



"Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone
who asks you for a reason for your hope"
1 Peter 3:15

Top 10 Questions from Protestants

WHY the questions?

Most Protestants see Catholics as being fairly illiterate when it comes to Scripture. Whereas Catholics are not usually trained to memorize chapter and verse – we can usually recognize Scripture verses when they are uttered.

Being trained to *memorize* Scripture is okay – but it is much better to understand what Scripture is saying. Sadly, many of our Protestant brothers and sisters are at the mercy of either their denomination or their independent Pastor's interpretation of Scripture. This is where we, as Catholics have a greater advantage, having the official interpretations from Christ's 2000 year-old Church.

Because they see us as being not very well-read in the Scriptures, Protestants often ask Catholics questions when preaching to them in an effort to trip them up. It is very easy to confuse an under-catechized Catholic and they see them as easy targets for conversion.

WHY the questions? (cont'd)

Because of this – it is very important for us to stay informed about what we believe in as Catholics – and WHY we believe it.

In this lesson, we will discuss 10 of the most common questions used by Protestants when converting Catholics out of the Church. We will also give the Biblical answers to these questions so that our Protestant brethren understand what we *really* believe in – instead of what they've been **led** to believe.

1. Are you saved?

Answer: Yes - however . . .

According to Scripture – salvation is a **process** – not a one-time, slam dunk event. The Bible tells us that, as Christians, we are **ALREADY SAVED** (Rom. 5:1, 8:24, Eph. 2:5–8). This is **Initial Salvation** – God give us the initial grace to believe.

However, because Salvation is a **LIFELONG** process – it ALSO says that I am **BEING SAVED** (1 Cor. 1:8, 2 Cor. 2:15, 7:1, Phil. 2:12, Heb 12:14).

This is **Ongoing Sanctification** – God is sanctifying us throughout our life as we cooperate with his grace.

Because of this, I have the **hope** that I **WILL BE SAVED** (Matt. 24:13, Rom. 5:9–10, 1 Cor. 3:12–15). This is **Final Sanctification/Salvation** – We die and go to heaven having endured to the end.

2. Have you accepted Jesus as personal Lord and Savior?

Answer: I've been Baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy spirit – as prescribed by Scripture.

NOWHERE does Scripture command that I accept Christ as “personal Lord and Savior”. I **AM** commanded, however, to be Baptized (**Matt. 28:19, John 3:5, Mark 16:16, Acts 2:39, 1 Pet. 3:21**).

It is through **Baptism** that . . .

- We are **buried** with Christ (**Rom. 6:4, Col. 2:12**)
- We receive the **circumcision** of Christ (**Col. 2:11, Phil. 3:3**)
- Our sins are **forgiven** (**Acts 2:38, 1 Pet 3:21**)

3. Are your beliefs found in the Bible?

Answer: Yes.

However, when it comes to “**Biblical**” teaching – there are **TWO** types:
1) Explicit teaching – the doctrine is specifically taught or is mentioned by name (i.e., **Baptism**, the **Holy Spirit**)

3. Are your beliefs found in the Bible? (*cont'd*)

2) Implicit teaching – the teaching is alluded to but not explicitly mentioned. Some examples include the **Trinity**, which is never explicitly mentioned – but IS taught. Another is the **Incarnation. Infant Baptism** is yet another

Additionally, there is no teaching in Scripture which says that everything we believe in as Christians must be explicitly found in the Bible. As a matter of fact, the Bible appeals to the Authority of Scripture and Tradition.

In Paul's Second letter to the Thessalonians, he makes a very strong case for Tradition:

2 Thess 2:15

"Stand firm and *hold fast to the Traditions* you were taught, whether by an **ORAL STATEMENT** or by a letter from us."

Similarly, he writes to the **Corinthians**:

1 Cor. 11:2

"I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions *even as I have delivered them to you*".

- Christ gave Supreme Authority to His Church. He said that **WHATEVER** it declared or held bound on earth would be declared or held bound in Heaven (**Matt, 16:18-19, Matt. 18:15-18, John 20:21-23**).

- He said that the Holy Spirit would guide His Church to **ALL truth** (**John 16:12-15**).

- He told the leaders of His Church that whoever listened to or rejected His **Church** listened to or rejected **HIM** and the **One** who sent Him (**Luke 10:16**).

- Finally, Christ promised His Apostles that the gates of Hell would not prevail against His Church (**Matt. 16:18**). Because of these promises of Christ – His Church cannot teach error.

4. Why do you pray to idols (statues)?

Answer: First of all – an “idol” is something other than God that is worshipped.

Secondly – we don't pray TO statues – neither do we “worship” them. Statues and other images are worship aids – reminders. That's all they are. A statue has no “magical powers”.

It is like staring at a photo of a loved one that you carry around in your wallet. You wouldn't accuse a person of lovingly displaying an image of a loved one in their home – so condemning Catholics for doing essentially the same thing is hypocritical.

The Commandment against images in **Ex. 20:2-6** is against the **WORSHIP** of them as gods – not the creation of them.

Our Protestant friends need to remember that God **commanded** Moses to make 2 golden Cherubim to place atop the Ark (**Exod. 25:18-20**) and they prostrated themselves before it (**Joshua 7:6**). He also commanded him to fashion a bronze serpent and mount it on a pole so that those who gazed upon it would be healed (**Num. 21:4-9**). They didn't **worship** these images, they did as God commanded.

5. Why do you confess your sins to a priest?

Answer: Because Jesus said to.

On the night of His Resurrection, He visited His disciples and stood in their midst:

John 20:21-23

“Peace be with you. **As the Father has sent me, so I send you.**”

And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the holy Spirit.

Whose sins **YOU forgive** are forgiven them, and whose sins **YOU retain** are retained.”

There are only **TWO** instances in **ALL** of Scripture where God breathes on man:

1. God breathes life into Adam

2. Jesus (God) breathes the power to forgive sins onto His Disciples

Also – Jesus told the apostles, “**As the Father has sent me, so I send you.**”

What did the Father send Jesus to do? He sent Him to bring about the forgiveness of sins. This is precisely what Jesus is giving His Apostles the authority to do.

6. Why do you worship Mary?

Answer: Why do you falsely assert that we “worship” Mary?

To “worship” means to consider a person or a thing as a **god**. If you’re asking why we ‘pray to Mary – this is very simple. We pray to Mary and the saints in Heaven – to ask them to pray for US. This is no different than asking somebody here on earth to pray for you.

In **James 5:16**, we are commanded to “Pray for each other”. James goes on to say that the prayer of a righteous person is very powerful. The only people who are truly righteous are those in Heaven, who have been made perfect in Christ. We know they are perfect because **Rev. 21:27** states emphatically that **NOTHING** imperfect can enter Heaven.

Furthermore – the primary definition of the word “**Pray**” simply means to “**ASK**”.

Meriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines "**Pray**" as:

Definition of *pray*

transitive verb

1: ENTREAT, IMPLORE - often used as a function word in introducing a **question, request, or plea** *pray* be careful

2: to get or bring by praying

intransitive verb

1: to make a **request** in a humble manner

2: to address God or a god with **adoration**, confession, supplication, or thanksgiving

"Worship" or "adoration" are **secondary** definitions.

7. Why do you worship wafers?

Answer: Because that “wafer” is Christ.

In **The Bread of Life Discourse (John 6:25-71)**, Jesus discusses the Eucharist – and the importance of **consuming** His Body and Blood. Christ emphatically states that unless we **eat** his flesh and **drink** his blood, we have **no life** within us. He goes on to say *“For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink.”*

It is interesting to note that the usual Greek word used for human eating is **“phagon”**, however, this is not the word used in these passages. St. John uses the word, **“trogon”**, which means, **“to munch or to gnaw - like an animal”**. Jesus was again using **hyperbole (exaggeration)** as he often did to drive his point across so that the crowd would understand that he was not speaking metaphorically. He **meant** what he said.

Later, **John 6:66**, goes on to say, *“As a result of this, many of his disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied him.”* This marks the **only** time in Scripture where Jesus’ disciples left him for doctrinal reasons. They simply couldn’t handle what Jesus was telling them.

At the Last Supper, our Lord stated in no uncertain terms, “This **IS** my body”, and “This **IS** my blood.”. He did **NOT** say that it was simply a “**symbol**” or “**representation**” of His body and blood.

The Early Church Fathers were unanimous in their belief in the Holy Eucharist – so much so that they were willing to shed their blood by martyrdom for this belief. The Jewish and Roman leaders of the time accused them of ***cannibalism*** for their belief in the Eucharist and many of them suffered horrible deaths because of it.

The rejection of this truth is only as old as the **Protestant Reformation**, although some Protestant Fathers believed in the Real Presence. For example, whereas **Martin Luther** believed in the Real Presence - **John Calvin** rejected it. Belief in the Eucharist was yet another source for the seemingly endless splintering of Protestantism.

8. If you died tonight, would you go to heaven?

Answer: First – let me ask **YOU** a similar question. **WHY** do you believe that you will go straight to Heaven no matter what? The Bible doesn't teach this.

The Bible teaches that although we have been born again in Christ – we must still **endure** in faith and strive not to fall back into darkness and lose our secure position (**Matt. 7:19-23, Matt. 10:22, Matt. 24:13, Matt. 25:31–46, John 15:1-6, Rom. 11:22, 1 Cor. 9:27, 1 Cor. 4:4, 1 Tim. 4:1, Heb. 3:6, Heb. 3:12-14, Heb 6:4-6, Heb. 10:26-27, 2 Pet. 3:17, 1 John 2:24, 1 John 5:13, Rev. 3:5, Rev. 22:19**).

This “**Once Saved Always Saved**” (OSAS) doctrine is a Protestant invention that only goes back as far as the 16th century. Certainly, you can cherry-pick a verse here and there to substantiate this false doctrine – but the **CONTEXT** of Scripture condemns this arrogant teaching.

As Catholics, we have a **moral certitude** that we will indeed go to Heaven - having **endured in faith**, as the Word of God prescribes.

9. Why do you call your priest "Father" when the Bible says not to?

Answer: The Bible *doesn't* say not to.

In **Matt. 23:9**, Jesus tells the crowd not to call any man “**Father**”. The verse that precedes this (**Matt: 23:8**), Jesus tells us not to call people “**Teachers**”.

Is Jesus telling us that we *can't* call certain people "fathers" or "teachers" when they may actually be fathers or teachers?

Absolutely **NOT**. He is telling us that no man is to be considered father *above* our Father in heaven and no person is to be considered teacher *above* our Teacher in heaven.

Jesus was speaking about the Scribes and Pharisees who exalted themselves before all: *“They love places of honor at banquets, seats of honor in synagogues, greetings in marketplaces, and the salutation 'Rabbi.’”* (**Matt 23:6-7**).

Consider the following passages:

- Jesus said, "Your **FATHER** Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad." (**John 8:56**).
- St. Stephen refers to "*our **FATHER** Abraham,*" (**Acts 7:2**).
- St. Paul speaks of "*our **FATHER** Isaac*" (**Romans 9:10**).
- *For I became your **FATHER** in Christ Jesus through the gospel" (**1 Cor. 4:14–15**).*
- *"For this I was appointed a preacher and apostle . . . a **TEACHER** of the Gentiles in faith and truth" (**1 Tim. 2:7**).*
- *"For this gospel I was appointed a preacher and apostle and **TEACHER**" (**2 Tim. 1:11**).*
- *"God has appointed in the church first Apostles, second prophets, third **TEACHERS**" (**1 Cor. 12:28**).*

There are but a few of many examples of these words in Scripture that prove the Catholic position. Our priests **are** our fathers and teachers in **Christ** - and in no way attempt to usurp God's authority.

10. Why do you pray for dead people?

Answer: Because praying for the dead is a Biblical practice.

Praying for the dead is a practice that goes all the way back to the Old Testament.

In **2 Macc. 12:42-46**, we see that Judas Maccabeus prays for the men of his army, killed in battle. **Verse 44** says, “... *for if he were not expecting the fallen to rise again, it would have been useless and foolish to pray for them in death.*”

2 Maccabees is one of the **Seven** Books removed from Protestant Bibles. It is interesting to note that the Orthodox Jews **STILL** pray for the dead to this day, but our Protestant brothers reject this idea as “**unbiblical**” because their Bibles are devoid of these Books.

The Catholic doctrine of **Purgatory** is Biblically-based and is best described as a state of final cleansing before entering into heaven. According to the **Catechism of the Catholic Church**, it's a "***final purification of the elect***" (1030-1032).

Matt. 5:25-26 tells us that unless we have settled our matters, we will be "*handed over to the prison guard and will not be released until we have paid the last penny.*"

Additionally, **Matt. 12:32** states, "*whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come*", which indicates that there **IS** purification after death for some.

Matt. 18:32-35 and **Luke 12:58-59** are additional verses that support this doctrine.

In **1 Cor. 3:10-15**, this is how the process is described:

"According to the grace of God given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But each one must be careful how he builds upon it, for no one can lay a foundation other than the one that is there, namely, Jesus Christ. If anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw, the work of each will come to light, for **the Day** (judgment) will disclose it. It will be revealed with **fire**, and the fire itself will test the quality of each one's work. If the work stands that someone built upon the foundation, that person will receive a wage.

But if someone's work is burned up, that one will suffer loss; the person WILL be saved, but only as through fire."

- This cannot be **Heaven** because the person will **SUFFER** - and there is **NO** suffering in Heaven.
- This cannot be **Hell** because the person will be **SAVED** - and there is **NO** salvation in Hell.
- This is describing a **THIRD** state – a state of **Final Purification**.

Final Thoughts

There are many more questions that non-Catholics and Anti-Catholics use to draw Catholics away from their faith. But before we get angry, we should understand that they actually believe that they are doing something noble because they believe the Catholic Church to be a pagan-oriented perversion of the Church that Christ left the world.

By drawing Catholics out of the Church and luring them into one of the thousands of Protestant denominations – they believe that they have aided in the “saving” of a soul. Unfortunately, many under-catechized Catholics agree as they parade right out of the Church after becoming confused and disoriented when they are grilled about their faith.

As Catholics, we need to be better equipped in defending what we believe by being able to explain those beliefs when we are ambushed by a “well-intentioned” non-Catholic. We need to remember that we have Scripture, history and archaeology on our side – as well as an unbroken line of Apostolic Succession. We should see encounters with Protestants as a welcome challenge – and not a discussion to run away from.