

I'm Glad You Asked

July 30, 2017

1. How do you/ECO view Catholics praying to the Virgin Mary?

- *Traditional Roman Catholic Prayer of Confession I confess to almighty God, and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned through my own fault, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and what I have failed to do; and I ask blessed Mary, ever virgin, all the angels and saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.*

Revelation 6:9-11 *When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. ¹⁰ They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" ¹¹ Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the full number of their fellow servants, their brothers and sisters, were killed just as they had been.*

- So the saints in heaven have some awareness of what is going on down here.
- One of my professors used to say that he would ask the saints to pray for him just as he would ask his friends who were still on earth.
- But there's no biblical warrant for that.
- I have asked Jesus to tell my parents I love them, or I'm sorry for something etc.
But I think they are so occupied with the praise of Jesus and the things of heaven that earthly things are of little import to them now.
- However, I don't agree with the idea of praying to Mary or any of the saints because of verses like this.

I Timothy 2:5-6 ***For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time.***

- There seems to be a psychology that Mary can persuade Jesus to do for us what He doesn't want to. But no one loves us like He does.
- And this has more to do with worshipping the saints than praying to them, but I like what we find in our Book of Confessions.
- SECOND HELVETIC CONFESSION *THE DUE HONOR TO BE RENDERED TO THE SAINTS.* St. Augustine in *De Vera Religione*: “Let not our religion be the cult of men who have died. For if they have lived holy lives, they are not to be thought of as seeking such honors; on the contrary, they want us to worship Him by whose illumination they rejoice that we are fellow-servants of his merits. They are therefore to be honored by way of imitation, but not to be adored in a religious manner.” (5.026)

2. Are the rewards of heaven the same for a god-lived life as they are for a “death-bed conversion Christian?”

- First, you're right that death bed conversions occur and are accepted.

Luke 23:43 ***Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”***

- We are saved by grace, not by works.
- And the Parable of the Talents indicates there is the same reward.

Matthew 20:1-15 ¹³ ***“But he answered one of them, ‘I am not being unfair to you, friend. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius? 14 Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you.***

15 Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?'

- But there are other places where Scripture teaches there are differences in the rewards.

I Corinthians 3:11-16 ***For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, 13 their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work. 14 If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. 15 If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames.***

- ***"The Portion of The Righteous" (Romans 2:10 Jonathan Edwards) And there shall be no such thing as envy in heaven, but perfect love shall reign through the whole society. Those who are not so high in glory as other, will not envy those that are higher, but they will have so great, and strong, and pure love to them, that they will rejoice in their superior happiness.***

<http://reformedanswers.org/answer.asp/file/43280>

- **Like containers in the ocean. Different sizes but completely full.**

- **There are rewards in *this* life. Come now.**

- ***"Late have I loved you, beauty so old and so new: late have I loved you...You called and cried out loud and shattered my deafness...You were radiant and resplendent, you put to flight my blindness. You were fragrant, and I drew in my breath and now pant after you. I tasted you, and I feel but hunger and thirst for you. You touched me, and I am set on fire to attain the peace which is yours."*** Augustine of Hippo, Confessions X.27

- ***"If Ted Bundy is in heaven, I don't want to go!"***

3. Would a loving God really send people to Hell?

- Through history there have been several attempts to “explain away” what the Bible teaches about Hell.
- Gehanna was a garbage heap where trash was burned outside Jerusalem. It doesn’t refer to eternal hell.
- Hell is temporary. (Rissi, Towner)
- What counts as Faith? (“Those whose faith is known to God alone.” *Book of Common Worship*)
- I might like that to be true! Family members etc.
- Let’s look at Scripture.

Mark 9:47-48 *47“ And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, 48 where “the worms that eat them do not die, and the fire is not quenched.”* (See Isaiah 66:24)

Matthew 13:41-42 *41 The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. 42 They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

- The question presupposes that humans are neutral and God “sends” some to hell according to arbitrary conditions – viz. Believe in Jesus.
- In Eden, God’s intent was for all to live in paradise. But humans rebel against God.
- God sends no one to hell. People choose separation from God.
- *“I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It isn’t just that I don’t believe in God and, naturally, hope that I’m right in my belief. It’s that I hope there is no God! I don’t want there to be a God; I don’t want the universe to be like that.”* (“The Last Word” by

Thomas Nagel, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at NYU.
Oxford University Press: 1997)

- Suppose the Bible taught that EVERYONE will go to heaven, that is, everyone will spend eternity loving and adoring God. You may not want to go there. You may not want to worship God, but you have to. Love Wins, like it or not! God loves you so you have to worship him after you die.
- Think how the world would be outraged by that doctrine.
- “There needs to be a hell for people who want to go there.”
- “Heaven and hell are the same place. For those who don’t love God, worshipping Him for all eternity will be sheer Hell!”
- Life preserver.
- God does not want you to go to Hell. Grab the life preserver!

Matthew 13:49-50 *49 This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous 50 and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

3. Do you think we are in the end times as revealed in the Bible?

- Yes! And I have for more than 50 years!

Hebrews 10:24-25 *24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

- Since the re-establishment of a Jewish homeland in Israel in 1948, it’s hard to doubt that we are seeing the fulfillment of Scripture.
- I am wary of attempts like *The Late Great Planet Earth* which set out time-lines. I’ll tell you why in a minute.
- There is one, though, that I find very attractive.

Mark 13:10 ***And the gospel must first be preached to all nations.***

Romans 11:25-26a ***I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, 26 and in this way all Israel will be saved.***

- ***The Puritan Hope Iain Murray***
- ***A last Great Revival.***
- ***Messianic Jews, like Dan Asher, are picking up on this.***
- ***I hope so! God has had me preaching and praying about revival for more than 20 years!***
- ***But look at the Bible's dominant teaching on the subject.***

Mark 13:32-33 ***32 "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33 Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come.***

Matthew 24:42, 44 ***42 "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. ... 44 So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.***

I Thessalonians 5:1-2 ***Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, 2 for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.***

- ***So the Bible's main teachings are 1. No one knows. 2. Be ready!***
- ***The problem with time lines is they say, "Jesus can come after these things happen.***
- ***No! He can come now.***
- ***Are you ready?***

5. How is one's obedience affected by one's level of trust in the Lord?

What can we do to increase our trust in him?

- **If you trust me, you'll do what I tell you. (Directions, investments etc.)**

Psalm 119:67 ***Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word.***

- **The more experience we have, the more we trust.**

John 7:17 ***Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.***

- **Seems backwards!**
- **Dick in Congo. "I had a vision of a man who came and told us what we needed to hear."**
- **Not just "Trust and Obey," but "Obey and Trust!"**
- **I think Dick preached on the following topic.**

6. What's wrong with sex outside of marriage?

- **Foundationally, sex was God's idea in the first place!**
- **He knows it feels good!**
- **It was the first commandment!**

Genesis 1:28 ***28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."***

- **But just because sex is good doesn't mean it is good in just any context!**

I Corinthians 7:2 ***But since sexual immorality is occurring, each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman with her own husband.***

Mark 10:6-8 ***6 "But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female.' 7 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, [b] 8 and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh. (Genesis 1:27, 2:23-24)***

- First, sexual intimacy creates a “one flesh” reality. Even outside marriage.

I Corinthians 6: 16 *Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh. 17 But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit. 18 Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. 19 Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.*

- You carry part of that person around with you.
- Soul ties.
- Even the person who asked me this question – though she seemed a bit defensive – expressed regret about relations with the father of her first child, though she loves the child.
- Soul ties can be broken.
- Look at a second reason.

Matthew 15:9 *For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.*

Galatians 5:19 *The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ...*

- Sexual immorality (fornication, adultery, any sex outside marriage between a man and a woman) is an act of the flesh, not of the spirit.
- Many in our society have engaged in sex outside marriage. Here’s a final word on the subject for you.

John 8:10-11 *10 Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” 11 “No one, sir,” she said. “Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”*

7. What steps can we take to become more familiar with the Bible?

Psalm 119:99 ***I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes.***

John 8:31-32 ***31 So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”*** (ESV)

Acts 2:42 ***And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.***

- Read. (“How many times have you read it?”) Even if you don’t understand.
- INVEST yourself in Scripture.
- Meditate.
- Take Bible Study classes. (Romans. Bible Study Fellowship)
- Listen to sermons. Live and on line. Many teachers/preachers.
- Use resources
 - Life Application Bible
 - Spirit-Filled Life Bible
 - Concordance
 - Commentaries

www.BibleGateway.com

www.BibleHub.com

(Look up “Sexual Immorality!”)

- Apply it! Do what it says. (cf. #5)