

INFALLIBLE POPES?

The Catholic Church thinks that the pope is infallible on faith and morals when he speaks officially as shepherd and teacher of Church and intends to be infallible. The idea became an infallible dogma in 1870 through the infallible Vatican Council 1. The dogma says the pope can make an infallible statement without the consent of the Church and without consulting it. This declaration was part of the decree in Pastor Aeternus which was ratified as infallible at Vatican 1.

The dogma like all the dogmas defined by the Church or the pope is considered necessary for salvation. To say that the dogma is necessary for salvation not in itself but because to deny it is to deny the authority of God sounds very odd. It would indicate that you are making a dogma for the sake of condemning people who don't obey you and believe in it to Hell. It would be like throwing your weight around aimlessly just to show people who is boss. If the dogma is necessary for salvation of itself then everybody before who did not realise that it was a true revealed by God and who did not believe in it properly as a correct doctrine must have been damned. It is total insanity to agree with Roman Catholicism that the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin and her Assumption into Heaven, the two papal dogmas, are needed for salvation in themselves. By implication, the Virgin is being made equal to Christ for the dogmas of his saving death and glorious resurrection are necessary for salvation and somehow illogically her conception without sin and her assumption are equal in value to that. The blasphemies and absurdities of Rome know no bounds.

Keenan published his approved Roman Catholic Catechism in 1851 and on page 102 he rejected the view that Catholics had to consider the pope infallible as a Protestant calumny. In 1870 the Church made a Gospel truth of this calumny.

The popes exercise their infallibility so seldomly that they can do without it. A fallible pope can be head of the Church and have the right to obedience in so far as he stands by revealed doctrine and that doctrine is the rod by which he is to be measured. As long as he has infallible doctrines it doesn't matter if he can or can't make such doctrines himself. The pope's office does not mean that he must be infallible.

John Henry Newman declared before papal infallibility was proclaimed that he had an opinion that the pope was infallible but was not very sure (page 13, Church and Infallibility). It is no wonder for if the Church is infallible the pope need not be. When Newman was not sure despite his knowledge of the early Church how could the pope be sure enough to be able to validly proclaim the doctrine of papal infallibility?

The doctrine contradicts the fact that a reasonable God cannot do wasteful miracles.

Papal infallibility implies that a doctrine is fully revealed by God because the pope says so and not because reason says so for if reason were enough the infallibility could not and would not make the doctrine more convincing. If a doctrine can be proven to be revealed by God you don't need infallibility. Infallibility must make the doctrine more certain otherwise being infallible would serve no purpose. Yet the Church says the pope cannot make a dogma unless he is sure the evidence says it is true first. In other words reason and investigation prove it first. So is a doctrine infallible if proclaimed as a result of faulty research or inaccurate information? The Church says it is so the research is not important at all. It isn't necessary. Infallibility in that case would be inspiration. Popes would be prophets of God.

The Church teaches that the Bible cannot be added to which is one reason why it has to say infallibility is not inspiration. But virtually all Christian scholars these days think that the Bible's statements are infallible and the word of God in the same way as the popes statements are infallible. They think God pulls strings to ensure that what he wants to say is put across and that this doesn't tamper with the freedom of the instrument saying or writing those things. So if the scholars are right then the pope is adding to the Bible. They see inspiration not as God putting ideas into people's mind but as indirectly making sure they write what pleases him. For example, Mark might write a gospel and God might not like some of it so God sets the stage so that somebody will edit Mark and drop the unwanted bits. This idea fits the development of the Bible best rather than the stupid notion of God writing the Bible along with the authors.

If a man becomes pope and within seconds of being elected proclaims a new dogma such as that Judas Iscariot is in Hell forever what then? His research before he became pope can't count. The scenario shows the absurdity of papal infallibility and that it is inspiration and new revelation despite what the Church maintains.

To affirm the need for research is to say that the pope must be infallible when he sifts through the evidence to see what it really says. So the research is infallible as well as the doctrine.

It may seem that the research is only infallible if the pope intends to make an infallible dogma. But the pope will not know

until the research is completed and it is decision time if he should make the dogma or not. For example, Pius IX proclaimed the doctrine that Mary was conceived without sin. He had to research it first. Then if he concluded that Mary was not conceived sinless he wouldn't make a dogma of that. It would be pointless. So he didn't know if he could proclaim that Mary was sinless at her conception until after the investigation was wrapped up. Also, if he is to do the research properly he cannot come to it with a biased mind. So the research cannot be infallible just because the pope wishes to make a new dogma after he has done it.

So everything the pope researches must be infallible because it is only when he reaches a conclusion that the option of declaring a doctrine infallible comes to him. But whether he proclaims a dogma or not the conclusions must be infallible. It must follow that all papal statements are infallible.

The pope has the power to be infallible even if he does not want to use it.

The pope needs to be clever before he can be infallible. Then why have most of the popes been so stupid? What about the popes that were only boys? To say they had latent infallibility or whatever is meaningless.

Papal infallibility though believed by millions of Catholics previously was not declared an infallible revelation of God until Vatican 1 in 1870. But years before Vatican 1, the pope claimed to be infallible as he taught that Mary was conceived without original sin and lived a sinless life.

It was certainly heretical for a pope to declare an infallible doctrine without the Church first using its infallibility to make his infallibility an article of faith. It is a contradiction to say that the decision of a man who had not been declared infallible could be binding on the Catholic conscience as a doctrine revealed by God. The pope was a heretic judging by Catholic standards. Even if he were infallible he ceased to be when he became a heretic for heresy puts you out of the Church. The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was made infallible by a false pope in 1854. That pope was Pius IX who later convened Vatican 1 to get proclaimed infallible. The Catholic declares that any ecumenical council assembled by a fake pope is not infallible but is schismatical and heretical. Vatican 1 and 2 were fake ecumenical councils. The Roman Catholic Church does not exist any more for it has been replaced by a similar organisation.

If the pope could make an infallible doctrine without being infallibly declared infallible by the Church then he must be infallible – actually not potentially - all the time and every word he says on religion is correct. But Vatican 1 decreed that the pope can only use its infallibility under certain conditions so if the pope was infallible in defending the Immaculate Conception then Vatican 1 was a fake and fallible ecumenical council.

To say the pope is right that he can only make new dogmas that are necessary for salvation is to say that the pope must infallibly know what is necessary for salvation first. The pope can make a dogma anytime. Thus he needs to know what doctrines are needed for salvation all the time just in case. This knowledge would be a gift to him from God. So the pope is automatically infallible all the time for if he knows a doctrine is necessary for salvation he knows the doctrine is true. He knows how a doctrine is needed for salvation and why. He knows what the doctrine is.

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 that 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 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 Catholic Church 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 dogmatised 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 frauding 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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