



FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ULSTER



The state visit of Pope Benedict XVI examined by Scripture

It is claimed that the Pope, 'comes primarily as a visitor to all the people of the UK, not just those who are Catholics'. However, it should be noted that on financial, constitutional and moral grounds by no means will 'all of the people of the UK...' welcome his visit. As a church our fundamental objection is spiritual in nature. Our dismay and abhorrence at a state visit being afforded to the Pope is not the product of an innate hatred of all things Roman Catholic, for we bear no ill will towards our Roman Catholic neighbours. We pray that all people might enter into the freedom of the glorious Gospel of Christ. Rather our opposition is because of the deeply offensive and anti-scriptural nature of the papacy's claims and creed.

THE PAPACY'S CLAIMS ARE CONTRADICTED BY SCRIPTURE

Every pope usurps titles that belong to the Trinity:-

'HOLY FATHER'

This is a title of God the Father. (John 17:11).

'SUPREME PONTIFF OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH'

We reject his conceited claim to be the Head of all Christians. We recognise no head of the Church but Christ alone. (Ephesians 1:22, 23; 5:23; Colossians 1:18).

In the year 2000 Cardinal Ratzinger - now the present pope - headed up the 'ministry for doctrine' which stated that Protestant churches were not true churches.

'VICAR OF CHRIST'

The Saviour entrusted the universal care of souls to the divine person of the Holy Spirit Who is the true Vicar of Christ (John 14:26). The Roman Catholic catechism states, 'The pope enjoys, by divine institution, supreme, full, immediate, and universal power in the care of souls' (Paragraph 937).

Such titles and claims of the pope are clearly at variance with Scripture and historically have been viewed as blasphemous by Protestant churches. That is why the historic creeds of the Protestant churches recognised the pope as, 'that antichrist ('anti' means in place of) in the church' (Westminster Confession of Faith chapter 25 section VI).

Obviously there is a clear contrast between the teaching of scripture and the false doctrines of the papacy. Out of love and loyalty to the Only King and Head of the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ, we therefore repudiate those Protestant churchmen who will welcome the pope, meet with him or refuse to publicly condemn his teachings and remain indifferent. By their actions they not only give credence to his spurious claims but are betraying the very creeds they once professed to believe, teach and defend.

We invite you to attend any of our Free Presbyterian congregations tomorrow, Sunday 12th September, when Pope Benedict's claims and creed will be examined in the light of scripture.

A booklet entitled 'Roman Catholicism examined by Scripture' will be available at those services.

For further information please go to www.freepres.org or email info@freepres.org

THE PAPACY'S CREED IS CONTRADICTED BY SCRIPTURE

THE MASS

The creed states the priest has power to transform bread and wine into the very body and blood of Christ. The Roman Catholic Church states, "the sacrifice in the Mass is identical with the sacrifice of the cross" (Council of Trent, session 22:2) and "that in the Mass is offered to God, a true, proper and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead" (Creed of Pope Pius IV).

In the Church of Ireland's '39 Articles' the Mass is correctly termed, 'a blasphemous fable and a dangerous deceit' (Hebrews 10:10, 12).

JUSTIFICATION

The Roman Catholic creed teaches that justification is conferred in baptism and that the justification thus received could be increased or lost depending on one's actions.

Scripture clearly teaches that a person can only be declared righteous before God on the basis of a perfect righteousness freely provided by Christ and received by faith alone. (Romans 3:23-28; 4:5; 5:19).

ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

The Roman Catholic creed places an 'anathema' (a curse) upon all who claim they have assurance of eternal life. This contradicts many clear scriptures (John 3:16; 5:24; 1 John 5:13).

MEDIATOR

While the Bible states there is, 'One Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus' (1 Timothy 2:5) Rome teaches that the pope, Mary, priests and dead saints can mediate for men before God.