

# “PROBLEM” PASSAGES

The following passages from Scripture tend to be very difficult for non-Catholics to explain in doctrinal and theological terms without using a Catholic paradigm.

1. **Mt 16:18-19** And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

**The Church is a hierarchical, visible institution built on the “rock” (kepha in Aramaic) of Peter. He was given the keys of the kingdom of heaven. What did this mean? Why did Jesus give the keys only to Peter? When put in context with Isaiah 22, it is evident that Jesus knew exactly what He was doing...**

**Is 22:20-22** In that day I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, and I will clothe him with your robe, and will bind your girdle on him, and will commit your authority to his hand; and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David; he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.

**The One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church was founded upon the person of Peter, and he would reign with full authority. Jesus gave Peter the authority to make decisions for the Church that would be ratified for eternity. If Peter was a mere sinful mortal man, then his decisions had to be divinely protected...hence, infallibility.**

2. **1 Tim 3:14-15** I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these instructions to you so that, if I am delayed, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth.

**Although the Bible is the inerrant, written Word of God, the *Church* is the pillar and bulwark (foundation) of Truth...not the Bible. In fact, it was the Church that gave us the Bible as we have it today.**

3. **2 Thess 2:15** So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter.

**It is evident here (and many other places in Scripture) that Paul is a big believer in Sacred Tradition. Paul is saying that the Bible alone (Sola Scriptura) is not enough...we must obey *oral* traditions passed on by the apostles as well.**

4. **1 Pet 3:21** Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

**Most non-Catholic Christians believe that Baptism is just symbolic, or a required “ordinance”...that it does not save us. But, St. Peter specifically tells us that Baptism does save us. Baptism is indeed salvific. Only through the merits of Christ’s death and resurrection, Baptism frees us from sin, makes us children of God and leads us to salvation.**

5. **Jn 20:22-23** And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

**Jesus gave the apostles the authority to forgive sins. Why would He have done this if He didn’t intend them to use this authority? If He knew that Christians would only have to “go straight to Jesus” for forgiveness, He never would have given them this unique spiritual gift by breathing on them and giving them the Holy Spirit.**

6. **John 6:53-58, 66-69** So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He

who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me. This is the bread which came down from heaven, not such as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live forever." After this many of his disciples drew back and no longer went about with him. Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also wish to go away?" Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God."

**This is the one passage that Bible literalists almost never take literally. Jesus uses very specific, clear and simple language in John 6 to make His point that the Eucharist really is His body and blood...and He says it more than once. It was taken literally by all His disciples on that day. Many walked away from Christianity...and Jesus let them go. If it was symbolic, wouldn't He have called them back to explain?**

7. **1 Cor 11:27** Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord.

**Paul confirms what John taught in John 6 and tells us that if we take the Eucharist unworthily, we are guilty of profaning Jesus, in essence, murdering Him. Wouldn't that be a little "over the top" for something that is not to be taken literally? If the Eucharist were only symbolic, how could we be guilty of so great a crime?**

8. **Jam 5:14-15** Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

**Anointing with holy oil has real effect. How many non-Catholic Christian churches believe that this anointing oil will heal and forgive sins? Holy oil is found all over Sacred Scripture, but you generally won't find it in these churches.**

9. **Col 1:24** Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church.

**Was Christ's death and resurrection sufficient for our salvation? Paul indicates that we must "complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions." Our suffering has merit and allows us to participate in Jesus' work of redemption and salvation. By virtue of our Baptism, we are called to participate in the eternal priesthood of Christ. Our prayers, works and especially sufferings play a part on Christ's saving work.**

10. **Jam 2:24** You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.

**If we are saved by faith alone (Sola Fide), why does James so specifically point out that we are justified by works...and *not* faith alone? Only the Catholic understanding of faith plus works explains this. Martin Luther actually added the word 'alone' to the text of Paul (Eph 3:28).**

**Martin Luther on faith 'alone'...**

"You tell me what a great fuss the Papists are making because the word 'alone' is not in the text of Paul. If your Papist makes such an unnecessary row about the word 'alone', say right out to him: 'Dr. Martin Luther will have it so,' and say, 'Papists and asses are one and the same thing.' I will have it so, and I order it to be so, and my will is reason enough. I know very well that the word 'alone' is not in the Latin or Greek text, and it was not necessary for the Papists to teach me that. It is true those letters are not in it, which letters the jackasses look at, as a cow stares at a new gate.... It shall remain in my New Testament, and if all the Popish donkeys were to get mad and beside themselves, they will not get it out."

Letter to Wenceslas Link, September, 1530 (publ. in *Rebuilding A Lost Faith, By An American Agnostic* by John L. Stoddard, Pg 88)