

PETER, THE POPES, AND MARY:  
WHATEVER HAPPENED  
TO JESUS?



# PETER, THE POPES, AND MARY: WHATEVER HAPPENED TO JESUS?

Demolishing the  
Seven Pillars of Rome

Paul I. Johnson Ph.D.



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For Jared, Nathan, and their generation



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements, ix

Preface, xiii

Introduction, xv

Chapter 1: Becoming a Christian, 25

Pillar One

Chapter 2: Peter as Presented in the New Testament, 35

Chapter 3: Was Peter the First Bishop of Rome?, 53

Chapter 4: Peter the Rock, the Keys, and the Reality, 65

Pillar Two

Chapter 5: The Dubious History of Popery, 85

Pillar Three

Chapter 6: Mary, the Temporary Mother of Jesus, 109

Pillar Four

Chapter 7: Tradition Trumps Scripture, 131

Chapter 8: The Sacramental System Explained, 145

Pillar Five

Chapter 9: Water Baptism, 161

Pillar Six

Chapter 10: The Eucharist: The Magic Elixir, 175

Pillar Seven

Chapter 11: Purgatory: The Great Ponzi Scheme, 193

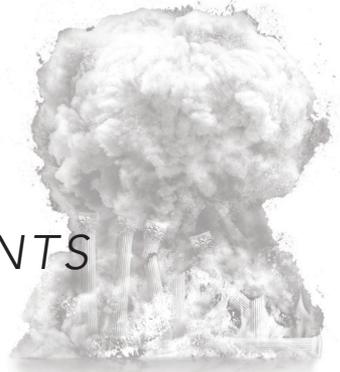
Chapter 12: One Man's Journey, 217

Bibliography, 231

Further Reading, 233

Notes, 237

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While doing the background reading that resulted in this book, I read approximately seventy-five authors of various persuasions and purposes. I am grateful for each of those authors who helped me to understand how and why the Catholic religious system developed as it did and why it was challenged so forcefully through the Protestant Reformation.

Not all of the authors who contributed to my understanding are listed in the bibliography. I only listed the ones who were quoted in my book and a few others I felt the reader should know about. Bibliographies in the books that are listed in my bibliography will take the reader anywhere he or she wants to go in further reading or research.

Also, I want to acknowledge the professional and technical help of my editor, Dianne Pitts. She not only did the technical

editing, but she and her husband Ron provided a rent-free apartment for my wife Willie and myself while I wrote the original draft of the book. We got lots of exercise going up and down the stairs from our apartment to Dianne's working area. Ron and Dianne also entertained us with game nights, taco Tuesdays, and other treats from Ron's kitchen. Willie and I will always be grateful for their fellowship, friendship, and wonderful hospitality.

Willie was the first reader of the manuscript. From her extensive background in editing all kinds of written documents during many years as an executive secretary, she provided valuable input. Her input regarding the use of many Scripture passages was also invaluable. She is a graduate of a notable Bible school.

My son, Paul B. Johnson, was the second reader. He was a special help in suggesting different ways to phrase certain thoughts. Also, because of his advice, the manuscript has fewer pages, for which I'm sure the reader will be thankful.

As the author, I take full responsibility for any errors that might be found.

I had a few other people read the manuscript just to get their general reaction. Each one of those readers was positive about the purpose of the book and its content. They were enthusiastic about the book becoming available to pass along to some of their friends. Some suggested it be available to be used as a teaching tool for Sunday school classes and Bible studies.

There is a group of special friends who partner with Willie and me. We were missionaries for many years and during that time, we were supported by the prayers and financial support of forty people and some churches. When we retired, many of those partners stayed with us. Consequently, they have

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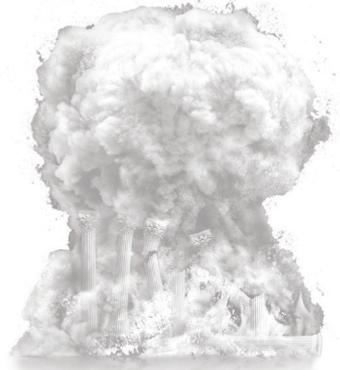
I must end this by saying how appreciative I am for the Bible. “Thy word is true from the beginning and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth forever” (Ps. 119:160 KJV).

A hearty thank you to all,

Paul I. Johnson



## PREFACE



**ON OCTOBER 31,** 1517, Martin Luther posted his ninety-five thesis on the door of the Wittenberg church. It was one of the most memorable and significant events in the turbulent history of Christianity. For approximately fifteen hundred years, Roman Catholicism (which one historian commented was “neither Roman nor Catholic”) masqueraded as Christianity.

One of the purposes of the book you are about to read is to remind all true Christians everywhere that Catholicism is not a form of Christianity.

Another purpose is to help bring to mind the outstanding and astounding consequences of Luther’s act on that day in October, 1517.

A third purpose of this book is in some measure to contribute to the celebration of the five-hundred-year anniversary on October 31, 2017, of Luther’s remarkable achievement, which ushered in what is known as the Protestant Reformation.

Luther's act was remarkable in several ways. Firstly, it forced the entire Catholic world to face the fact that its religious system was in every aspect suspect when brought before the judgment of biblical truth.

Secondly, it began to bring to light that there were absolutely no historical facts that would support this religious system with its foundational dogma that Peter was the first pope. In other words, the Catholic system failed under the light of biblical truth and historical realities.

Thirdly, when Luther posted those ninety-five statements, it started a political fallout that caused several leaders and, in fact, whole countries to begin to abandon Catholicism and adopt what was, and still is, called Protestantism.

In the process of reading this book, you may find yourself questioning not just Catholicism but the Coptic religion and the Greek Orthodox religion.

Protestantism itself has much to be held accountable for. The word *Protestantism* is an umbrella term covering many so-called expressions of Christianity. Some of these expressions of Christianity are no more Christian than Catholicism. However, the purpose of this book is to expose Catholicism for what it is: the greatest heresy ever perpetrated on the face of this planet.

But what could we expect? Satan is a master deceiver. As the apostle Paul said, Satan can appear as an "angel of light."

So, this book is written in the spirit of Martin Luther and to continue the fight for truth that he began. May the world recognize what he did for true Christianity on that day of October 31, 1517. May he be widely celebrated on October 31, 2017, and may this book lend a hearty amen to that celebration.

# INTRODUCTION



**JESUS CAME INTO** my life in March of 1958.

When I asked Jesus to come into my life, it was a desperate call. I was in the navy and had come to the understanding that if I died, there would be only one choice for me: going to hell. Heaven was out of the question. My manner of life was such that God could not possibly accept me into heaven.

So, I asked Jesus to come into my life and save me. He answered my call. I was, as the Bible explains, “born again.” The first chapter of this book is devoted to explaining how to become and how to know you are a Christian.

Up to that evening in March of 1958, I had no religious background or experience. I was a religious vacuum. But as I studied the Bible and grew in the faith, I became interested in the history of Christianity and determined that someday I would give as much time as I could to reading all about the beginnings of the Christian faith—to find my roots somewhat as the seeker in Alex Haley’s book, *Roots*.

The last chapter of this book will be the story of how Jesus came into my life and where I found my roots.

When I was able to retire after forty years serving with a Protestant mission organization, the opportunity came to give the time needed to read a lot of books on the history of Christianity.

I already knew quite a bit about the Protestant Reformation, but I didn't know very much about what happened in the approximately fifteen hundred years prior to that. That is, I didn't know how Christianity had developed within the historical process of the Roman Catholic religious system and its domination up to the time of the Reformation.

Perhaps you've guessed by now that I would be labeled an evangelical. I am not, however, a Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, Lutheran, nor am I attached to any other denomination. I graduated with a BA from a Baptist college but have kept my options open regarding churches I've attended.

What I want you to know is, as I read and studied the history of Christianity, it wasn't from a particular denominational point-of-view. However, it was from an evangelical point-of-view—that is, the firm conviction that the Bible is explicitly (without doubt or reserve) the Word of God.

Also, I had no intention of writing a book about Roman Catholicism. I was reading and studying for my own edification. But, as I became acquainted with the early history of Christianity, I became deeply troubled by the facts of that history.

I knew something of the Roman Catholic religion before I started my prolonged and serious study of Christianity. As I studied, I discovered that the bishops of Rome (later defined as popes of the Roman Catholic religion) dominated the first approximately fifteen-hundred years in the history of Christianity. This fact was a reality that demanded my attention.

Questions kept surfacing. How and why did a religion professing to be Christian but so obviously not Christian, gain such a hold on the continent of Europe and subsequently on Latin America? In fact, it now claims about one billion adherents literally encompassing the world.

Where and how did the concept of a pope take hold in the minds of millions of people and their kings? How did Peter get brought into the mix? What about Mary?

You might already know something of the suspect dogmas: Mass, indulgences, purgatory, treasury of merit, prayers to dead saints, penance, crusades, relics, celibacy, papal tradition equaling or exceeding Scripture in authority, and the sacramental system of religion.

I knew a little about some of these dogmas (teachings that one is obligated as a Catholic to believe), but what really interested me was how these teachings came into being. What were the social, religious, political, economic, and other forces that drove millions of people to buy into such heresies?

Webster's defines heresy as, "an opinion, doctrine, or practice contrary to the truth or to generally accepted beliefs or standards." Interestingly, Webster's includes in the definition this statement: "denial of a revealed truth by a baptized member of the Roman Catholic Church."

It is true that the word *heresy* came into common use during the early years of Christianity, and it was adopted by the popes to excommunicate those who denied what they were teaching. It's almost amusing, if it wasn't so tragic, that the popes labeled teachings that contradicted their teachings as heresy, while they themselves became teachers of the greatest heresies ever propagated.

Now, I've just made a serious charge. I am stating that many of the dogmas of the Roman Catholic religion are heresies. My

definition of *heresy* is beliefs and teachings that directly contradict what is taught in the Bible.

The Bible is the genuine Christian's standard of all beliefs and practices. I will be unraveling some of the dogmas of the Roman Catholic religion and showing these teachings do not adhere to, and in fact are contrary to, biblical statements and principles.

In the world of deconstruction, the powerful technique called *implosion* is used to bring down massive buildings in seconds. Experts find the exact places in the structure of a building—the load bearing points, the critical structural connections—and place explosives at these points. When the explosives are detonated, the building collapses.

My intent is to place scriptural truths at some of the most critical structural connections of the Roman Catholic religious system. It is my belief that powerful biblical truths will act, metaphorically, as explosive agents, demolishing the heretical dogmas of this religious system.

The “Seven Pillars of Rome” as they are called on the title page of this book are, in my judgment: Peter, the popes, Mary, tradition, water baptism, Mass and the Eucharist, and purgatory. It is these seven dogmas that function as the fundamental religious structure supporting the entire system.

Consequently, in all but two of the chapters, as you will see in the table of contents, we will explore and demolish each of these pillars. Texts will be cited from Catholic documents and other historical resources so the reader can see the underlying rationale Catholic leaders use to support these seven pillars. The Bible will be amply cited to show clear and contradictory evidence bringing down every one of these seven pillars.

“The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish

strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God” (2 Cor. 10:4–5).

I don’t know if many Roman Catholics will read this book, but if you are a Roman Catholic, I want to make the following clear: you may be a Roman Catholic and a genuine born-again Christian. It is not for me to say who is a Christian and who is not. However, if you are a Roman Catholic, it might be well for you to examine what you believe, or claim to believe, as a member of the Roman Catholic religion. Reading this book will help you with just that. The apostle Paul wrote: “Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?” (2 Cor. 13:5).

Is Christ Jesus in you? That’s the test question. What is your answer? I hope it is, “Yes.”

You may have been a Catholic and now have found Jesus in a real and satisfying way as Lord and Savior. But, you may also have found that you carry some of the Catholic religious baggage in your soul and spirit. You will find in this book that many Jews who came to know Jesus in a personal way had trouble shedding Judaism. Some of them never did. Peter had that problem. At least at one time in his life, Peter was seriously hindered in his growth in the Lord by his religious baggage. You will read about it in chapter 2.

So, may God use the teachings in this book to help you to let go, to not doubt that Catholicism is a deadly religious disease, and that you were fortunate by the grace of God to be free of it, or maybe not free, yet. “[But] if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed” (John 8:36).

You may be what many call a seeker. Perhaps you’ve realized that you need God in your life. Perhaps you’ve been attending different churches or have explored different religions.

Maybe you've been interested in Roman Catholicism. If you are a seeker, be sure to read chapter 1 thoroughly.

Maybe you are like me. You've been a Christian for years and have some knowledge of Roman Catholicism but never understood how it was so different from what you believe. Maybe, too, you considered Roman Catholicism just another form of Christianity, a schism and not a heresy.

In the original meaning of *schism*, the concept of discord or disharmony was the central idea. The word did not carry the same weight as the word *heresy*. There could be schism, but the possibility of substantial agreement was there, and thus religious fellowship was still possible.

For example, in today's religious world, Roman Catholic leaders will allow their members to attend some Lutheran churches if there is no Roman Catholic Church available in that person's area.

No matter if you are a seeker, a Roman Catholic, an ex-Roman Catholic, or a reflective but uninformed Christian, by reading this book, you will be able to demolish this religious stronghold called Roman Catholicism. You will, in the process, find out how to become a Christian, and you will, through this knowledge, discover the biblical characteristics of a genuine Christian.

I trust, too, that you will discover the reasons why New Testament Christianity cannot be equated with Roman Catholicism. In terms of the New Testament, Christianity and the Roman Catholic religious system are worlds apart.

This is not a book about people. You will not find in-depth discussions about the men who claimed to be popes—the Vicars of Christ—and some of the very bad things they did. It is a book about the Catholic religious system as it conflicts with the Word of God, the Bible, and particularly how it conflicts

with the New Testament. If you know the Old Testament, you will also notice how the Catholic system brought back into Christianity several Judaistic features such as priests, sacrifices, and, in general, a feeling of a law-based religion.

There will be no discussion of the wedding of secular powers with Roman Catholicism. Almost all of the historians I read pointed out that without the secular powers of Europe supporting, by their military power, the popes and their religious system, Catholicism would have never gained and held the power that it did.

And the reverse is also true that many secular leaders realized that without the support of the popes and their emissaries, they would not have been able to stay in power. It was a constant struggle, but for many years, Catholicism virtually ruled in many European and Latin American nations.

Interestingly enough, both Luther and Calvin, leaders in the Protestant Reformation, tried to wed Christianity to secular powers. Even to this day in Germany, the State financially supports Lutheran and Catholic churches. In England, the tie between church and state still exists as the Queen of England is the titular head of Anglicanism.

The Bible is the source of truth about God and his will and his plan of salvation. The Scriptures are quoted extensively in this book because, as Paul said, the Scriptures “have the divine power to demolish strongholds” (2 Cor. 10:4–5).

As you read God’s Word quoted in this book, pray as the psalmist David did to, “Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law” (Ps. 119:18).

Now, one last word as to why I decided to write this book. As I read, studied, and learned what you are going to read in the coming chapters, I also became aware of a disturbing fact.

I have been a Christian for fifty-eight years. I've attended a lot of different churches and been in many Sunday school classes, in some of which I was the teacher. The disturbing fact is that in those fifty-eight years, I could not remember ever hearing any Christian pastor or Sunday school teacher say anything about what you are going to read in this book.

The Catholic religious system was never presented. There were many lessons about the details of the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Mormons, and other prominent cults. But, Catholicism, for some reason, seemed to be given a pass.

I wondered if a lot of believers in Christ considered Catholicism just another form of genuine Christianity. In fact, I think that possibility is actually true. And what about all of those pastors and Sunday school teachers who never taught the truth about Catholicism.

Has there been, in fact, a kind of political correctness resident among us Christians in that we won't speak out about the Catholic heresy? Why have we given Catholicism a pass?

The reality that no one was speaking out and explaining this giant heretical religion masquerading as Christianity was what moved me to write this book. I felt and feel today that Satan has pulled one over on us. He has pulled one over on virtually the whole world for at least fifteen-hundred years.

Some Catholics who read this book might be offended and deeply hurt by what I've written. But, remember these words from the book of Proverbs: "Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses" (Prov. 27:5-6).

I have a number of Catholic friends. I also recognize that there may be Baptists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, and others who may read this book and find that they themselves are not

experiencing what has been described above as the true nature of Christianity.

If anyone is wounded by what follows in this book, please understand that I am writing as a friend.

May God bless this book in a way that it will help expose Catholicism for what it is and open the eyes of millions and lead them to the one and only Savior of the world: Jesus the Christ, the Son of the Living God.





## CHAPTER 1

# BECOMING A CHRISTIAN ESTABLISHING A BASE LINE

**THIS BOOK BEGINS** with this chapter—Becoming a Christian—for the purpose of establishing a kind of base line, or definition, or description of how one becomes a Christian.

Some readers may refer back to this chapter should it be necessary to become clear on how a person becomes a Christian. Although I've tried to make this clear at various places in the chapters that follow, chapter 1 starts the book, so that there will always be this place to come to should an unhindered presentation of the gospel be necessary.

According to Catholicism, the Roman Catholic Church is set forth as the means of acquiring salvation. It is set forth as the means of maintaining salvation, and it is set forth as the means of gaining heaven when the believer dies. You probably also know that something called *purgatory* stands between the believer and actually arriving in heaven. But Catholicism has the believer's back on that too. There is an imagined way

through and out of purgatory if the Roman Catholic believer acquires, shall we say, the right resources. More of that later.

Effectively, then, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are not essential to achieve salvation. The Roman Catholic church claims to have, and more than that, *to be* the means of salvation. This religious scheme couldn't be further from the truth that is presented to us in the Scriptures.

The Scriptures present Jesus and the Holy Spirit to us as the only means of salvation. Jesus himself said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).

Is baptism into the Roman Catholic Church a substitute for Jesus—a proxy for Jesus? That is, can a person "come to the Father" by water baptism (particularly water baptism applied by a priest of the Roman Catholic Church)? What did Jesus say? The answer is obvious. Jesus said, "No one comes to the Father except through me."

Is baptism into the Roman Catholic Church a proxy for the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Regarding the Holy Spirit and baptism, here are the words of the apostle Paul: "The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink" (1 Cor. 12:12–13).

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is not water baptism and has no part with water baptism, no matter who is doing the water baptism or in what manner it is done.

By the way, the NIV translation of the Bible I quote from essentially carries the same meaning as in any Roman Catholic sponsored Bible translation. I would like to say also that I firmly believe we cannot go wrong when we interpret Scripture

while following this principle: When the words of Scripture make plain sense, seek no other sense.

Now, in the above passage when Jesus said, “through me,” what did he mean? How would a person come through Jesus? Is there a specific way to do this?

In John’s gospel, this statement is made: “He [Jesus] was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God” (John 1:10–13).

This Scripture says, “Yet to all who received him.” How does a person receive Jesus? As a simple analogy, imagine it is your birthday: a friend comes to you with a birthday present, holds a nicely wrapped gift out to you, and says, “Here, I have a gift for you.”

But you don’t have the gift, yet. Why not? Because you haven’t taken it. Until you receive—take the gift—it is not yours. Your friend can hold it out to you all day, but until you take the gift, it isn’t yours. This is what it means to receive, to believe in Jesus. When a person actually asks Jesus to come into his life—accepts Jesus as his Savior—that person has become a Christian. In the context of salvation, it is Jesus who is being received as a gift.

As it says in John 1:13, the person who receives Jesus is “born of God.” In John 3:3, Jesus said to a Jewish religious leader, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.”

So, when a person receives the gift of Jesus as his Savior, he is born again.

Receiving Jesus has consequences—wonderful consequences. In John, chapter 3, Jesus went on to answer a Jewish religious leader’s perplexing question. We will follow the story as it is told in John’s gospel. The Jewish leader asks: “How can a man be born when he is old?” [This Nicodemus was an older Jewish leader. Nicodemus goes on to say,] ‘Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb to be born!’ Jesus answered, ‘I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh [being born of water: human birth], but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again’” (John 3:4–7).

You might have noticed as you read through this scriptural sequence that when Jesus talked about being born again, he specified it was a spiritual rebirth. He said, “the Spirit gives birth to spirit.” Note the first *Spirit* is capitalized and the second *spirit* is in the lower case. The born-again process is initiated and completed by the Holy Spirit in the spirit of the individual.

The apostle Paul said it a little differently. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” (2 Cor. 5:17).

If you are born again you are a “new creation.” Do you see and understand the beauty of what God has done by his Son and through his Holy Spirit? The role of the Holy Spirit in being born again (in becoming a new creation) is a wonderful aspect of the salvation process. It’s important to understand how the Holy Spirit actually makes real and effectual in the individual what Jesus accomplished when he died on the cross and when he rose again from the dead and later ascended into heaven to be at the right hand of the Father.

It's also important for you to understand that there has been no mention of any other agent (or agency) involved in the process of salvation. Specifically, there is no human agent or agency involved. That is, to be clear, the Roman Catholic religious system (the sacramental system) has no part in salvation. I will be more specific in later chapters.

Right now, I want to emphasize the role of the Holy Spirit. You might remember that when John the Baptist was engaged in his ministry of water baptism, the Jewish crowd was perplexed about who John was. Some thought he might be the Christ (the Jewish Messiah, or Savior, who had been prophesied). In the following quote, observe the shift from water baptism to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. "The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Christ. John answered them all, 'I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire'" (Luke 3:15–16).

Peter said in a later incident: "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit'" (Acts 11:15–16).

Following is a lengthy quote from the book of Romans that will enable us to understand just what it means to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Again, please note the operation of salvation is begun and completed by the work of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. For emphasis the word *Spirit* is italicized in the quote. Capitalization of the word *Spirit* is in the original text.

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the

*Spirit* of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law [by inference, any religious laws propagated by any religion or religious system] was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the *Spirit*. Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires, but those who live in accordance with the *Spirit* have their minds set on what the *Spirit* desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the *Spirit* is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the *Spirit*, if the *Spirit* of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the *Spirit* of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the *Spirit* of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his *Spirit*, who lives in you (Rom. 8:1–11).

It is of critical importance to understand that the process of salvation is the work of God the Father, by the Son, through the agency of the Holy Spirit. No doubt you have observed, through the Scriptures quoted, that there is absolutely no mention of any human agency or material (natural) elements like water baptism involved. In fact, the Scriptures make it pointedly clear that water baptism had no spiritual power. Remember, Peter himself said he was told by the Lord Jesus that they would be baptized by the Holy Spirit.

And as we just read in the quote from Romans, being baptized by the Holy Spirit is an absolute necessity. As the apostle Paul said, “If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.”

In another one of Paul’s letters, he presents the process of salvation in such a beautiful and compact way that it is impossible to misunderstand the meaning and the implications of his words. “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Eph. 2:8–10).

Bible scholars have always defined *grace* in these terms: “the unmerited favor and blessing of God.” In this passage in Paul’s letter to Ephesus, Paul establishes the fact that grace and faith are the gift of God. Gifts are not, by nature, earned. Gifts are just that, gifts. Paul further makes this clear by saying these three things:

1. This (grace and faith) is not from yourselves. There is nothing within yourself (no religious yearnings or intentions) that God acknowledges as making you somehow deserving of grace and faith.
2. The gift of grace and faith are, “not by works.” None of your religious actions—good deeds—or baptism by a Roman Catholic leader are acknowledged by God as making you deserving of his gifts of grace and faith.
3. “So that no one can boast” makes it clear no one will be able to say to God, or to anyone else, “Look at me. See how good I am. See all the good works I’ve done. I’m good enough to enter into heaven. I was baptized by a

Roman Catholic priest.” You could be baptized by the Pope, and it wouldn’t do you any good.

Those three statements make it extremely clear you cannot work yourself into heaven through any of your religious good deeds, or by getting baptized by water, or giving money to the church (or to any other agency), or by any other act that makes you think you are a good person and have followed all the religious rules of your particular religion, no matter what religion you might follow.

In Luke 18:19, Jesus himself asked, “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered his own question by saying, “No one is good—except God alone.”

Paul the apostle wrote (my italics for emphasis): “As it is written: ‘There is *no one* righteous, *not even one*: there is *no one* who understands, *no one* who seeks God. *All* have turned away, they have *together* become worthless; there is *no one* who does good, *not even one*’” (Rom. 3:10–12).

Are you convinced that you cannot come to God because of your own religious desires or any outward works such as water baptism? Perhaps you are a tireless worker in your church. Maybe you’ve even seen marvelous things happen in other people’s lives through your religious works. Read in the following what Jesus said about self-righteousness. He introduces this text by saying in verse 15 of Matthew, chapter 7, “Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.” “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform

many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’” (Matt. 7:21–23).

You can see we are helpless and hopeless without these gifts from God. How do the gifts of grace and faith come to us? Remember John 1:12? “Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision, or a husband’s will, but born of God.”

As Paul says in verse 10 of Ephesians, chapter 2, “For we [those who receive Jesus by grace, through faith] are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

Observe in this passage, that the good works that come as a result of this new creation, in fact are only possible if we are “created in Christ Jesus.” It’s important to realize that being created in Christ Jesus is a work of God: God’s workmanship. The Greek word for *workmanship* is the word *poema* from which we English speakers get the word *poem* or *poetry*.

Now isn’t that a wonderful way to express God’s workmanship? Each believer in Jesus Christ is a creative, individual work of poetry—a work of art, if you will—and the creator of this work is God himself.

If the process of salvation is God’s work, what is the role of the church—God’s people—in this process? Well, it is simply to preach this good news—this gospel. And, of course, as God’s people group together in local congregations or even in large networks like denominations, they have the responsibility to build up and nurture one another in the faith.

We become Christians only by receiving Jesus as our Savior. When we receive Jesus, we are born again through the agency of the Holy Spirit; we are baptized in the Spirit. We are a new creation, the workmanship of God. And being the workmanship

of God, we are now able to do good works, which God always intended for us to do, but which we could not do until we were created anew in Christ Jesus.

There is no other way to become a Christian and to do the works of God.

The apostle Paul summed it all up with this one, succinct, masterful statement: “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27).

The rest of this book is about demolishing the stronghold of the Roman Catholic religion. As the title of this book indicates, we will begin with Peter as he is the foundational pillar of the entire Catholic system.

Peter is so important to the supposed authority of the leaders of Catholicism, particularly of the popes, bishops, and priests, that we must begin with him.

In fact, Peter is so significant in the whole scheme of Catholicism, I felt it necessary to devote three chapters just to his history as revealed to us in the Bible. By the way, there is no other reliable source but the Bible from which to gain a true understanding of Peter’s role in the founding of Christianity.

The following three chapters will bring to light, using the Bible as the historical basis for Peter’s life and ministry, that Peter had no superior status among the other apostles. These chapters will also bring to light that Peter was not the “Rock” upon which Jesus would build his church, and Peter did not solely possess the “keys” of the kingdom of God.

The imploding and demolition of the Catholic religious system now begins.