of pedophile priests is no different than the normal population." All of this is brushed under the carpet as fast as it can be in an effort to protect the illusion of holiness.

Really it's hard to say whether the claim of infallibility is more ridiculous or more wicked. Wicked because it attributes to man what belongs only to God. Ridiculous because Popes have been so wrong so often and because the whole system is so wrong. One might conclude that they are infallible when it comes to being wrong.

Let me just conclude with three thoughts. One, the Papacy is unbiblical. It is unbiblical. There's not one tiny shred of evidence in Scripture for the Papacy, nor is there any evidence for cardinals, bishops, priests, nuns. It's all an invention of men and demons to create an illusion of spirituality and an illusion of transcendence. It was all developed by evil people, satanically led to create a false religion that would be the enemy of the truth. The appeal is because of the power, prestige and the money.

Do they try to support the Papacy from the Bible? Yes. Listen to this, again this is their technology from Ludwig Ott, Fundamentals of Roman Dogma. "Christ appointed the Apostle Peter to be the first of all the Apostles and to be the visible head of the whole Church by appointing him immediately and personally to the primacy of jurisdiction." What they do is go back and say Peter was the first Pope, appointed by Christ. "If...says the Vatican Council...if anyone says...this is back in 1823...if anyone says that he, the blessed Apostle Peter, was not constituted by Christ our Lord, prince of all the

Apostles and visible head of the Church militant, or that he directly, Peter, and immediately received from our Lord Jesus Christ a primacy of honor only and not one of true and proper jurisdiction, let him be anathema." If you deny the papacy of Peter, you are cursed...you are cursed. So if you say the Pope is not the successor of Peter, you are also cursed, says Ott.

Here's another test of biblical fidelity that the Roman Catholic system fails utterly. No student in the New Testament would deny that Peter was important, he is important. Important Apostle, leader, spokesman for the Twelve, on the top of all four lists of the Twelve, he's always at the top. He was a spokesman. No one would want to call him Holy Father, or Holy anything. He was weak and selfish and sinful and cowardly and unfaithful. He may have been in Rome. He may have died in Rome, but there's no evidence. They say he went to Rome, pastored a church in Rome, died in Rome, is buried in Rome. St. Peter is supposed to be built where he was buried. There's no evidence for that at all. One thing is certain, he never pastored a church in Rome...if he ever went there.

How do you know that? Well Paul wrote Romans in the year 56, made no reference to Peter. If Peter was in Rome, there was already a church there. If Peter was the pastor of the church in Rome, why doesn't he refer to Peter? And he greets a whole bunch of people in chapter 16, he just keeps greeting one after another after another after another, it would be pretty serious to overlook Peter. When Paul was later imprisoned in Rome in the year 60 to 62, he wrote four letters and he included in those letters all who came to him, never mentions Peter. In his last letter, 2 Timothy, written in the year 64 or about that, he gives greeting to ten people in Rome, not Peter..not Peter. By the way, Peter was never called to the Gentiles anyway. Galatians 2:7 and 8, you might want to look at that for just a minute. Galatians 2:7 and 8, he says, "I had been entrusted...Paul says...with the gospel to the uncircumcised, to the Gentiles, just as Peter had been to the circumcised." Peter was never called to pastor a Gentile congregation, to take the gospel to the Gentiles, never. Galatians chapter 2 talks about, verses 11 to 14, when Peter came to Antioch, Paul had to oppose him to his face because he stood condemned because of his terrible, terrible compromise. It was he who denied the Lord, as you know. It was he who disobeyed the Lord. It was he who was cowardly.

By the way, the head of the Jerusalem church, you might think at least Peter would be the head of the Jerusalem church, but he's not. According to Galatians chapter 2 and Acts chapter 15, the head of the Jerusalem church was James...was James, not Peter at all. There's no indication whatsoever that Peter had anything to do with the city of Rome.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 1, the Apostle Paul addresses the factions in the Corinthian church, he says, "Some of you say I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I am of Cephas, or Peter, I of Christ." He doesn't sort Peter out. He doesn't make any great thing of him at all. In fact, he makes it very clear that none of these people are particularly significant. They're not the ones who deserve the credit for the work of God. Go over to chapter 3. "What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you

believed. I planted, Apollos watered, God was causing the growth." It's a very low key way to treat yourself. He doesn't give any elevation to anybody.

Furthermore, Paul went to Rome to preach and in Romans 15:20 he says, "I aspired to preach the gospel not where Christ was already named." If Peter had been there and planted a church, then that would not be true. He didn't go where somebody else had been. If Peter was already the Bishop of Rome, why would Paul want to go there and strengthen and establish that church?

In 1 Peter, let's hear from Peter himself. First Peter chapter 1, Peter an Apostle of Jesus Christ, that's all, an Apostle of Jesus Christ. He introduces himself as nothing more than that, not THE Apostle, not the head of the church. First Peter 5, "I exhort the elders among you as your fellow elder." As your fellow elder. I'm just one of you. I'm just a partaker of the glory to be revealed. Shepherd the flock of God. "Exercise oversight, not under compulsion but voluntarily, according to the will of God, not for money but with eagerness. Not as...here it comes, verse 3...lording it over those allotted to your charge." Boy, there's a direct hit at the papacy. We're just fellow elders. Don't ever lord it over. Peter himself actually taught against the priesthood of which, of course, the papacy is the highest place. First Peter 2:5 he says, "You are living stones, you are built up a spiritual house for a holy priesthood." This is what we know as the priesthood of believers. Down in verse 9, "You are a chosen race. You are a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession." There's no priesthood but the priesthood of believers.

And by the way, Peter completely disappears after Acts 15, completely. But in spite of all of this, the Roman Catholic Church affirms that Peter was the first Pope, the head over the whole Church and the author of Papal Succession. Where do they get it? They get it from three passages completely misrepresented. Matthew 16, and this one you know, Jesus said, "I say to you, you're Peter and on this rock I'll build My church." You are Peter and upon this rock I will build My church. It's a play on words. He's not saying you are Peter and upon you I'll build My church. You are Peter, *Petros...Petros,*small stone, and upon this *Petra*, rock bed, I will build My church. What rock bed? The rock bed of the reality of Christ. Simon Peter in verse 16, "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God. And Jesus says, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood didn't reveal this to you, My Father who is in heaven. I say you are a small stone, but it's on the rock bed of who I am that I will build My church." How could that be perverted, the language is crystal clear?

Verse 19, they like this one, "I will give you the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven and whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Wow, that sounds like authority, you get to open and shut. Whoever controls the door is in charge. You get to decide who comes in and who goes out. Isn't he saying that to Peter?

Yes cause it was true of Peter, but He didn't just limit it to Peter. If you look at chapter 18 where you have the discipline section, He says to anybody, "If your brother sins, go and reprove him in private, if he listens you won your brother, if he doesn't listen, take two or three witnesses. If he still doesn't listen, tell the church. And if he still doesn't listen to the church, put him out. Truly I say, everybody, to all of you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Peter wasn't given any authority that every believer doesn't have, same thing.

You say, what is this? It is the authority to say something to someone, "Your sins are forgiven, or your sins are not forgiven" based on what? Based upon whether they believe, whether they repent. You have the right to say to someone, you can enter the Kingdom, by how they respond to the gospel. You can say to someone, "You're loosed from your sins because you put your trust in Christ." You can say to someone, "You're bound in your sin because you refuse Christ." You can say it as well I can say it, Peter could say it, anyone could say it. We have that authority based upon how people respond. The Pope is wrong to say we don't know the mystery of who's going to be in heaven and who's going to be in hell. Yes we do. We have the authority to say you are inside the Kingdom, you are outside. You are forgiven, you are not..based upon the response to Christ.

They also use a second passage, Luke 22:31, Luke 22:31 where Jesus says, "Simon, Simon, behold Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat. I've prayed for you that your faith may not fail and when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." They say that is a sort of a declaration of his papal primacy. Boy, that is some stretch. He says, "I'm turning you over to Satan and your faith isn't going to totally fail, but you're going to deny Me before the cock crows, He says in verse 34, but you're going to be restored, strengthen your brothers. So they say here is the great commission to be the ultimate supreme strengthener Pope. Again, ludicrous interpretation of that text.

The other one they use is John 21. John 21, I have to keep reminding people that they use the Scripture but they don't need it because they can just invent doctrines. Verse 15, John 21, Jesus finishes breakfast and says to Peter, "Do you love Me? Yes, Lord, You know I love You. Tend My lambs. Then He says it again. Shepherd My sheep. And He says it again, Tend My sheep." And they say in this three-fold call of Peter, he was made the supreme shepherd. No. First Peter 5, I just read it to you, he said, "I'm nothing but a fellow elder under the chief Shepherd."

They say that from Peter on there's an unbroken chain of papal succession. That's absurd. The first person who was actually Pope was the sixth century. And then they had to go back and pick out people who could fill in the gaps back to Peter. I wish I had time to give you the history of the papacy, it is one ugly story. Just remember, nobody was really an official Pope until 600. Before that there

were elements of the Church, the institutional Church. There were powerful elements of the Church in Rome and Constantinople and other places, about five of these huge ones. It was a battle for power. The Bishop of Rome because Rome was significant wanted to be the head of everything, and finally got his wish after a long and unhappy history.

But there were periods of time when there was no bishop in Rome at all...304 to 308, 638 to 640, 1085 and 86, 1241 to 43, 1269 to 71, 1292 to 1294, 1314 to 1316, 1415 to 1417 there weren't any. And the point I am making is there's no succession here, certainly there's no divine succession. The papacy was bought and sold and bartered. It was invented. It was reinvented. At some points there were as many as three who all called themselves Popes at the same time, fighting for power. Alexander VI bought the papacy as an illustration. Having purchased enough votes, the majority was attained when he voted for himself. In his days the Vatican was the scene, says a historian, of frequent orgies, such as the Banquet of Chestnuts attended by 50 or more prostitutes who squirmed and crawled naked amidst lit candles to pick up chestnuts scattered on the floor and afterwards entertained the guests in carnal indulgence. One historian says in Alexander VI, the papacy stood forth in all the strength of its emancipation from morality. The litany of licentiousness in the history of the papacy is staggering, absolutely staggering. Bought and sold, fought over, murdered for, multiple Popes, conflicting lists of Popes with different names, different numbers, if it wasn't so sad it would be like a joke. It wasn't really until Gregory the Great, 590 to 604, that there was a legitimate Pope. Supposedly from Peter on there was a succession falsified, forged documents were intended to prove that.

So you can literally obliterate the papacy because there is no apostolic succession. The claim is ridiculous, absolutely ridiculous. It was just a big battle for power. And then they wanted to establish that power. Once it got centered in the Bishop of Rome and he became the Pope, he wanted to affirm and magnify his power and so he created the idea of succession and started filling in the gaps going back. It is unbiblical.

Secondly, it is unholy. You can read it for yourself. You can read the history of the papacy. Just horrific, really, terribly sinful and yet in *The New Catholic Encyclopedia* claims that the one receiving the sacrament, the Pope, and the ones who elect the Pope are to be, quote: "Outstanding and habitual...characterized by outstanding and habitual goodness of life, especially perfect chastity." So the Pope is perfect and has to be chosen by perfect men. That's impossible, obviously. I would say this, that the papacy is the biggest hoax ever foisted on the world...biggest hoax ever. Folks who were fornicators and bribers and murderers and some who were good men, in a human sense, dot the landscape of this history and make it impossible to see in it the work of God or any apostolic succession.

Well, since my time is gone, let me just give you one other thought. It is unbiblical, it is unholy and it is arrogant and idolatrous. The Pope has the right to pronounce sentence of deposition against any

sovereign on the planet, so says the Papacy. That means the Pope is the king of the world, he can depose any king. The Catholic encyclopedia says, "We declare, we say, we define, we promise that every being should be subject to the Roman Pontiff." The Pope is the supreme judge even of civil laws and is incapable of being under any true obligation to them. He is above all law. He is above all kings.

At the consecration of Roman Catholic bishops there is an oath of allegiance to the Pope. Whenever a bishop is consecrated, an allegiance oath is given. Here's what it says, "With all my power I will persecute and make war on all heretics, schismatics and those who rebel against our Lord the Pope, and all his successors, so help me, God, and these holy gospels of God." So you swear to make war on anybody who rebels against the Pope. Where is humility in this? Romanism is a gigantic system of Church worship, sacrament worship, Mary worship, saint worship, image worship, relic worship, priest worship and Pope worship. J.C. Ryle was right when he said, "It's a huge organized idolatry. A man wearing a gold crown, triple decked with jewels worth millions? A cardinal's garb that costs tens of thousands of dollars?" Peter said, "Silver and gold have I not." Paul said, "I coveted no man's gold, no man's silver, no man's clothing." The Pope is surrounded by a dazzling display of arrogant over-indulgence, it is theater, it is nothing more than theater to give the illusion of God, the illusion of transcendence, the illusion of spirituality. It is a pompous display of wealth. It is a lavish indulgence in ridiculous buildings, ridiculous robes, crowns, thrones to cover and mask a sinful system like the whitewashed tombs that Jesus referred to. There was never such a thing as a papal coronation before the tenth century. And now the world has gone bizerk over this as it if was true religion.

And I said this a few weeks ago, going through Luke, the more liturgy, the more mystery, the more ceremony, the more apostasy. The Pope is in direct violation of everything in Scripture and sets himself up as the greatest person on earth. And, friends, it's not a bad guess to see the final Antichrist as a Pope. Colossians 1:18 speaks of Jesus Christ, He is the head of the body of the church. He is the beginning. He is the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything. Who gets first place in everything? Christ...Christ.

Oh, they've got a clever system. How to preserve error. How to perpetuate error. Make heresy infallible. And the arch heretic unassailable, ir-reformable and absolutely authoritative. It is possible that the final Antichrist could be a Pope because the final Antichrist will be a dominating world leader. He will be not subject to any other world leader. He will be an imitation of Christ, an anti-Christ, a pseudo-Christ. He will have international power. He will be a Gentile. And his system seems, in the book of Revelation chapter 17, to be headed up in Rome. If the Pope can fool evangelicals, it seems to me that the Antichrist won't have much trouble doing the same with the world.

Well, let's leave it at that.

Available online at: http://www.gty.org
COPYRIGHT (C) 2014 Grace to You
You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright).