

The Old Paths

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“The Catholic Church’s Head Is Dead”

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No doubt, people in every country in this world are aware of the fact that Karol Wojtyla died on Saturday, April 2. (Karol Wojtyla became John Paul II in 1978.) He was known as the 264th Pope of the Roman Catholic Church. This last week has seen Vatican City filled with literally millions of people who filed past Karol’s dead body to get one last glimpse before the body was buried. Now, starting on April 18th, a “conclave” (secret meeting) will take place in which 117 Roman cardinals will vote on who will become the new Pope of the Roman Catholic Church, and new head of the Vatican City. (The world’s smallest city-state, a nation completely surrounded by Rome.)

The Pope

Catholics once considered the Pope a “vicar (representative) of Peter”. Now, he is called the “Vicar of Christ.” Imagine, a mere man being selected by mere men (117 to be exact) to be Christ’s representative! Yet, this is the practice of the Catholic Church. When folks speak about the Pope of Rome, often he is simply referred to as “Pope.” What I find interesting is that his official title among the Catholics is: “Bishop of Rome, Vicar of Jesus Christ, Successor of the Prince of the Apostles, Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church, Patriarch of the West, Primate of

Italy, Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Roman Province, Sovereign of the State of the Vatican City, Servant of the Servants of God”. What a mouthful! In addition to this title, the Pope goes by such descriptions as “the Holy Father,” “Highest Pontiff,” “Most Blessed Father,” or “Our Most Holy Lord.” In reading such titles, I am reminded of Matthew 23:9; Job 32:21-22; and Romans 12:3, which tell us to be humble and not to take give men flattering titles.

Currently, the office of Pope is vacant, a condition known as “sede vacante,” or the vacant seat. Therefore, there is no “bishop,” no “vicar,” no “pontiff” over the Catholics; nor is there a “sovereign” over Vatican City at this time. Yet, the Catholic Church and Vatican City are still functioning. They are carrying on the duties they have set forth for themselves even in the absence of their “vicar,” their “pope.” This fact in itself is quite interesting, for if a church can function without its “head,” it tells us that the “head” is actually unnecessary! In addition to this, the fact that the Catholic Church can function without its head, and yet soon “vote” to get a new “head” teaches us

The Catholic Church Is Not The Church Found In The Bible!

How can I make such a statement? It is because when we compare the Catholic Church to the church found in the Bible, we see a marked difference, beginning with the description of the head of the

New Testament church.

• They Are Wrong About Who Is The Head Of The Church ...

Please take note of the fact that when we read about the church found in the pages of the New Testament, we see a church whose head is not a man, but Jesus Christ (Col. 1:18). Jesus said “all authority ... in heaven and earth” belonged to Him (Matt. 28:18). Yet, when a man wears a title like “Most Holy Father,” or “Successor of the Prince of the Apostles,” does this sound like this man respects Christ’s sovereign, supreme authority?

Furthermore, consider the fact that Christ being called the head of the church (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23) means that there is no room for any other “head”! The New Testament illustrates the Lord’s plan by telling us that the church is Christ’s body, and Christ is the head (Col. 1:18, 24; I Cor. 12:12, 14; Eph. 5:23). Knowing what the Bible teaches, how can men then say, “Karol Wajtyla was the head of the church, too!” (or Pius, or John XXIII, etc.)? If people in this world, including our Catholic friends, respect what the Bible says, how can 117 men get together and “vote” for a new “head”? Think about it: If the church (body) has more than one head, it is a monstrosity. Yet, for the church (body) to have no head means it is dead!

• They Are Wrong About Peter Being The First Pope ...

In examining the Catholic Church, we know it is not the church that is found in the New Testament, because this church claims that the apostle Peter was the first Pope of the Catholic Church, and that Karol Wajtyla was the 264th successor to Peter. Historically speaking, there is no mention of anyone with the title, “Pope” until

around 606 A.D. Before this time, (including the first century, A.D.) there was no such title ever given to a man! In reading the New Testament, we find no special emphasis placed upon Peter. We find Peter was considered equal with the apostles. Furthermore, Peter was married (Matt. 8:14-15; I Cor. 9:5), Peter sinned (Matt. 26:69-75; Lk. 5:8; Gal. 2:11-14), and Peter made it clear that he was not worthy of being worshipped by any man (Acts 10:25-26). Contrast these Biblical facts with the expectation that one "kiss the ring" of the unmarried Pope, that a person calls him "Holy Father," and the "Vicar of Christ"! Such facts as these make it clear that the Catholic Church and its organization does not bear any resemblance to the church found in the Scriptures!

• ***They Are Wrong About Who Is A Saint ...***

During the funeral on April 8, the Associated Press said the people were chanting, "Santo Santo," while Reuters news reported people were chanting "Santo subito." In other words, "Make him a saint!" or, "Make him a saint immediately!"

In contrast, the New Testament says that anyone who is a Christian is a saint! When one believes in Christ, repents of his sins, confesses his faith in Christ,

and is baptized for the remission of sins, he becomes a Christian, i.e., a saint (Jn. 8:24; Lk. 13:3; Rom. 10:10; Acts 2:38, 11:26)! This fact is made clear when we open the New Testament and read about saints in places such as Philippi (Phil. 1:1), Corinth (I Cor. 1:2), Jerusalem (Acts 9:13; Rom. 15:25-26), Lydda (Acts 9:32), Ephesus (Eph. 1:1), Colossae (Col. 1:2), and Rome (Rom. 1:7). In fact, Paul said there were saints in Caesar's household (Phil. 4:22)! Clearly, our reading of the Scriptures makes it clear that those called "saints" in the New Testament were simply Christians.

One does not have to wait for some years until they can confirm the "miracles" that have been performed, and then "vote," on a person to determine whether or not he or she is a saint (this is the Catholic practice). The Bible says that once one has been saved from his sins, he is a "saint." It is as simple as that!

• ***They Are Wrong In Worship ...***

It has been apparent for some time that the Catholic Church encourages folks to do things contrary to the gospel of Christ. For instance, the Catholic Church teaches that certain men are to be "priests," while others are distinguished as "laity" or lay-men. The New Testament makes no such distinction, declaring that all Christians are priests (I Pet. 2:5, 9).

In addition to this, the Catholics use mechanical instruments in worship. This is contrary to such passages as Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19; and Hebrews 2:12. They have resurrected the lighting of lamps, burning of incense, and other practices of the Old Law in spite of the fact that the worship and practices of the Old Testament were nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14; Heb. 8:8-13).

Besides these things, we can add the fact that the Catholic Church encourages partaking of the Lord's Supper during weddings, funerals, and often during the week, rather than respecting God's will that the Lord's Supper is to be eaten only upon the first day of the week (Acts 2:42, 20:7)!

Probably the greatest affront to the Lord is when Catholics encourage prayer to Mary and to their self-appointed "saints" (per their definition) rather than praying to God through His Son, Jesus the Christ (I Tim. 2:5).

Conclusion

Yes, the Catholic Church's head is dead, and if the Lord allows this world to stand, they will vote in another "head" very soon (the 265th head to be exact). What is sad is that this church, though filled with many good, moral folks, does not bear the slightest resemblance to the church that is found in the New Testament! Therefore, let us look for opportunities to talk to our Catholic friends and teach them the truth.

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