

WHY JESUS CAN BE CALLED THE ULTIMATE POPE IN CATHOLIC DOCTRINE

Catholic doctrine is that the pope in Rome stands in the place of Jesus to run the Church on earth and this authority is set up by Jesus himself so ultimately Jesus is the real pope. To disobey the pope is to disobey the man who is the arm of Jesus the ruler.

The pope safeguards tradition which is the word of God and infallible. Occasionally he can use the protection given by Jesus to declare a doctrine the truth.

Rome insists that Jesus made the popes infallible when he told Peter to feed his flock with the truth in John 21:15-17 and when he asked him to confirm his brethren in the faith in Luke 22:32. Peter could have been infallible without his successors being infallible. Peter could have been an infallible pope but the popes which succeeded him could have been created without acquisition of this power. If Peter had been infallible it might only have been when he was having visions. The book of Acts says he was guided by visions and revelations. If his infallibility was different to that claimed by the Catholic pope then there is no reason to think that the pope is infallible and every reason not to when he is not led by visions and indeed holds visions to be inferior to the Bible and not infallible.

Neither text is evidence that papal infallibility was there in apostolic times. Read them in their context and see.

Peter's writing or speaking inspired scripture would be a different power from his using papal infallibility. Creating scripture differs from it in many respects. Infallibility is preservation from error while inspiration is putting thoughts in the mind of another. Writing scripture does not require the approval of the Church but the Church requires its approval. And the power is entirely subject to God's will and is over when he says it is over but the pope can make a new doctrine whenever he wants.

The Church says that the pope cannot be sure that a doctrine is true unless he reads and thinks about it. His decision is then guided by the Holy Spirit so that it will be the correct one. But then infallibility is only as good as the information the pope gets. You could have good arguments for something and miss the argument that disproves it. Papal infallibility is therefore useless with regard to the purpose for which it exists, revealing what is God's word. The infallibility of the Church affords more protection but is prone to the same flaw. Papal infallibility is dangerous and imprudent. It infers that the pope is a god for he knows for sure when the Holy Spirit is in touch with him. The Holy Spirit is alleged to guide all Catholics and how often have they been proved wrong? But the divine pope knows for sure when God is speaking. He is greater than God for he knows the mind of God. The Protestant complaint that the papacy self-deifies itself is not too far off the mark. The pope must infallibly and supernaturally know that God is guiding him and what God is saying. That is new revelation.

The Church says that the pope and the Church are the official interpreters of the revelations of God. So that can make the Church and pope superior to the word of God therefore it is necessary that the Church and pope possess stronger miraculous and prophetic proof of their divine mission and authority than the word of God will have when that word is not very clear on the need for infallibility and supreme interpreters. This stronger proof does not exist as the Church admits so the pope and Church are not infallible. Also, Deuteronomy 18 says that the prophet of God will make accurate predictions for the future to prove his message. The Bible says the Devil can do miracles but that since God is stronger that a prophecy that would take too much power for the devil to engineer fulfilment for by rigging events to carry out what he pretended to have foreseen must be from God. The Catholic Church and the pope are unable to give such prophecies so they are fakes. When the Church interprets the Bible and is infallible then the Church should be able to verify that it has this authority by being better at prophecy even than the Bible.

The prophet Amos declared that the sovereign Lord does nothing without first disclosing what he is doing to the prophets (3:7). The papal system was not revealed to any prophet so it is false. God would not leave something so important out. And notice that Amos does not say that the Lord presently does nothing privately or that he does nothing private now. Don't assume a time limit when none is declared. It is reasonable as well. God will give the essentials through his prophets for unlike even the popes, they are God's literal mouth-pieces.

The Bible says that in the last days there will be two witnesses or prophets sent by God to the world. It speaks of them having the power to prophesy for one thousand and two hundred and sixty days. This is in the Book of Revelation chapter 11 which predicts their appearance after the Temple is rebuilt on earth. So how could there be a pope for prophets have a stronger authority and infallibility than any pope could claim? The pope claims to conserve revelation only while prophets deliver it.

If the pope is infallible his infallibility is to be preferred to that of the Church because it could happen that when the bishops are assembled in an ecumenical council that many of them have no right to be there and are not real Catholics. This would mean that the decisions of the council would be null and void and there would be no grace of infallibility. So assuming that Jesus does not let fake Catholics become pope which would mean they are not real popes, the papacy is a safer source of certainty that a dogma is revealed by God than anything else. Therefore, the duty of the pope is to employ his infallibility to ratify all the dogmas that were made before he was proclaimed infallible to make sure. The Church likes to boast that infallibility makes her dogmas certain in the sense that nobody can deny that God revealed them if there is a God (page 8,9, The Student's Catholic Doctrine). It cannot do that with a straight face since papal infallibility came in. Papal infallibility cannot work with the councils of the Church but only against them in the sense that it makes them dangerous and superfluous.

The Old Testament speaks of a case of infallibility. In 1 Kings 3, God tells King Solomon that he can have whatever he asks. Solomon says that he would like the wisdom to discern between good and evil. He specified that he wanted this gift for he was a very young man with little leadership skills. He said that without the gift he could not govern the people of God. God then was so pleased at this request that he gave Solomon what he described as a wisdom so clever than none before Solomon or after him could be described as his equal. It would be curious if God gave Solomon this gift and didn't give it to the popes! Yet none of the popes claimed to have a unique wisdom. The claim is that the pope has access to wisdom as in tradition but apart from that he is just possibly as ignorant as the next person.

The dogma of papal infallibility is positively untrue and it is impossible for it to be true.

BAD ANTI-INFALLIBILITY ARGUMENTS

Defenders of Protestantism give many useless arguments against the Catholic doctrine that the Pope and even the Catholic Church itself cannot err under certain conditions.

The Catholic Church says she can't append new dogmas to what the apostles taught and says this is a teaching that cannot be wrong. Here is an illogical reply to this doctrine, "The Church let people deny her infallible doctrines at least for a time before she made them infallible. Prior to December 8th, 1854, Catholics were free to deny the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception and after Pius IX infallibly created the dogma that day they were not. The dogma would not be an addition if it is implied by revelation. So, when Pius said that Catholics must now accept the new dogma he was automatically making another dogma which was an addition. This hidden dogma was that it would be a mortal sin for a Catholic to deny the Immaculate Conception from now on though it wasn't before. Pius XI did create a brand new dogma and add to the apostolic faith."

To this Catholics would say that making this sin is not addition to the faith for the faith and tradition always said that if anything becomes defined as a dogma revealed by God it would be mortally sinful to question or deny it. It teaches it by implication. Dogmas are defined or shown to be of divine origin and are not made. They are dogmatized because they are true.

Another mistaken argument, "How could sinners be infallible? God could make them infallible but when they are hostile to him they might pretend to be using the gift to deceive the world?"

He got sinful men to write his scriptures. He commissioned us to preach his gospel so when we were good enough for that why couldn't we be made infallible? God can prevent infallible people becoming doctrinal fraudsters simply by decreeing that they will only be free from error under several strict conditions and could intervene miraculously to stop them giving fake infallible declarations or make sure a condition is missing when they fake. A pope who plots to define a fictitious teaching would be struck dead or paralysed before he is able to do it. Or more probably the declaration can be made but is instantly shot down as it is discovered not to be implied by apostolic revelation or there is no evidence. Perhaps it would force Christ to appear and tell the real truth. Sinners can be made infallible.

The doctrine of the sinless conception of the Virgin is certainly a heresy and yet the pope made it a dogma and got away with it.

Infallibility has to do with teaching not living so anybody who says that sinners cannot have this charism just because they are sinners is wrong. Yet many get infallibility and impeccability (sinlessness) mixed up.

Protestants sometimes quote verses that say that we must trust in God not in men as disproofs of Catholic infallibility. But Catholics see trusting in the infallibility of the pope as trusting in a gift that the pope has bestowed on him for the purpose of revealing things hence it is supposed to be trust in God. Protestants trust the authors of the scriptures so why can't they trust the pope? What they have to do is prove that to trust in men to convey the word of God is denying God.

CONCLUSION

The pope is not infallible. His claim to be infallible shows that he is a fraud for he has no excuse for believing that he is. If he is infallible then he can proclaim any doctrine he likes if Jesus promised that the Church would never be led astray when identifying a doctrine irrevocably as part of what God has revealed. He doesn't need to worry about research and indeed research would indicate that he isn't so confident that his teaching can be infallible. Any priest could become pope so what does that say about them?

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