

## MERIT AND CATHOLIC DOCTRINE

Some religions see Heaven or eternal happiness as a reward for a good life or even worse for just saying a prayer or getting a few sacraments. A baptism and a couple of masses getting Heaven for you makes it very cheap! Others say the eternal life is a gift and any additional benefits such as happiness or the high level of happiness are rewards.

Gift or not Heaven amounts to a carrot for you cannot get to it if you prefer evil and sin to God. Even just evading the unending punishment of Hell is a carrot too. Its the real carrot compared to all the rest. If you promise any carrots to people and/or deliver they may of course be more morally compliant. The result will be that their moral valuing, their love of virtue and their self-image of themselves as moral beings, will lessen for it will become more and more about the reward. They will end up needing more carrots before they will do anything good.

The Catholic Church officially says that it agrees with the Bible teaching that we carry original sin which excludes us from the kingdom of God. The Bible says that this sin is basically us usurping God's right to make the rules. We have original sin through Adam and Eve's fault. They were forbidden to have the knowledge of good and evil and they took that knowledge and estranged themselves from God. God's problem was that they wanted their perception of good and evil to be independent of what God said. The Catholic Church teaches the doctrine of natural law. This is the doctrine that morality can be worked out rationally. The Church says the atheist can understand it and believe it and work it out if he or she is honest. This makes morality independent of God. Catholics are barred from Heaven and estranged from God by believing this doctrine.

The Roman Catholic Church says that faith and good works done by grace and in freedom from serious sin are necessary for salvation. The Church says that only good works done with the supernatural help of God merit salvation. From this it argues that though God makes us really deserve Heaven, the deservings or merits are really all his work and not ours (see the booklet, The Catholic Church has the Answer).

This is so forced. It is only taught because the Church wants its theology to fit the clear Bible teaching that nobody however good deserves Heaven and that Heaven is not a reward but a free gift. It is so easily seen that it is forced and artificial. If God rewards only his part in our good works then we cannot really deserve Heaven. Our good works are ours even if they are done with his help. It is not all his work. The statement that we deserve Heaven contradicts the idea that God rewards his part in our works. We might benefit from this reward but he is really only rewarding himself not us. Just because we benefit doesn't mean that we are rewarded. It's a by-product.

Either we earn Heaven or we don't. To accept the Catholic doctrine is only to adopt self-deception. It is a major sin.

The Bible says that no matter what we do there is some imperfection in us that we are glad to have so we are all sinners (Romans 3) and it also says that one sin defiles all you do (James 3:11). To do good while adhering to sin is saying, "I want the good and want the sin", which is hardly a holy or good attitude so it makes all you do sin. That is why the Bible says that nobody can be righteous in God's sight even if they keep the Law of Moses for the Law exposes their sins (Romans 3:20).

The only hope then is to have somebody to live without sin for us in our place and for God to credit that person's righteousness to us. God does this when the Christian repents and believes in Jesus and it is done once for all. No sin can cost you this salvation. Christianity rejects the merit doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. The portions that say you must obey to be saved mean that since the saved do good works that you must get saved and do these works and salvation will be yours. No good works means the conversion was not genuine.

The Catholic Church says that Christ was God and sinless and that Mary was sinless as well. A man once called Jesus good and Jesus asked him why he called him that for nobody was good only God. Christians argue that the man was using flattery and Jesus is saying he does not like that. So Jesus is saying he is not good in the flattered way. But Jesus said nobody was good only God which is a strange way of correcting a flatterer. The simplest interpretation is that Jesus denied his own sinlessness and that he was God. So when he was not sinless how could anybody else be? The simplest is the one meant. The gossellers just copied the story from Mark and nobody bothered to think about it. If they had it would have been deleted from Mark and they would have tried to bury the story. Jesus was not sinless and so Jesus was not God.