

LETTER TO PROMISE KEEPERS

BY

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To: Promise Keepers Officers and Board of Directors

Gentlemen:

I have recently heard of the financial difficulties encountered by Promise Keepers U.S.A. It is of great personal regret to me as I see Promise Keepers as an organization that has/had the potential of greatly affecting the United States for moral good and revival of the church of our Lord Jesus.

Unfortunately, I also see two main things that may have caused God's blessing to be lifted from the Promise Keeper organization. May I humbly set these before you with the hope you will seek God's will with respect to this – both its truth and its implementation within the Promise Keeper organization.

The Statement of Faith

I'm one of those people who read the Statement of Faith. After I wrote *What the Bible Says About a Saving Faith*, I became very interested in what people were claiming produced a saving faith. To my recollection I gave that book to Randy Phillips some long time ago.

I thought the Statement of Faith was well stated until I got to paragraph number 5 and found it does not reflect the teaching of Scripture. Unfortunately, the difference is important – critical – so much that the difference can mean eternal life or eternal punishment.

Let me state it so we all have it in front of us:

5. We believe that man was created in the image of God, but because of sin, was alienated from God, that alienation can be removed only by *accepting through faith God's gift of salvation which was made possible by Christ's death.*

You will see I have italicized the last part of the sentence where the troubles lie. There are true parts within the italicized area, e.g., God's gift of salvation was made possible by Christ's death. We know that is true as shown in Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 6:23, etc. The part that is ERROR is associated with the words: "accepting through faith God's gift of salvation." Nowhere in Scripture can that be found nor are those words associated with salvation in Scripture. Colossians 1:21 refers to alienation from God, and that God reconciled us by Christ's physical body through death to present us holy in his sight. That verse tells us what God did, but not how to be saved.

However, when it comes to salvation, how to be saved, an excellent statement is found at Romans 10:9: That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. Likewise, Paul told the jailer, "They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household" (Acts 16:31). Also, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:13). The entire thrust of the New Testament Scripture is that we must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ if we would be saved. A shorthand way of stating and remembering that is this: Jesus is Savior of all for whom he is Lord; Jesus is Lord of all who will be saved.¹

¹ Salvation is also shown in other titles of Jesus, e.g. Christ and Son of God. Both of those titles include Lordship within them as shown at Romans 1:4, "and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord." A full discussion of the titles of the Lord Jesus and their relationship and

If some of you are not used to reading in a discriminating way – my training as an attorney taught me to read that way – you may not realize that the Promise Keeper Statement of Faith makes no claim that faith should reside in the person of Jesus Christ. It is only “accepting through faith God’s gift of salvation.” It is supposedly the “accepting” of something. The word “accepting” is NEVER used with reference to salvation in the New Testament. In America it is often stated that “if one accepts Jesus as Savior that person will have eternal life,” or “believe that Jesus died on the cross for your sins and you will have eternal life,” or, as your statement says, accept through faith God’s gift of salvation in order to remove that alienation from God. All such statements are heresy. Each denies by substitution that salvation is in a person – the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The thrust of salvation is that when we recognize that we are sinners, we come to understand that God has made a way by which we can be reconciled to him through the sacrificial, atoning death of his Son Jesus on a cross by which our sins can be forgiven, and that we can become heirs of eternal life by receiving Jesus Christ as our Lord and pledging to serve him as his bond-servants for the rest of our lives. It is then that the Lord Jesus asks his Father to give us the Holy Spirit (see John 14:15-16 and Acts 5:32). It is because we receive Jesus as our Lord that we then honor and obey him. Obedience is the primary mark (evidence) of a saving faith. See Hebrews 5:9, Matthew 7:21, 28:20, Luke 6:46, 11:28, John 14:15, 23-24, 15:10-14, Romans 15:17; 16:25-26, Ephesians 6:5-6, 2 Thessalonians 1:8, 1 Peter 4:17, 1 John 2:3-6; 3:22,24; 5:2-3.

It is possible that by offering through your Statement of Faith an untrue path of salvation, God has withdrawn his blessing. God judges the heart, thankfully, not the jot and tittle of our written word. But when our word is in error and we know it, then our heart also is corrupt.

In my last letter from Randy Phillips, he stated your Statement of Faith included “only through faith, trusting in Christ alone” which is not in the New Zealand Promise Keepers Statement of Faith from which I quoted paragraph 5. But note that the phrase quoted to me by Randy Phillips also does not refer to the Lordship of Jesus though that is the dominant theme of the New Testament and the primary capacity of our Lord associated with salvation. Later in this letter I will refer to “trusting in Christ alone” more closely.

Is the Bible God’s Word?

Without doubt if I ask that question you will say yes, as I do. The Statement of Faith I have before me also says that the Promise keepers believe it is verbally inspired, authoritative and without error in the original manuscripts.

Is there a slip between the Statement of Faith and practice? Didn’t the *New Man* official magazine of Promise Keepers contain an article that advocated the view of “Christian evolutionists” – those who do not treat Scripture as authoritative or without error. The article put down literalists – those who claim the Bible really is true – by calling them “strict creationists.”

Which Jesus?

When I first attended a Promise Keeper weekend, the thing that struck me most forcefully was the emphasis on Jesus as Lord! Hallelujah! Finally someone – many men – are declaring and honoring Jesus as Lord! I could not have been happier.

But since then I have learned that the declaration of Lord may have become lip service and no longer genuine homage to the King of kings and Lord of lords. You may feel horrified that I could make such a statement. Let me review, please, things that have happened which could lead a person to such a conclusion.

Somehow there has begun in Promise Keepers an ecumenical thrust which seems to ignore all doctrine basic to the faith in its effort to have unity among the brothers. But as soon as you even attempt to do that, you have sacrificed the person of Jesus Christ, the Lord himself, on your personal altar of ecumenism. But you may cry, haven't you read John 17, Jesus' prayer for unity? As you may imagine, I surely have, and I desire as much as you unity among the brethren.

Randy Phillips wrote me, "I would hope that you understand that by including members of the Catholic Church in our efforts Promise Keepers is not seeking "unity at any cost" or oneness based on some watered-down creed that requires no adherence to the teachings of the holy Bible."

Perhaps your board, and Randy, will think differently as you conclude this letter.

Can we sacrifice the Lord himself in order to achieve unity? You may indignantly say, "We would never do that!" But have you already? You are seeking to embrace Mormons as Christian brothers, and Roman Catholics as Christian brothers. Are these men Christian brothers for whom Jesus Christ is Lord of all? They may say so, for whatever their reasons, but they belong to a church system that denies Jesus as Lord – as presented to us in the Scriptures.

Please let me illustrate from T. A. McMahon's description:

The Mormons' Jesus

"The "Jesus Christ" of Latter-Day Saints couldn't be further removed from the Jesus of the Bible. The Jesus invented by Joseph Smith and after whom he named his church is the first spirit child of Elohim, just as all humans, angels, and demons are spirit children of Elohim.

"This Mormon Jesus became flesh through physical intercourse between Elohim (God the Father who has a physical body) and the Virgin Mary. Their Jesus is the half-brother of Lucifer. He came to earth to become a god. His sacrificial death gives immortality to every creature (including animals) at the Resurrection. However, whether an individual creature spends eternity in hell or in one of three heavens is totally up to his or her (or its) performance.

The Roman Catholic Jesus

"Roman Catholics love Jesus. I did for twenty-some years of my life, but he was very different from the Jesus I now know and love. Sometimes he was still a babe in arms or a young boy, overshadowed and protected by his mother. When I wanted his help I made sure I prayed to his mother first. The Jesus to whom I pray now hasn't been a baby for 2000 years.

"The Jesus I loved as a Catholic resided bodily in a small, boxlike tabernacle on our church altar in the form of a white wafer, while simultaneously inhabiting millions of pieces of bread worldwide.

"The Roman Catholic Jesus I knew was the Christ of the crucifix, his body continually hanging on the cross, fittingly symbolic of the perpetual sacrifice of the mass and his unfinished work of salvation.

"The Jesus of the Bible has no need of the seven sacraments, the liturgy, the priesthood, the papacy, His mother's intercession, indulgences, prayers to and for the dead, purgatory, etc., to help save anyone. Roman Catholics who say they love Jesus, though they may call themselves charismatic Catholics, evangelical Catholics, or born-again Catholics, actually love a Jesus who is not the biblical Jesus. He's 'another Jesus.'"

Not Yoked With Unrighteousness

Please realize that though Jesus wanted true believers to be one – in unity with one another – he did not want Christians to be yoked with those worshipping "another Jesus."

We must be very critical (in the positive sense) in our thinking and understanding – as shrewd as snakes – to determine which Jesus a person speaks of who claims to honor and serve the Lord

Jesus. Just because a person uses the words we want to hear does not mean that he understands and means the same thing by them that you and I do.

Mr. McMahon related a conversation with a Muslim who often repeated to his Christian friends how much he loved Jesus. He said of this man: "Though a committed Muslim, he regards himself as an ecumenist. He's proud of the fact that he shares some of the beliefs of both Jews and Christians. Occasionally he attends a Presbyterian church with my friends and truly enjoys the experience and their fellowship. Once in a restaurant he was expressing to me and our Christian friends his love for Jesus. He ended his proclamation with these words: 'If I could tear away my flesh so that all of you could see deep into my heart, you would know how much I love Jesus.' The emotions that filled his every word were stunning; it's uncommon to hear such a devout declaration, even in Christian circles.

"Getting back to my boysenberry pie, I felt good about my friend's expression of love when a nagging thought hit me: Jesus who? A brief mental skirmish took place over whether or not to ask such a question. My words, however, came out before my mind had settled the issue. "Tell me about the Jesus you love." My Muslim friend didn't hesitate: "He's the same one you love." Before I got "doctrinal" with my friend, I thought I should try to show him why it was important to make sure we were talking about the same Jesus.

"I used his neighbor, who is a great friend to both of us, as an example. He and I really love the guy. After agreeing on our mutual feelings, I began to give a description of our common friend's physical attributes: "He's 5'6"; he's completely bald; he weighs 320 pounds; he wears a ring in his left nostril." Actually, I didn't get quite that far before objections were made.

"Wait a minute... he's easily over 6'4", I wish I had all his hair, and he's the thinnest man I know!" My friend added that it was obvious that we weren't talking about the same person. 'Does it matter?' I asked. He gave me an incredulous look. 'Of course it does! I don't have a neighbor fitting your description. You may know someone else like that, but it's not my good friend and neighbor.'

"I pointed out that if I truly believed the description I'd just given, then we couldn't possibly be friends with the same person. He agreed.

"What followed was my description of the Jesus I knew. 'He was crucified and died on the cross for my sins. Did the Jesus you know do that?'

"No, Allah took him to heaven before the crucifixion. Judas died on the cross.'

"The Jesus I know is God himself, who became a man. Is that your Jesus?'

"He shook his head. 'No, Allah alone is God. Jesus was a great prophet, but just a man.'

The discussion went on to many other characteristics the Bible ascribes to Jesus. In almost every case, my Muslim friend had a different perspective. Though he remained convinced that he held the correct view, the fact that our contradictory convictions couldn't be reconciled seemed to dampen his zeal for proclaiming his love for Jesus."

Perhaps the greatest danger today is the uncritical alignment which has taken place between Protestants and Mormons and Roman Catholics. This effort was publicized by Charles Colson with the document *Evangelicals & Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium (ECT)*.

A Continuing Misunderstanding

I have written on this subject to Randy Phillips before. He does not understand what I am saying. He counters with statements such as,

"to imply that all Protestants are automatically saved and that all Catholics are not strikes us as a terrible misunderstanding of the realities in the Church today, where not only do many Catholics know the Lord, but where many Protestants do not. To us, this kind of

thinking is merely indicative of the very lack of mutual understanding and relationship that has separated Protestants and Catholics for centuries – to our shame and the Holy Spirit’s grief.”

He went on to bolster his argument referring to a Barna report:

It will interest you to know that a recent Barna report indicates that 16% of all born-again Christians today are Catholic, and that in the last two years there has been a 41% increase in the number of Catholics who profess Christ as their personal Savior.

I would prefer you would refer to Scripture, not to a Barna Report. Barna does not understand the requirement that Jesus Christ must be Lord of all true believers. Anyone can profess Christ as their personal Savior. It is meaningless unless he is also his/her Lord. To claim salvation because one has accepted Jesus as one’s personal Savior is heresy! That is found nowhere in Scripture. Obviously I am not claiming or implying that all Protestants are automatically saved.

I am not speaking about the personal salvation of some who are Catholics and some who are Protestants. God alone knows the heart. We can only judge by the fruit of those who claim the relationship. According to my view, the gate is narrow as you may guess from my prior remarks. We live in a time and culture in which the church has sought to tear down Christ’s narrow gate and install a six-lane highway. That is the way of those who teach salvation may be had by accepting Jesus as Savior.

I commend having all the Mormons and Catholics one can possibly recruit to a Promise Keeper meeting where Jesus Christ is proclaimed as Lord and the salvation message clearly given. These men need to hear a true gospel.

The problem I am having, and I’m certain God is having, with what you are doing is that you are extending to the Roman Catholics an acceptance of their church as another Christian church. By your kind words, you are giving the Roman Catholic Church credibility. You are saying to all the world that it is just another Christian church. By having a Catholic address a meeting of Promise Keepers you are assuring the Catholics present that their church is perfectly acceptable as well as all the other Catholics who will hear of your tacit endorsement.

The Roman Catholic Church is not another Christian church. It is the mother of all cults. If Paul were able to view the Catholic Church, his denunciation would be ever so much more severe than when he castigated the Judaizers who were presenting another gospel to the Galatians. Paul told them, “But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!” Sadly, today we have those who preach a much worse, much more deviant gospel, and you (Promise Keepers) would (and do) call them brothers. Let me please review some of the deviant doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church.

JESUS' EXAMPLE

Did Jesus practice ecumenism to all who shared the Jewish faith of his day? Jesus spent almost his entire time in his country of origin, in Israel under Roman political domination. The people were of the same faith but with religious rulers – Pharisees and Sadducees – who had differing religious beliefs. Was Jesus loving and accepting to all, fulfilling the present-day understanding of ecumenism?

Not at all! **One on one**, Jesus treated the religious rulers kindly, as he did Nicodemus to whom he taught the need to be born again. But to the religious leaders as a group, Jesus had nothing good to say. He called them vipers and hypocrites. Most on point, he described their father: "You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer

from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.²

Though the religious leaders all *professed* the same one God, Jesus said *their father* was the devil. I hope to show you the parallel between those Jewish leaders – the religious establishment – and the Roman Catholic Church.

Jesus spoke of evangelization by the Jews: "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are."³

Just as Jesus was with Nicodemus, we should be loving and accepting *of individual Catholics* who desire to know more and/or worship God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. But we should no more accept the Roman Catholic Church than Jesus did the Jewish religious leaders of his day.

JUDAIZERS AND CATHOLICS

Peter was afraid of the circumcision group – the Judaizers. The Judaizers claimed to be Christians, but they forced Jewish customs upon the Gentile Christians. When they were around, Peter acted like a Jew; otherwise he lived like a Gentile.⁴ Paul stated the present evangelical Christian belief when he said:

"We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners' know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by *faith in Jesus Christ*. So we, too, have put our *faith in Christ Jesus* that we may be justified by *faith in Christ* and *not by observing the law*, because by observing the law no one will be justified."⁵

The Catholic Church does exactly as the Judaizers did. It says Catholics must follow rules established by the Catholic Church in order to have salvation. This is heresy!

WHAT CONSTITUTES SPIRITUAL TRUTH VS. HERESY?

Paul's letter to the Galatians showed that Paul considered the Judaizers teachings heresy:

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to *a different gospel*--which is really *no gospel at all*. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to *pervert the gospel of Christ*. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, *let him be eternally condemned!* As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, *let him be eternally condemned!*⁶

What had the Galatians done that was so awful that Paul would use such forceful language to denounce it? Were they denying Christ? No. Had they deserted Christianity? No. The Galatians had been influenced by the Judaizers who taught them that *in addition to* the Christianity taught by Paul, they should also observe Jewish customs and laws, among which was circumcision. Please remember, there is no evidence that the Galatians denied Christ or did not call Jesus Lord. They added to the requirements for salvation by accepting the teaching of the Judaizers that they must also obey the rules and customs of the Jewish religion.

² John 8:44.

³ Matthew 23:15.

⁴ Galatians 2:11-14.

⁵ Galatians 2:15-16.

⁶ Galatians 1:6-9.

Isn't the parallel remarkably similar between the Judaizers and the Catholic Church? Like the Judaizers, the Catholic Church added rules and regulations to Christianity which they falsely claim must be observed in order to have salvation.

Even the signatories to the Evangelical Accord (ECT) acknowledge exactly what Paul condemned in those who perverted the faith of the Galatians: "Evangelicals hold that the Catholic Church has *gone beyond Scripture, adding teachings and practices that detract from or compromise the Gospel* of God's saving grace in Christ."

FAR WORSE THAN JUDAIZERS

Actually, the Catholic Church is far worse than the Judaizers, having introduced lie upon lie to the belief system of Catholics everywhere. Examples are the claim of an unbroken line of apostolic succession, infallibility of the Pope, confession, the mass, purgatory, Maryology, and claiming salvation can be had only in *the true Church* – the Roman Catholic Church.⁷ All these are the inventions of men.

By contrast the Judaizers were attempting to impose upon the Gentile believers rules and regulations which had been given by God to the Jews.

ARE CATHOLICS CHRISTIANS?

Were the Galatians Christians with a saving faith? No, they had added to their faith. Paul was in despair over them.⁸ Are Catholics Christians with a saving faith? Though there is surely a small remnant of Catholics who have knowledge of Jesus Christ as Lord and believe they must follow Jesus as their Lord, the vast majority appear to rely on the Roman Catholic Church for their salvation. They believe that salvation is possible only through – not the Lord Jesus Christ – but through the one and only true Church – the Roman Catholic Church.

I spoke with a pastor about his efforts to convert Catholics, to disciple them and to teach them what Scripture says. The Catholics could hardly believe Mary had other children and ran to get their Catholic bibles to see what it said. They often could not accept that there is but one mediator between God and man – the man Christ Jesus.⁹ As you know, Catholics are taught that their priests – and most particularly the pope – are mediators between God and man. Even after knowing the false claims of the Roman Catholic Church, this pastor said it was amazing these people still would not leave the Church.

Catholics are enslaved by the Roman Church which claims they will go to purgatory at death and can only be released from purgatory by the prayers and masses given for them in the one true Church – the Roman Catholic Church. These teachings are lies.

Experiential evidence abounds from former Catholics who are now Christians. Do they now believe they had salvation as Catholics? Invariably not. They deplore their former faith, the untruths, the lies, the fear. There are many books detailing their experiences. Two examples are the books of Patricia Nolan Savas, *Gus: A Nun's Story*,¹⁰ and Bartholomew F. Brewer, *Pilgrimage from*

⁷ On the other hand, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, page 223, states: "The plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator, in the first place amongst whom are the Muslims; these profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and together with us they adore the one, merciful God, mankind's judge on the last day."

Which is worse? That Muslims are also saved or that the Catholic Church is the one true Church?

⁸ Paul wrote, "Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? Have you suffered so much *for nothing*--if it really was for nothing? (Galatians 3:3-4) My dear children, for whom I am *again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you*, how I wish I could be with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you!" (Galatians 4:19-20).

⁹ 1 Timothy 2:5.

¹⁰ Bridge Publishing, 1993, S. Plainsfield, New Jersey.

Rome.¹¹ Pat Savas details the little-known story of nuns who had a heart for God, who tried so hard to please him, but who never found peace or joy. Bart Brewer was eager to be a priest, was so happy to become one, but became increasingly disillusioned as he learned Scripture until he felt compelled to leave Catholicism. Two of our best friends are former Catholics who are now glowing, enthusiastic, joyous Christians. They now know they had no salvation as Catholics even though they did the things required of them by the Church. Another converted, former, 20-year Catholic who regularly practiced his faith said he had not once heard the gospel in the Catholic Church.

Generally speaking, *Catholics are not Christians*.¹² They are Roman Catholics who believe salvation is in *The Roman Church*.

Catholic Church Is Condemned in Scripture

Chapters 17 and 18 of Revelation refer to the Roman Catholic Church. Admittedly, it takes study and discernment to understand this and I don't know if any of you have spent much time in Revelation. I have, and the more I study it, the more open it becomes. There are excellent research works which establish beyond reasonable doubt that it is, in fact, the Roman Catholic Church described in these chapters.¹³

Consider how astonishing that God would spend *two chapters* of his Word prophetically describing an evil religious system which over centuries had spilled the blood of his saints¹⁴ and which would exist in the last days. That suggests the subject is of extreme importance to God.

God told us how he views the present condition of Mystery Babylon: "She has become a home for demons and a haunt for every evil spirit, a haunt for every unclean and detestable bird."¹⁵ Catholic scholar Dr. Malachi Martin, formerly a Jesuit professor at Georgetown University and a confidant of Vatican insiders, flatly declared in a New York City interview, "Yes, it's true. Lucifer is enthroned in the Catholic Church." Archbishop Emmanuel Milingo, in front of thousands at Rome's Fatima 2000 International Congress on World Peace, solemnly affirmed that members of the Catholic Church hierarchy are secretly involved in the darkest kinds of formal Satan worship. In a subsequent interview he stated, "Certainly, there are priests and bishops alike who are followers of Satan." He declined to comment on whether cardinals or even the Pope himself were guilty of this heresy, saying he did not feel it proper for him to comment about superior officials. Cardinal Milingo also claims the devil in the Catholic church is like a protected animal. The exorcist today is forbidden to attack the devil, forbidden to do his job.

In Revelation 16:19 it states: "God remembered Babylon the Great [the Roman Catholic Church] and gave her the cup filled with the wine of the fury of his wrath." What will God do to her? "Give back to her as she has given; pay her back double for what she has done. Mix her a double portion from her own cup. Give her as much torture and grief as the glory and luxury she gave herself."¹⁶ In one day her plagues will overtake her: *death, mourning and famine. She will be*

¹¹ Bob Jones University Press, 1982, Greenville, S.C.

¹² This is greatly reinforced by speaking with former Catholics who have been converted. They are almost universally vehement in their condemnation of their former bondage, saying with certainty that they had no salvation in the Roman Catholic Church. Indeed, they claim they did not know the biblical way of salvation until they came out of the Roman Church.

¹³ A current work which thoroughly establishes the identity of the Roman Catholic Church in Revelation 17 and 18 is by Dave Hunt, *A Woman Rides the Beast*, published by Harvest House in 1994.

¹⁴ Revelation 17:6, 18:24, 19:2.

¹⁵ Revelation 18:2. Consider the parallel with 1 Timothy 4:1-3.

¹⁶ Revelation 18:6-7.

consumed by fire, for mighty is the Lord God who judges her.¹⁷ They will bring her to ruin and leave her naked; they will eat her flesh and burn her with fire."¹⁸

PROPHECY OF DESTRUCTION OF ROME

Over 800 years ago in Ireland, a bishop predicted the exact day and hour his life would end. When making a pilgrimage to Rome, he fell into an ecstatic trance upon seeing the city and in short three word phrases – a coded list – predicted the next 112 popes *until doomsday*. The list was lost for ages in Vatican archives.

When it was finally brought to the attention of the public, it was found that all of Malachi's predictions had come true up to, and including, the present Pope. With it was an ominous warning. *There are only two more popes after John Paul II.*

Malachi said the final pope will be Peter the Roman, bearing the same name as the first pope. *The final pope, he prophesied, will bear witness to the destruction of Rome. Malachi prophesied that the city of seven hills¹⁹ will be utterly destroyed and the awful judge will judge the people.*

Note that Malachi prophesied the same judgment for Rome as the prophecy in chapters 17 and 18 of the book of Revelation.

ECUMENISM OR REJOICING AT HER DESTRUCTION?

In Revelation 6, we see pictured the souls of the saints under the altar who are asking the Sovereign Lord to avenge their blood. They are told to wait a little longer until their fellow servants and brothers are killed, as they had been.²⁰ After the destruction of the Roman Catholic Church (chapters 17 and 18), the command is, "Rejoice over her, O heaven! Rejoice, saints and apostles and prophets! God has judged her for the way she treated you."²¹

No, not ecumenism, but judgment. As surely as night follows day, the Roman Catholic Church will suffer God's wrath and Rome will be destroyed.

Babylon's Crimes Before God

What wrong has she done? God told her: "By your magic spell all the nations were led astray."²²

John saw her future:

¹⁷ Revelation 18:8.

¹⁸ Revelation 17:16. Consider also 1 Timothy 4:1-3: "The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will *abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons*. Such teachings come *through hypocritical liars*, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. They *forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods*, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth."

Who do we know that fits that description? Isn't it the Roman Catholic Church that forbids its priests to marry? Isn't it the Roman Church that forbade eating meat on Fridays? As you read further, the other descriptions also fit the Roman Catholic Church.

¹⁹ See the identical description in Revelation 17:9.

²⁰ Revelation 6:10-11.

²¹ Revelation 18:20.

²² Revelation 18:24.

I saw that the woman [Mystery Babylon the Great, the Mother of Prostitutes] was drunk with the *blood of the saints*, the *blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus*.²³ "In her was found the *blood of prophets and of the saints, and of all who have been killed on the earth*."²⁴ God has condemned the great prostitute who corrupted the earth by her adulteries. He has avenged on her the *blood of his servants*.²⁵

In the history of the world, there has been *only one* religious organization that – over hundreds of years – persecuted to death the true saints of God: *the Roman Catholic Church*. As they developed one false doctrine after another, the Roman Church persecuted to death true believers who resisted her lies and idolatries.

What are these adulteries by which the Roman Catholic Church corrupted the earth? What are the idolatries and lies which were resisted to the death by the saints? Let's look more closely at just three.

THE MASS

Each mass is a sacrilege,²⁶ a claim that the priest is offering again the body and blood of Christ as a sacrifice for the sins of the people. It is a *false* claim! It is a lie. Scripture repetitively teaches, *as though there might be a future date when such explicit explanation is necessary*, that Jesus died once for all.²⁷

Canon I, "On the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist," reads, "If anyone denieth, that, in the sacrament of the most holy Eucharist, are contained truly, really, and substantially, the body and blood together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and consequently the whole Christ; but saith that He is only therein as in a sign, or in figure, or virtue; let him be anathema."²⁸

Charles H. Spurgeon said,

"The worship of what is called the Blessed Sacrament is as vile an idolatry as the worship by the Egyptians of onions and other pot-herbs which grew in their own gardens."²⁹

According to former priest, Bartholomew F. Brewer, "Today in several American convents where the wafer is prepared and baked, a wafer is placed on a monstrance – a gold or silver vessel – and kept on the altar for all to see. Twenty-four hours a day, every day, nuns take turns kneeling before the altar in perpetual adoration of the Host."³⁰ Is this idolatry more of the sins [of Revelation 18:5] piled up to heaven?

Please, gentlemen, do you want to be yoked with a religious system that teaches and perpetuates idolatry?

²³ Revelation 17:6.

²⁴ Revelation 18:24.

²⁵ Revelation 19:2.

²⁶ Are the untold millions of repetitions of the mass fulfillment in part of Revelation 18:5, "for her sins are piled up to heaven?"

²⁷ See 1 Peter 3:18, Hebrews 9:26,28, 10:10, 10:14.

²⁸ *Dogmatic Canons and Decrees* (Rockford, ILL.: Tan Books), p. 82.

²⁹ "On Whose Side Are You?" *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* (Pasadena, Texas: Pilgrim, 1972) XXVI, p. 214.

³⁰ Bartholomew F. Brewer, *Pilgrimage from Rome* (Bob Jones University Press, 1982), p. 43.

MARYOLOGY

Maryology – a mass of lies. In the Roman Catholic Church Mary has been elevated to a position virtually above Christ, a god-like position. The prohibition of the second commandment is constantly violated within the Roman Catholic Church which erects statues of "saints" to whom the faithful bow down and pray. Scripture says, "Thou shall not make unto thee any graven image of anything in the heavens above or the earth beneath or the waters under the earth. Thou shall not bow down to them or worship them. . . ."³¹ Are these more of the millions of sins committed daily within the Roman Church [Revelation 18:5]?³² But perhaps it is argued that the elevation of Mary is really of the past and not truly subscribed to by this Pope. If so, that argument is also fatally flawed. Closing the mass in Denver, August 1993, John Paul II said,

"Mary of the New Advent, we implore your protection on the preparations that will now begin for the next meeting. Mary, full of grace, we entrust the next World Youth Day to you. Mary, assumed into heaven, we entrust the young people of the world . . . the whole world to you!"

The Rosary, the most recited Catholic prayer, concludes: "Hail, holy Queen, Mother of Mercy! our life, our sweetness, and our hope! To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to thee do we send up our signs, mourning and weeping, in this valley of tears. Turn, then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us; and after this our exile show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus; O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary."

The false claims and untruths about Mary are proclaimed by and subscribed to by many leaders in the Roman Church. St. Bernadine said:

[A]ll gifts, all virtues, and all graces are dispensed by the hands of Mary to whomsoever, when, and as she pleases. O Lady, since thou art the dispenser of all graces, and since *the grace of salvation can only come through thy hands, our salvation depends on thee.*³³

Another more recent author declares: "The Church and the saints greet her thus: 'You, O Mary, together with Jesus Christ, *redeemed us* . . . O Mary, *our salvation is in your hands*' She is *co-Redemptrix* of the human race, because *with Christ she ransomed mankind* from the power of Satan. Jesus redeemed us with the blood of His body, *Mary with the agonies of her heart* . . . *suffer[ing] in her heart whatever was lacking in the passion of Christ.*"³⁴

A tract titled "Heaven Opened by the Practice of the THREE HAIL MARYS" states:

One of the greatest means of salvation and one of the surest signs of predestination is unquestionably the devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin. All the holy doctors of the Church are unanimous in saying with St. Alphonsus of Liguori: "A devout servant of Mary shall never perish. . . ." I consecrate to Thee [Mary] my heart with all its affections, and beseech Thee to obtain for me from the Most Holy Trinity all the graces necessary for salvation.³⁵

On a four-nation Latin American trip, pope John Paul II called for all who had abandoned the faith [i.e., Catholicism] to return to the fold. "All those who have at some time prayed to the Most Holy Virgin, even though they may have strayed from the Catholic church, conserve in their hearts an

³¹ Deuteronomy 5:8-9.

³² Revelation 18:5, "for her sins are piled up to heaven."

³³ St. Alphonsus de Liguori, *The Glories of Mary* (Redemptorist Fathers, 1931), pp. 161-62, 170. Many more quotations of the same gist can be found in this source. As this is but a letter, not a book, I don't feel free to include them.

³⁴ Rev. John Ferraro, *Ten Series of Meditations on the Mystery of the Rosary*.

³⁵ "Heaven Opened by the Practice of THE THREE HAIL MARYS," Imprimatur: Francis Cardinal Spellman, Archbishop of New York.

ember of faith which can be revived," he said. "The Virgin awaits them with maternal arms open wide." (From Christianity Today, 4/8/96). Mary is now the heart of Catholicism, and the Pope's concern is not to bring sinners to Christ for salvation but to Mary and thus to Catholicism.

You know Scripture, gentlemen. You don't need my explanation to show how grossly Scripture is violated by these statements and prayers. Are these the people who share a common belief in Christ Jesus with Protestants? All of this is extra-biblical. All of this creates an object of worship, an idol, a substitute for the person of Christ Jesus. Randy Phillips said you subscribed to "trusting in Christ alone." If that be so, you have nothing in common with the Roman Catholic Church nor with its leaders, notwithstanding what they may say. Remember who their father is.

How different was Jesus' response when people sought to honor Mary. There are two instances which teach exactly what Jesus wanted us to know about the importance of Mary. The first is *recited three times in Scripture*. When a passage is included three times – in Matthew, Mark, and Luke – I'm certain there is something of special importance God wants us to know.³⁶ There are two truths contained in this passage that bear on the subject of this letter. Matthew wrote:

While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother *and brothers* stood outside, wanting to speak to him. Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you."

He replied to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. For *whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.*"³⁷

First, the three similar passages dispel the lie that Mary was a continuing virgin.³⁸ Jesus had brothers; Mary was their mother. Second, Jesus gave *no special honor* to his mother, instead he accorded the same honor to all who do the will of his Father; he regarded all those as his brothers and sisters and mothers.

Is there more corroboration for not specially honoring Mary? Yes, and even more on point. A woman in the crowd attempted to give honor to Mary as Christ's mother. She called out, "Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you." What did Jesus reply? "Blessed *rather* are those who hear the word of God and obey it."³⁹ Not only did Jesus *deflect* special honor from Mary, but said it should go *instead* to those who hear the word of God and obey.

I know you know these Scriptures, gentlemen. It does not occur to me that I'm showing you something you haven't seen. But I'm hoping you will see them in a new light and re-evaluate old evidence.

PURGATORY

What does the present Catholic Church⁴⁰ say about purgatory?

The doctrine of purgatory clearly demonstrates that even when the guilt of sin has been taken away, punishment for it or the consequences of it may remain to be expiated or cleansed . . . [I]n purgatory the souls of those who died in the charity of God and truly repentant but who had not made satisfaction with adequate penance for their sins and omissions are cleansed after death with punishments designed to purge away their debt.

³⁶ We should know that nothing in Scripture is by accident. Is this teaching in Scripture to make certain true believers do not fall prey to the false teachings about Mary?

³⁷ Matthew 12:46-50. See also Luke 8:19-21, and Mark 3:31-35.

³⁸ Even more explicit is Matthew 13:55-56, "Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? Aren't all his sisters with us?"

³⁹ Luke 11:27-28.

⁴⁰ Statement by the Vatican II Council.

Remember Galatians 1? There Paul said of those who added to the Gospel: "But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!"⁴¹ What gospel is it that teaches Christ's sacrifice on the cross does not take the full punishment for the sins of those who are justified before God? Is there partial justification? Must there be punishment to purge away the remainder? Paul said about such, "Let them be eternally condemned."

Yet, inexplicably, you seem to wish to declare unity with the Roman Church and give it credibility by letting its representatives speak at your meetings. Will not God judge this? Has he already begun his judgment?

The Cult of Babylon

Why is the Roman Catholic Church referred to as *Mystery Babylon* in Revelation? Consider the following.

"Attalus, the Pontiff and King of Pergamos, died in 133 B.C. and bequeathed the headship of the *Babylonian priesthood to Rome*. When the Etruscans came to Italy from Lydia (a region of Pergamos), they brought with them the *Babylonian religion* with all its rituals. They also set up a Pontiff who was head of the priesthood.

"Later, the Romans accepted this Pontiff as their civil ruler. Julius Caesar was made Supreme Pontiff of the Babylonian Order, thus becoming heir to the rights and titles of Attalus, the Pontiff of Pergamos, who had made Rome his heir. Thus, the first Roman Emperor became the head of the *Babylonian Priesthood*, and *Rome became the successor of Babylon*.

"The emperors of Rome continued to exercise the office of Supreme Pontiff until 376 A.D. when Emperor Gratian, for Christian reasons, refused it. Consequently, *Damascus, the Bishop of the church at Rome, was elected to the position*. At that time, he had already been Bishop for 12 years -- since 366 A.D. Interestingly, Damascus had attained the office as Bishop through the influence of the monks of Mt. Carmel, *a college of the Babylonian religion* originally founded by the priests of Jezebel.⁴² Therefore, in 378 A.D., *the head of the Babylonian Order became the ruler of the Roman Church. As a result, Rome and Babylon were united into a single religious system.*"⁴³

rites of Babylon appear in Roman Church.

"Soon after Bishop Damascus was made Supreme Pontiff, the rites of Babylon began to come to the forefront.

"The worship of the Virgin Mary was set up in 381 A.D., and since that time all the outstanding festivals of the Roman Catholic Church have been of Babylonian origin. Easter, for instance, is not Christian. The name refers to Ishtar, one of the titles of the Babylonian queen of heaven whose worship by the children of Israel was an abomination in the sight of God.⁴⁴ The decree for the observance of Easter and Lent was given in 519 A.D.

"The name queen of heaven is as paganistic a title as anyone has ever borne.⁴⁵ The teaching depicting Mary as 'queen of heaven' is a direct transfer of title from the Babylonian goddess

⁴¹ Galatians 1:8.

⁴² Jezebel was wife of Ahab. See 1 Kings 18-19.

⁴³ Peter LaLonde, *Omega Letter*, Special Report: Babel Becomes One, 1990.

⁴⁴ Jeremiah 7:18, 44:17,18,19,25.

⁴⁵ Study Jeremiah 7:18, The children gather wood, the fathers light the fire, and the women knead the dough and make cakes of bread for the Queen of Heaven. They pour out drink offerings to other gods to provoke me to anger.

Study also Jeremiah 44:17-24.

Jeremiah 44:25-26, "This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: You and your wives have shown by your actions what you promised when you said, 'We will certainly carry out the vows we made to burn incense and pour out drink offerings to the Queen of Heaven.'

Ashtoreth. This is the same goddess who appears in other pagan religions under other names. She is the Babylonian 'Semiramis,' the Assyrian 'Astarte,' the Egyptian 'Isis,' the Greek 'Aphrodite,' and the Roman 'Venus.' Each was worshipped as the queen of heaven in her respective land.

"Likewise, the rosary and the 'sign of the cross' had their origin in the mystic Tau of the Chaldeans and Egyptians. It came from the letter 'T,' the first initial of the name Tammuz, and was used in the Babylonian mysteries for the same magic purposes as the church now employs it.

"Celibacy, the Tonsure and the order of Monks had no warrant or authority from Scripture, nor did the order of nuns which came into existence through the "vestal virgins" of Babylonianism.

"There is absolutely no doubt about it. Romanism is Babylonianism in mystery form, or Mystery Babylon."⁴⁶

Additional heretical teachings were added to Christendom on the following approximate dates: Veneration of angels and dead saints: 375 A.D.; The Mass as a daily celebration: 394 A.D.; The worship of Mary: 431 A.D.; The doctrine of Purgatory: 593 A.D.; The title, "Pope": 610 A.D.; Worship of the cross, images and relics: 788 A.D.; Holy water instituted: 850 A.D.; Canonization of dead saints: 995 A.D.; Fasting on Fridays and during Lent: 998 A.D.; The celibacy of the priesthood: 1079 A.D.; The rosary copied from the Hindu and Mohammedan prayer wheels and introduced by Peter the Hermit: 1090 A.D.; Confession of sins to a priest, instituted by Pope Innocent III: 1215 A.D.; Papal infallibility: 1870 A.D.; and the assumption of the Virgin Mary into heaven: 1959 A.D.⁴⁷

None of these doctrines and practices were part of Christ's church during the first 300 years of its existence. The majority were accepted from Babylonianism.⁴⁸

Is it any wonder The Revelation describes the Roman Catholic Church as *Mystery Babylon the Great*, The Mother of Prostitutes and of the Abominations of the Earth?⁴⁹

Second Vatican Council

Some now "rejoice together that the Roman Catholic Church – as affirmed by the Second Vatican Council and boldly exemplified in the ministry of John Paul II – is strongly committed to religious freedom and, consequently, to the defense of all human rights." Really? The section in Vatican II on religious liberty states:

We believe that *this one true religion continues to exist in the Catholic Church*, to which the Lord Jesus entrusted the task of spreading it among all men. . . .

So while the religious freedom which men demand in fulfilling their obligation to worship God has to do with freedom from coercion in civil society, it leaves intact the traditional Catholic teaching on the moral duty of individuals and societies towards the true religion and the one Church of Christ. . . .

Throughout the ages she [the Roman Catholic Church] has preserved and handed on the doctrine which she has received from her Master and the apostles . . . in forming their consciences the faithful *must pay careful attention to the sacred and certain teaching of the Church*. For *the Catholic Church is by the will of Christ the teacher of truth*. It is her duty to proclaim and teach with authority the truth which is Christ and, at the same time, to declare and confirm by her authority the principles of the moral order which spring from human nature itself. [Emphasis added.]

"Go ahead then, do what you promised! Keep your vows! But hear the word of the LORD, all Jews living in Egypt: 'I swear by my great name,' says the LORD, that no one from Judah living anywhere in Egypt will ever again invoke my name or swear, "As surely as the Sovereign LORD lives."

⁴⁶ Peter LaLonde, *Omega Letter*, Special Report: Babel Becomes One, 1990.

⁴⁷ Jack Van Impe. The date may also be 1950.

⁴⁸ Peter LaLonde, *Omega Letter*, Special Report: Babel Becomes One, 1990.

⁴⁹ Revelation 17:5.

The Roman Catholic Church, as stated in Vatican II does not believe there is salvation in the Protestant Church. They say, "this *one true religion* . . . exists in the Catholic Church . . ."

The Vatican II Council also stated the following:

This sacred council accepts loyally the venerable faith of our ancestors in the living communion which exists between us and our brothers who are in the glory of heaven or who are yet being purified after their death; and *it proposes again the decrees of the Second Council of Nicea, of the Council of Florence, and of the Council of Trent.*"⁵⁰

You are likely aware that the Council of Trent decreed over 100 anathemas that were directed at the believing Christians of that day (1545-1563) who would not accept the idolatry and false claims of the Roman Catholic Church. The Vatican Council II, *by proposing again the decrees of the Council of Trent, agrees that those same anathemas continue today.* Consider just one pertaining to confession:

If anyone *denies that sacramental confession was instituted by divine law or is necessary to salvation*; or says that the manner of confessing secretly to a priest alone, which the Catholic church has always observed from the beginning and still observes, is *at variance with the institution and command of Christ* and is a human contrivance, let him be **anathema**.⁵¹

Gentlemen, do you believe that confession was not instituted by divine law and *is not necessary to salvation*? Do you believe it is at variance with the institution and command of Christ? If you do, you are anathema to the Roman Catholic Church. Yet you wish to think of the Roman Church as simply another Christian church and those who practice its faith as your brothers in Christ.

Or, how about purgatory. Do you subscribe to that? The position of the Catholic Church remains:

If anyone says that after the reception of the grace of justification the guilt is so remitted and the debt of eternal punishment so blotted out to every repentant sinner, *that no debt of temporal punishment remains to be discharged either in this world or in purgatory before the gates of heaven can be opened*, let him be **anathema**.

Remember gentlemen, if you don't agree that there remains a need for further punishment -- that Christ's sacrifice was not sufficient -- *you are anathema to the Catholic Church*, notwithstanding the relationships you have with your Roman Catholic friends and board members.

Perhaps to understand the full force of those anathemas we should review the meaning of the word:

Anathema: (1 a) a ban or curse solemnly pronounced by ecclesiastical authority and accompanied by excommunication (b) the denunciation of anything as accursed; (2 a) one that is cursed by ecclesiastical authority (b) one that is intensely disliked or loathed.

Whichever meaning you choose from that definition, gentlemen, defines how you and I are regarded by the Roman Catholic Church if we hold a traditional evangelical belief in salvation through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Do you really believe you are somehow joining together in unity, in a Christ-like manner with those who loathe you, who denounce you as accursed? What would Jesus say?

⁵⁰ Vatican Council II, Vol. 1, p. 412.

⁵¹ *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, ed. and trans. H. J. Schroeder, O.P. (Tan Books, 1978), Fourteenth Session, Can. 6, pp. 102, 103.

You may say, "They surely do not!" Who does not, gentlemen? The few Catholics with whom you've worked on your board and whom you've known personally? The position of The Roman Catholic Church is as stated above. It is naive to think the Roman Church now finds Protestant theology acceptable and agrees that Protestants may have salvation without accepting the dogmas of the Catholic Church. Actually, knowing the above, it is more inconceivable that Protestants can (and would) welcome professing, practicing Catholics into the brotherhood of believers.

LIARS OR HYPOCRITES

Do you begin to see a problem with the Catholics with whom you work on the board of Promise Keepers? These are people who are claiming to share evangelical views with you and who claim to regard you as believing Christians. Aren't they claiming this? Yet, they belong to an organization which decrees anathema to you because of your beliefs. It curses you, bans you, loathes you.

Isn't there something wrong here? Can a person believe white is black and black is white? Or do these same people who claim that "All who accept Christ as Lord and Savior are brothers and sisters in Christ" mean something quite different than Protestants do when they say that. Are they *also* saying that [for them at least] true faith and salvation is only in the Roman Catholic Church. Do they still believe in confession and purgatory? Do they honor Mary and pray to her?

If the Catholics you've worked with do *not* believe the things recited above,⁵² *they are anathema to the Catholic Church and are not Catholics at all*. Then why don't they obey the command of Christ, "*Come out of her, my people*, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues?"⁵³ Are they remaining in the Church because they don't want to lose their influence and power? Is it because deep down they believe they must be in the Roman Church in order to have salvation and be rescued from purgatory? If your Catholic friends and board members *do believe* those doctrines, they have added much to the faith and are deserving of the condemnation Paul heaped upon the Judaizers. If they *do not believe* the doctrines stated above, aren't such people wrongfully, fraudulently claiming to be Catholics? If they do not, why are they still in the Roman Catholic Church which says they are anathema?

Neither alternative is good. There is a serious moral dilemma there.

DIFFERENT MEANINGS

Do Catholics confess Christ as we do? You likely know that at law many conflicts arise because people do not use words in the same way – the meanings they ascribe to the words are different though the words are the same. I can hardly think of a more appropriate venue for this principle than the Protestants and Catholics affirming a common faith in Christ as Lord.

I think of the misstatement of Scripture that is at the heart of the ECT Accord: "We affirm together that we are justified by grace through faith *because of Christ*." There is no statement in Scripture which states that. "Because of Christ"? What does that mean?

Hopefully, for the Protestants, it means "we are justified by faith in Christ Jesus."⁵⁴ That's from Scripture.

For the Catholics the meaning can be very different. They can say: "Because of Christ the Roman Church exists. Thus because of Christ we have confession, the Mass, the doctrine of purgatory, the worship of Mary, the knowledge that the Catholic Church is the one and only true

⁵² Relating to the Mass, confession, and purgatory.

⁵³ Revelation 18:4-5.

⁵⁴ Galatians 2:16,17.

Church." Thus for the Catholic, "we are justified by grace through faith – in the Church, in the sacraments, in the teachings of the one true Church – because of Christ."

HOW MUCH DEVIANCE, LIES, AND IDOLATRY?

Gentlemen, how much is enough? How much idolatry, how many lies, how many false claims can the Roman Catholic Church have in it and still have Protestants (and Promise Keepers) embrace it in the name of ecumenical unity?

Is the Catholic Church a totally different church now, today, than in the past when it slaughtered hundreds of thousands of reformers (those with what would be regarded today as an evangelical Protestant faith)? No, it has not changed except, perhaps, that the indulgences which were so discredited in the past are not so obvious today. In some areas, Maryology for example, the Catholic Church has continued to propound new heresies in the last decades, e.g. the Ascension of Mary as late as November 1, 1950 when Pope Pius XII made that (allegedly) infallible *ex cathedra* declaration in his Apostolic Constitution *Munificentissimus Deus*.

Persecution to death of Protestants continues in those countries firmly under the control of Catholicism. Perpetuation of the "one true Church" as the only source of salvation has not abated. So what is new that could cause Protestants now, with knowledge of the issues of the Reformation, to proclaim unity with Roman Catholics? Only that *certain* Catholics now use a vocabulary the Protestants want to hear and believe they can understand.⁵⁵

How much, gentlemen, can be tolerated before one says, "This cannot be true faith in Christ Jesus as Lord? Does one say that all those who claim – through words – to honor Christ as Lord are Christians?"

What about fruit, gentlemen? Jesus commanded, "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. *By their fruit you will recognize them*. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit."⁵⁶ These false prophets come saying good sounding words. Is their fruit good or bad? Over the centuries, when the Catholics were in the majority, they persecuted Protestants (Reformers); they slaughtered tens of thousands of God's saints. In solidly Catholic countries – even today – Protestants are sometimes persecuted to death by the Catholic church. Indeed they are ferocious wolves. Their fruit is bad! For the fruit of their true beliefs, look at the Canons of the Church, not the persuasive words that come from the mouths of a few. Its Canons declare heresy. This is not to say you may not know some true born-again men still in the Catholic church. Can a truly born-again person remain in the Catholic church? Consider the doctrines we just reviewed. All are revolting to our God.

The Roman Catholic Church is following a different Christ just as the Mormon Church follows a different Christ. They have devised a Christ of their own making, one that suits their ends. When a Roman Catholic speaks of Christ, he likely is not speaking of Christ Jesus who is the Lord of the true Protestant believer. He may be speaking of that Christ whose name is used so loosely in the Catholic Church, who is offered up as a sacrifice in every mass, and who is constantly portrayed on a cross.

MIRACLES AND DRIVING OUT DEMONS

You may have seen, as I have, Roman Catholic services in which there were apparent healing miracles. We know that through the centuries the Roman Catholic Church had priests who exorcised demons. Isn't that evidence that these are true believers! I wish it were. But that is not evidence of

⁵⁵ For example, the phrase "because of Christ," earlier discussed. Some of those Catholics may be born-again believers with a saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁵⁶ Matthew 7:15-17.

being a true believer or a believer at all. In what is to me one of the most frightening passages of Scripture, Jesus said:

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but *only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven*. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not *prophesy in your name*, and *in your name drive out demons* and *perform many miracles*?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"⁵⁷

Remarkable, isn't it? Demons can be driven out in Jesus' name; miracles can be performed in Jesus' name, and still such people are not saved if they do not do the will of God the Father.

Do Catholics do the will of God? How can anyone say they do? Aren't they the ones who for centuries said only "The Church" can interpret the Scriptures? A desperate lie! Don't Catholics claim Christ's sacrifice is insufficient so that more punishment must be exacted in order to gain entrance to heaven? Lies! Doesn't the Catholic Church claim confession was instituted by divine law and is necessary to salvation? Lies! Haven't Catholics devised lies about Mary, from her continued virginity to her ascension into heaven? Don't they call her the Queen of Heaven? Don't some claim there is no salvation without her efforts on their behalf? All lies!

Where God says thou shalt not make unto thee graven images, the Catholic church makes such images. God says thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor worship them. The Catholic church teaches its supplicants to pray to Mary and the saints (graven images) and worship them.

Obedience? No! Disobedience? Yes. Truth? No. Lies? Yes. Scripture makes clear that liars will not enter the Kingdom of God⁵⁸ and that the place for idolators and liars will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur.⁵⁹

Unity With Rome Is Directly Contrary to Scripture

Gentlemen, the reason you may be receiving such a barrage of difficulties is that you are doing that which is the opposite of the command of Scripture.⁶⁰ The spiritual damage that can and will result from your attempted unity with Catholics and Catholicism is immeasurable.

The following statement is in the ECT Accord: "We do know that God who has brought us into communion with himself through Christ intends that we also be in communion with one another." That is wrong as applied to Protestants and Catholics – the opposite of what is taught in Scripture. Scripture teaches:

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? (2 Corinthians 6:14-16).

My great fear for Promise Keepers is that what God first blessed as being of him is now being hijacked and used for great harm to the Kingdom of our Lord. Because of Promise Keeper's great success in the first years, your leaders have become very visible, appearing on leading talk shows and gracing the covers of weekly, secular magazines. By Promise Keeper's accepting and showcasing Catholic leaders, you are legitimizing Catholicism. Promise Keepers seems to be endorsing the Roman Catholic Church, apparently agreeing that Catholics are Christians and share a common faith. In one step, Promise Keepers has, and is, assuring Catholics that they are all right, that their faith is a

⁵⁷ Matthew 7:21-23.

⁵⁸ Revelation 22:15.

⁵⁹ Revelation 21:8.

⁶⁰ God has commanded those in the Catholic Church who have knowledge of the truth, "Come out of her, my people" (Revelation 18:5).

true faith which will give them salvation. It has given them a false assurance. Those that could have been saved may now be damned.

A WARNING FOR THOSE WHO ARE PART OF THE ROMAN CHURCH

Second, Promise Keepers does exactly the opposite of that called for by Scripture. John wrote: Then I heard another voice from heaven say: "Come out of her, my people, *so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues*; for her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes."⁶¹

God says, "Come out of *her, my people*."⁶² Who is "her"? It is the Roman Catholic Church. Who are "my people"? They are those who have faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord, but who are still in the Roman Catholic Church. God says, "*Come out!*" But Promise Keepers says we are all brothers in Christ and these men should go back home and support their local church.

Though God commands believing Catholics to leave, Promise Keepers teaches then not to do so. Promise Keepers will knowingly permit Catholics who have knowledge of the truth (but perhaps not of the prophecies of Revelation 17 and 18) to be subject to the plagues which will be visited upon the Roman Catholic Church. From the passage, it appears that those believing Catholics who continue in the Roman Catholic Church will share in her sins.⁶³

The call of Scripture is *not ecumenism* with Rome, but instead *to distance ourselves* from her. We are to warn those in the Roman Catholic Church to leave the false church so they will not share in her sins – idolatry, lies, false faith, etc. – so they will not share in her sins and receive her punishments.

Summing It Up

Likely few Protestants know all these facts about the history of the Roman Catholic Church. Many who oppose the Roman Church do so from prejudice based on what they've been told, not what they know to be true. *But the facts are true*. The Roman Catholic Church fulfills all the elements of the description found in Revelation 17 and 18. God says **the Roman Church is anathema**.

Doubtless you've already noticed a result you did not intend. While Promise Keepers sought to promote unity, your inclusion of Catholics has caused great discord and disunity among discerning Protestants. In past years I had prayer times for pastors in my home. Pastors from different denominations and widely varying theological positions attended. I was so pleased to see unity develop as they prayed together. But now a new divisiveness has occurred between those who seek unity with Rome and those who remember the reformation, the past persecution and slaughter, who know the Roman Church has only changed cosmetically, who know its present teachings and doctrines, and who understand Bible prophecy about the Roman Catholic Church. I fear the cause of unity is being set back terribly.

The fruit of your attempt at unity is bad. Catholics will be condemned to hell who would have come out of the church had they not been reassured by Promise Keepers that the Roman Church was just another Christian Church. And there will be a new divisiveness among Protestants who protest the false, unbiblical unity Promise Keepers proclaim.

Gentlemen, my brothers in Christ Jesus, I believe your hearts are pure. I cannot believe otherwise. I believe you have and are committed to serving Jesus Christ as your Lord. I believe you are committed to extending his Kingdom through Promise Keepers.

⁶¹ Revelation 18:4-5.

⁶² Revelation 18:4.

⁶³ Revelation 18:4. Will that also affect their possibility of salvation? We know our sins must be forgiven in order to appear before our holy God. They will "share in the sins" of the Church if they remain in it.

I've tried to give you a little of the evidence – there is much more – of why the Catholic church is not what it may appear to be. Truly it is cursed of God – anathema.

There is no way believing Christians can make a deal with the devil, no way we can work together with evil for good. That was never our Lord's way. We are to be different, to stand apart, to be of a different Kingdom, not of this world. You all know this.

I believe it is only through revival – a restoration of the understanding that all who would be true believers must daily follow Jesus Christ as Lord – that our land can be changed, that our people can once again be true followers of the living God.

I pray you will listen closely to hear the voice of the Lord on this matter. It truly is a time to discern the spirits.

Your brother in Christ,

Bernie Koerselman

Late addition:

John Paul II's recent four-nation Latin America trip kept tensions between Catholics and evangelicals in the region bubbling . . . [T]he pope called for all who had abandoned the faith [i.e., Catholicism] to return to the fold. "All those who have at some time prayed to the Most Holy Virgin, even though they may have strayed from the Catholic church, conserve in their hearts an ember of faith which can be revived," he said. "The Virgin awaits them with maternal arms open wide." [Emphasis added.]

[TBC: Prayers are to Mary. She is the heart of Catholicism, and the Pope's concern is not to bring sinners to Christ for salvation but to Mary and thus to Catholicism]

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