

What's the Difference

We compare the Protestant faith with Roman Catholicism

Roman Catholicism

- « Holy Scripture and church tradition are equal. ———
- « The interpretation of scripture is subject to the judgment of the church.
- « When the Pope speaks on behalf of the church, his words and judgment are infallible.
- « Roman Catholic doctrine concerning Mary:
 - Mary is the Mother of God
 - Mary is a Deity equal to Christ.
 - Mary is the Co-Redemptrix with Jesus. ———
 - Mary's virginity was perpetual. ———
 - Mary was also born of a virgin birth.
 - Mary was conceived without sin and lived without sin.
 - Mary did not die, but was “assumed” by God.
 - Mary is the Mediatrix that intervenes between us and God that our sins might be forgiven.
- « We are forgiven our Sin (and our sins) through
 - Faith in Jesus Christ
 - Good works
 - Through participation in the seven sacraments
 - + Baptism
 - + Confirmation
 - + Holy Eucharist
 - > Bread and cup become Christ's actual body and blood
 - + Penance
 - > Examination of conscience
 - > Express sorrow for sins
 - > Show a determination not to repeat sins
 - > Confess to the priest ———
 - > Perform penance or obtain indulgence
 - + Extreme Unction
 - + Holy Orders
 - + Matrimony
- « Behavioral sins are divided into two groups:
 - + Mortal sins: serious sins
 - + Venial sins: lesser sins

Protestantism

- « Holy Scriptures are our guide for faith and life. *2 Tim 3:16,17; 1 John 5:13; Deut 12:32*
- « We are encouraged to read the Bible with the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. *John 5:39 & 14:26; Rom 15:4; 1 John 2:27*
- « No man is infallible, and that only Christ is the head of the church *Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18*
- « Mary is the mother of Jesus, and is revered for her obedience, faith, and courage.
- « Christ is our Redeemer. *John 11:25, many others*
- « The Bible says that Jesus had brothers and sisters. *Mark 3:31, Mark 6:3, and many others*
- « Apart from Christ none are without sin. *Romans 3:9,10,23*
- « Jesus is our Mediator. *1 Timothy 2:5*
- « We are forgiven our Sin (and our sins) through faith in Christ Jesus. *Ephesians 2:8,9*
- « We observe the Sacraments in which Jesus Christ himself participated (baptism & communion)—as a sign of the real power and presence of Christ in the church.
- « The Lord's Supper, or communion, is a time to commune with Christ, to remember his sacrifice and to proclaim his death and resurrection. *1 Corinthians 11:23-26*
- « We confess our sins to God. All Christians are called to be priests or ministers in their daily lives. *1 Peter 2:5,9; 1 John 1:9*
- « All sins are an affront to God. *Romans 6:23*

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Roman Catholicism

« Teaches the existence of a Purgatory (post-death purification) and Limbo (a state for those born in original sin but not deserving of either heaven or hell.)

Pope Benedict 16th has recently eliminated Limbo, and Purgatory is “in limbo!”

« Teaches that Christ offers salvation to the world only through the Roman Catholic church, which is the only “one true church.”

« The authority of the church is derived from apostolic succession.

« Apostolic succession means a direct line of bishops traced back to St. Peter.

« Teaches that salvation cannot be guaranteed or assured.

« Christians are saved by meritorious works (beginning with baptism) and that salvation is maintained by good works (receiving the sacraments, confession of sin to a priest, etc.)

« Catholics not only pray to God, but also to Mary and the saints.

« Catholic Bible includes Apocryphal books

- 1st and 2nd Maccabees
- Baruch
- Tobit
- Judith
- The Wisdom of Solomon
- Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)
- Additions to Esther
- Susanna and Bel and the Dragon

Protestantism

« No Biblical basis for purgatory or limbo

« Salvation through Christ. *John 11:25, many others*

« Christ is Head of the Church *Ephesians 5:22*
Authority is derived from obeying Christ and following the scriptures.

« Apostolic succession means a direct line of faith, belief, and practice—beginning with the ministry of St. Paul. There is no compelling evidence that Peter was ever the Bishop of Rome.
John 14:16-17, Acts 15, Galatians 1:18-20, 2:1

« Salvation is certain through faith in Christ.
1 John 5:13

« Christians are saved by grace through faith, totally apart from works.
Titus 3:5; Ephesians 2:8-9; Galatians 3:10-11; Romans 3:19-24

« Scripture teaches us only to pray to God
Matthew 6:9; Luke 18:1-7

« Apocryphal books are non-canonical, but many are considered helpful or edifying.

References include "Catholic Encyclopedia," and "So What's the Difference," by Fritz Ridenour