



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

Differences Between Catholics and Protestants

- Part II -

PART 2

In our ongoing study of the differences between Catholic and Protestant beliefs, the point must be made that only those main differences can be expounded on. Because there is literally a never-ending splintering that goes on within Protestantism, there are also a never-ending number of doctrinal deviations.

The Catholic Church teaches that any person can be converted (**Matt. 28:19-20, 1 Tim. 2:3-4, John 3:16**). Most mainline Protestants (**Lutherans, Baptists, Episcopalians, Methodists, etc.**) believe this, as do many “**non-denominational**” Protestant sects.

Calvinists, on the other hand, believe that God only chose a certain number of people for conversion – and that the *majority* were actually created just to be thrown into Hell. This is what is known as the doctrine of **Double Predestination**, which is based on the Calvinist tenet of **Unconditional Election**. This precept teaches that God chooses only a select few for salvation – and they have no choice in the matter. Calvinists are followers of the doctrines of **John Calvin**, a contemporary of **Martin Luther**. Their groups include **Presbyterians** and many of the **Reformed Evangelical** and “**non-denominational**” groups.

If Unconditional Election was true – then there would be **NO** need for evangelization. **ALL** of God’s “**chosen few**” would be automatically saved. However – **Jesus** instructed His Apostles to:

Matt. 28:19-20

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, **teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”**

The Bible teaches that **anybody** can be saved . . .

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that **everyone who believes in him might not perish** but might have eternal life.

2 Tim. 2:3-4

This is good and pleasing to God our savior, **who wills everyone to be saved** and to come to knowledge of the truth.

Calvinism can be summed up by its “**5 points**”, referred to as **T.U.L.I.P.**:

Total Depravity

We are so injured by Original sin that we cannot possibly free ourselves from this condition without God’s grace.

Although we do not refer to this as “**Total depravity**” – Catholics actually agree with this tenet of Calvinism.

Unconditional Election

The proposition that God has selected a *few* for salvation and the rest for damnation

Limited Atonement

The idea that Christ died and paid for the sins of a select few – not the sins of all of mankind.

Irresistible Grace

The select few that God has chosen have no choice in accepting or rejecting God’s grace.

Perseverance of the Saints

Those select few can never lose their salvation. This is sometimes referred to as **Eternal Security** or “**OSAS**” (Once Saved, Always Saved).

Some of these points are so bizarre and *unscriptural* that only by twisting Scripture (**2 Pet. 3:16**) can one squeeze these doctrines out of it.

Some verses that they use to support their false doctrine of **Perseverance of the Saints** are:

1 Peter 1:5

Who by God's power *are being guarded through faith* for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

God IS able to guard us – *unless* we are unwilling.

2 Timothy 1:12

Which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and *I am convinced that he is able to guard* until that Day what has been entrusted to me.

Once again - God IS able to guard us, but only if we *cooperate* with His grace.

2 Peter 1:10

Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, *for if you practice these qualities* you will never fall.

This promise in this verse is contingent on **OUR** cooperation – “**IF**” we practice these qualities.

John 10:27-29

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and ***no one will snatch them out of my hand***. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and ***no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand***.

This says **NOTHING** about the ability of the person to walk away from God on their **own** – as we see Jesus's disciples do in **John 6:66**.

NONE of these verses is a guarantee that we **will** persevere. They are words of encouragement that we **CAN** persevere – **IF** we remain faithful. Whereas, God's love is unconditional – salvation is not.

A straight reading of Scripture completely refutes the “P” in TULIP (**Perseverance of the Saints**). Most Protestant denominations believe in this doctrine, also known as “**Eternal Security**” – the idea that once you are “**saved**”, there is *nothing* you can do to lose your salvation. They say that if a person is lost – then they were “**never saved**” to begin with. The **Bible**, however, tells a different story . . .

Romans 11:22

“See, then, the kindness and severity of God: *severity toward those who fell*, but God's kindness to you, *provided you REMAIN in his kindness; otherwise you to will be cut off.*”

*Paul is warning the faithful to **REMAIN** in God's favor or they will lose their salvation. How can they lose what they **never** had?*

Hebrews 10:26-27

“**If we sin deliberately AFTER receiving KNOWLEDGE of the truth**, there no longer remains sacrifice for sins *but a fearful prospect of judgment and a flaming fire* that is going to consume the adversaries.”

*This is a clear warning that falling away from God will result in the loss of our salvation. The Greek word for “**knowledge**” used here is **NOT** the usual word (*oida*). This is talking about a *full, experiential knowledge (epignosei)*. This verse is about **CHRISTIANS** who had an **EPIGNOSIS** of Christ and who can **fall back** into darkness and **LOSE** their salvation by their own doing.*

2 Peter 2:20-22

For if they, having escaped the defilements of the world through the KNOWLEDGE of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ, **again become entangled and overcome by them, their last condition is worse than their first.**

For it would have been better for them **not to have KNOWN the way of** righteousness than after knowing it to **turn back** from the holy commandment handed down to them.

*Here, Peter illustrates that those who had a **full, experiential knowledge (epignosei)** of Christ – **CHRISTIANS** – who can fall back into darkness and **LOSE** their salvation by their own doing..*

2 Peter 3:17

Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, ***be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position.***

*Peter is warning the faithful not to fall **back** into sin and lawlessness.*

Rev. 3:5

He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. **I will never blot out his name from the book of life,** but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels. *God **cannot** blot out a name that was **never** there in the first place. He is talking about **CHRISTIANS** who are already saved and how they can **LOSE** their salvation.*

These are just a *few* of the verses that refute this tenet of Calvinism. It simply goes to show how something so **UNSCRIPTURAL** can be twisted into so-called “**Scriptural**” doctrine.

As for being “**saved**” – here is what the **Bible** teaches, and therefore, the **Church**: The Scriptures assure us that we as Christians 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.

Salvation is not a one-time, slam-dunk event. It is a lifelong process.

As we discussed before – Protestantism is largely based on the “**Five Solas**”:

1. **Sola Gratia** - The belief that we are saved by ***Grace Alone***
2. **Sola Fide** - The idea that we are saved by ***Faith Alone***
3. **Sola Christus** - The believe that we are saved by ***Christ Alone***
4. **Sola Scriptura** - The idea that ***Scripture Alone*** is our Sole Authority
5. **Sola Deo Gloria** - The belief that every aspect of the Christian life is for the ***Glory of God Alone***

The two ***main*** pillars of Protestantism, however, can be summed up by:

Sola Fide

Sola Scriptura

Sola Fide was largely an invention of **Martin Luther** – as was Sola Scriptura. The main problem with Sola Scriptura is that the Bible itself ***rejects*** this false doctrine and tells us explicitly that Christ’s **CHURCH** is our final earthly Authority:

Matt 16:16-19

And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it.

I will give YOU the keys to the kingdom of heaven. WHATEVER YOU bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and WHATEVER YOU loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Matt. 18:15-18

"If your brother sins (against you), go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won over your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, so that 'every fact may be established on the testimony of two or three witnesses.'

If he refuses to listen to them, **tell the church**. If he refuses to listen even to the **church**, then treat him as you would a Gentile or a tax collector.

Amen, I say to you, **WHATEVER YOU bind** on earth shall be bound in heaven, and **WHATEVER YOU loose** on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Luke 10:16

Whoever listens to **YOU** listens to **ME**. Whoever rejects **YOU** rejects **ME**. And whoever rejects **ME** rejects the **ONE** who sent **ME**."

John 16:12-15

"I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now.

But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, **he will guide you to ALL truth**. He will not speak on his own, but he will speak what he hears, **and will declare to YOU the things that are coming**.

He will glorify me, because **he will TAKE from what is MINE and declare it to YOU**. **Everything** that the Father has is **MINE**; for this reason, I told you that **he will TAKE from what is MINE and declare it to YOU**.

John 20:21-23

Jesus said to them again, “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.”**

These verses clearly show that Jesus left His Church in charge – and **NOT** the personal interpretations of individuals. We must remember that when He addressed the crowds – He was addressing **ALL** of us. However, when He was instructing His Apostles and inner circle – He was instructing the **leaders** of His Church.

How can you have a so-called “**Biblical doctrine**” like Sola Scriptura when the Bible itself doesn’t teach it? The answer is **Scriptural acrobatics**. St. Peter warned about this kind of Scriptural perversion:

2 Pet. 3:15-16

And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, **which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.**

What the Church is - According to Scripture

The problem with most factions of Protestantism is that they view Catholics as having chosen the Catholic Church *instead* of Christ and His Word as their Authority. This couldn't be further from the truth – but they fail to recognize that:

- Jesus built **ONE** Church (**Matt. 16:16-19**). He prayed fervently that this Church remain **ONE** - as He and the Father are **ONE** (**John 17:20-23**). There is **NO** other.
- Jesus is **Truth** itself (**John 14:6**).
- Jesus promised His Church that the Holy Spirit would guide her to **ALL** Truth (**John 16:12-15**).
- The Church is the **Pillar and Foundation of Truth** (**1 Tim. 3:15**).
- The Church is the **FULLNESS** of Christ (**Eph. 1:22-23**).
- The Church is the **Body** of Christ and He is the **Head** (**1 Cor. 12:12-31, Eph. 4:3-6, Col. 1:18**).
- Jesus identifies His very **SELF** with His Church (**Acts 9:4-5**).
- Jesus gave His Church supreme **Authority** on earth - that **WHATEVER** it ordains on earth is also ordained in heaven (**Matt. 16:18-19, 18:15-18, John 20:21-23**).
- He stated that whoever listened to or rejected His Church listened to or rejected **HIM** and the **ONE** who sent Him (**Luke 10:16**).

It's not Christ **OR** the Church. Jesus Christ and His Church are **inseparable**.

As we have studied in a previous class – belief in a Pre-Tribulation “**Rapture**” is believed by many Protestant denominations. Belief in this unbiblical event really took root in the 1830’s when an English minister named **John Nelson Darby** began to preach about it. Darby started his own denomination called the **Plymouth Brethren** after becoming disillusioned with the Church of Ireland. He began to teach a new doctrine based on his own interpretations of several verses of Scripture – especially **1 Thess. 4:16-17**, which states:

For the Lord himself, with a word of command, with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God, will come down from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Thus we shall always be with the Lord.

The Bible is clear that the **Second Coming** of Jesus will be preceded by a period of persecution (**Matt. 24:20-31; Mark 13:19-27; 2 Thess. 2:1-4**) commonly referred to as the “**Tribulation**”. However, there is no mention of Jesus coming a second time to rescue his believers - only to return a *third* time. When we read **1 Thess. 4:16-17** in context with the other Scripture verses that mention the Tribulation and the Second Coming, it is clear that it is speaking about what is going to happen when the Lord returns at the end of time – not before.

None of the Protestant “Reformers” believed in or taught about the “Rapture” yet you would be hard-pressed to find a Protestant today who doesn’t believe in some form of Rapture theology. The variations in this theology differ in regards to whether Jesus will return **before** the coming period of Tribulation (“**Pre-Trib**”), **during** the Tribulation (“**Mid-Trib**”) or **after** the tribulation (“**Post-Trib**”).

Protestantism and Abortion & Contraception

Whereas most Protestants are against abortion, not all are against abortion in ALL cases. Some denominations teach that it depends on the case. For example, in cases of rape or incest, abortion is tolerated. The Catholic Church’s stand on abortion is one of **zero tolerance**. The child is ***never*** to blame for perpetrated sin that led to their conception. Whether that sin was rape or incest – or simply fornication - killing the child simply **compounds** the sin.

It’s interesting to note that before the **Anglican Church’s Lambeth Conference in 1930**, virtually **EVERY** Protestant group rejected artificial -contraception as intrinsically evil. After this conference, however, denomination after denomination began to give in to this evil as “acceptable” until virtually **EVERY** denomination not only ***accepted*** it but **taught** it to their congregants.

Thankfully, today there is a movement within Protestantism that rejects contraception as being contrary to God's will. More groups are rejecting what their predecessors held as "evil".

Another area where many Protestants differ from Catholics is **Baptism**. The Catholic Church teaches – as does Scripture, that Baptism is *regenerative* (**John 3:5, Col. 2:12-13, Acts. 2:38-39, Titus 3:5, Rom. 6:1-11, 2 Pet. 3:21**). Most Protestants believe that Baptism is simply an outward sign of "accepting Christ" but does absolutely nothing to the soul. Many believe that it is optional and not mandatory. Scripture teaches us that Baptism is necessary for salvation (**John 3:5, Mark 16:16, 2 Pet. 3:21**).

Most Protestants believe ONLY in what they refer to as a "**Believer's Baptism**". That is, only an adult or young person who has reached the "age of reason" should be baptized. The Bible teaches that **St. Peter** baptized the **ENTIRE** household of Cornelius based on his faith. **St Paul** spoke of baptizing the **ENTIRE** households of the **Philippian Jailer** and **Stephanas** based on their faith as well. The Early Church wrote volumes about the fact that Infant Baptism was handed down to them by the **APOSTLES**. Most Protestants reject this, however as "unbiblical."

Additionally, most Protestants reject the idea of baptizing by pouring water over the head as "**unscriptural**." They hold that baptism by "**immersion**" is the only valid way to baptize. The problem is – immersion is **NOT** mentioned in Scripture, either.

They get this idea from verses such as (**Acts 8:39**) where it says, “*When they came up out of the water . . .*”. The fact is that there is not a single example of a detailed Baptism in ALL of the New Testament. This is a situation where we defer to **Sacred Tradition**. The 1st century document, *The Didache (Teachings of the Twelve Apostles)*, gives explicit instructions on **HOW** to Baptize:

Chapter 7. Concerning Baptism

And concerning baptism, baptize this way: Having first said all these things, **baptize into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in living water**. But if you have not living water, **baptize into other water**; and if you can not in cold, in warm. But if you have not either, **pour out water thrice upon the head into the name of Father and Son and Holy Spirit**. But before the baptism let the baptizer fast, and the baptized, and whatever others can; but you shall order the baptized to fast one or two days before.

The Didache was written while many of the Apostles were still alive.

Finally, in **Acts 2**, when we read about the Apostles baptizing **3000** people in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost – **HOW** did they Baptize them? There was no river in the city – and the Chief Priests and Pharisees would **NEVER** have allowed them to Baptize in those people into Christ on the Temple grounds. **Pouring** would have been their only alternative.

Unfortunately, Protestantism continues to splinter and will **keep** splintering because those who break away from one another are just being good Protestants.

Protestantism was born of ecclesiastical divorce, so constant reform is **normal** – and for many, **necessary**.

As **Martin Luther** himself opined:

“There are as many sects as there are heads. There is not an individual, however clownish he may be, who does not claim to be inspired by the Holy Ghost, and who does not put forth as prophecies his ravings and dreams.” (**Martin Luther, Christians at Antwerp, 1525**)

