ROMAN CATHOLICISM
In the Light of Scripture

by

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CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

VENERATION OF MARY

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH in actual fact worships Mary, the mother of Jesus, more than it worships either God or Christ. For instance, as we have already seen, when praying with a rosary, one Paternoster is followed by ten Ave Marias.

Jesus is called the Righteous King; Mary is called the Merciful Queen. In the papal bull of Sixtus IV, adopted by the Council of Trent, she is called "*Queen of Heaven, who intercedes with the King, whom she has brought forth*." Although God is willing to pardon men, His righteousness makes Him very stern, so much so that He caused His Son to atone for our sins. The Son of God is also severe, and although He sacrificed Himself, and died upon the cross, He also commanded His disciples to carry their crosses, and by and by He will judge the world, casting those who have not believed on Him into the everlasting punishment of Hell. Only Mary is filled with mercy. Roman Catholicism attributes to Mary most of the characteristics of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayers were first offered to Mary toward the end of the fourth century, and during the fifth century her worship was in full flourish. In the Roman Church there are fourteen feasts which are universally observed in honor of Mary. She is also remembered every Saturday, and the whole month of May is dedicated to her. Besides this there are eight other feasts observed in her honor, but these are more local. The year 1953 was celebrated as the Marian year.

Since God chose Mary to be the mother of the Lord Jesus, we cannot but esteem her highly, honoring her a pattern for all motherhood. But the Lord Jesus said clearly, "**Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and he only shalt thou serve**" (Matthew 4:10). This being so, to worship Mary is erroneous and not in any way pleasing to God.

1. Nowhere in the Scripture is there recorded any worship of Mary, nor any command so to do.
2. The Wise Men worshipped the Babe; they did not worship Mary (Matthew 2:11).
3. In referring to Jesus and Mary together, the Bible puts Jesus first (Matthew 2:11, 13, 14, 20, 21).
4. Mary herself confessed that she was a sinner, for she needed a Saviour (Luke 1:46, 47).
5. The last reference to Mary is found in Acts 1:14:

These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

a. At that time Mary was earnestly and unitedly praying with other believers, as one of them.

b. Other books of the New Testament, although frequently discussing the subject of salvation, never once connect it with Mary, or make any reference to her.

c. The Book of Revelation refers to the saved in glory and to the "**Lamb as it had been slain**" (Revelation 5:6) in the midst of the throne, to the praising host (Revelation 5:7-14), to the twelve foundations of the city, with the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb upon them (Revelation 21:14), but there is not a single reference to Mary.

d. Since after Acts 1:14 neither the Scriptures nor early church history makes any reference to Mary, it may well be that this was in the purpose of God, because of the grievous errors of those who in later days would call her the "Mother of God," and worship and pray to her.

6. The Lord Jesus is the one and only Saviour, and He is abundantly able and willing to save us (Acts 4:12; Hebrews 7:25), so there is no occasion for Mary's intercessions.

7. The verses in Scripture which speak of the Mediator between God and men not only do not mention her, but on the contrary expressly exclude her, saying, "**There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus**" (I Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 8:6; 9:15; I John 2:1).

8. Roman Catholics call Mary the "Mother of God." God is infinite and eternal spirit, and to call her Mother of God is absurd. She was the mother of "**the man Christ Jesus**." Elizabeth called her "**the mother of my Lord**" (Luke 1:43; cf. v. 35), but that is very different from "Mother of God."

9. Because many mothers have influenced their sons, the Roman Church thought that Mary could also influence the Lord Jesus, and for this reason regarded her as a mediator. But the relationship between ordinary mothers and their sons cannot be compared with the relationship now existing between Mary and the risen Son of God. There are passages which show that even on earth, from the time when the Lord began His ministry, neither Mary nor any other member of the family could interfere with His work.

Three times Mary tried to do this, but the Lord would not permit it.

a. On the occasion when He visited the temple as a lad.

And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? (Luke 2:48, 49).

b. At the wedding feast of Cana of Galilee.

And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come (John 2:3, 4).

c. At Capernaum, when He was preaching.

There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him. And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother and my brethren? (Mark 3:31, 33).

For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother (Matthew 12:50).

10. To the woman who said, "**Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked**," He replied, "**Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it**" (Luke 11:27, 28). The Lord did not say that His mother was not blessed in her relationship to Him as mother, but He did say that the blessedness of those who kept His word was even greater. This verse by itself shows how utterly the Church of Rome, has gone wrong in exalting Mary as it has done.

11. Apart from the work of redemption which our Lord Jesus finished on the cross (Hebrews 10:20), there is no way for anyone to draw near to God.

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me (John 14:6).

Therefore to pray to Mary is not merely futile, it is blasphemous.

12. In praying to Mary, the suppliant says, "Pity us sinners." But Mary has no place in God's plan of salvation beyond her place as the human mother of Christ. When the angel spoke to Joseph about Mary, he said:

She shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins (Matthew 1:21). [Note the masculine pronoun He.]

13. Our Lord gave specific promises to those who will come to Him:

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out (John 6:37).

Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest (Matthew 11:28).

There is no need for any human being or angel to remind Him of His promises.

14. To pray to Mary is nothing less than to doubt the reliability of God's Word:

God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).

God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved) (Ephesians 2:4, 5).

15. Before the Roman Catholic Church existed, ancient heathen religions already had their female deities. Among these are the goddess Kuan-yin of Buddhism, the Goddess of Mercy; and the Queen of Heaven of the Babylonians (see Jeremiah 7:18; 44:15-23, 25).

16. It is estimated that tens of thousands of people are praying to Mary in every language every second of day and night. Since she is only a human being, how can she from year end to year end, night and day, without a break, hear those numberless prayers? Only God can do that. But, praise be to His name, He can and He does.

~ end of chapter 23 ~

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