

Answering Roman Catholicism

What Is the Difference Between the Roman Catholic and Protestant Versions of the Ten Commandments?

By Dr. Paul M. Elliott

From the **TeachingtheWord** Bible Knowledgebase

Part eighteen of a series. Read [part seventeen](#).

Many Bible-believing Christians do not realize that the Roman Catholic church's version of the Ten Commandments is different from the Biblical version used by Protestants. The difference reveals the essentially idolatrous nature of Roman Catholicism.

Roman Catholicism's emphasis on the alleged primacy of the visible church sheds a pervasive influence on its doctrines. One of the most glaring examples is Rome's revision of the Ten Commandments to support its agenda of idolatry.

The Commandments Compared

Aligning the Roman Catholic and Protestant versions of the Ten Commandments side-by-side shows the differences:

Roman Catholic Version

1. I am the Lord thy God...Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.
2. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.
3. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
4. Honor thy father and thy mother.
5. Thou shalt not kill.

Protestant (Biblical) Version

1. I am the Lord thy God...Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.
2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them.
3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
5. Honor thy father and thy mother.

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| 6. Thou shalt not commit adultery. | 6. Thou shalt not kill. |
| 7. Thou shalt not steal. | 7. Thou shalt not commit adultery. |
| 8. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. | 8. Thou shalt not steal. |
| 9. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife. | 9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. |
| 10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house. | 10. Thou shalt not covet. |

The Roman Catholic revision is obvious: The Vatican eliminates the second commandment against idolatry, and subdivides the tenth commandment against covetousness in order to keep the number of commandments at ten. This version is also used by many Lutheran churches. The Biblically accurate version used by Protestants is the one found on public monuments and in courtrooms in the United States and elsewhere, to the extent that the postmodern "freedom from religion" mindset still permits it.

(Judaism divides Exodus 20 in a manner similar to Protestants, except that verse 2 ["I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage"] is considered the 1st commandment and verses 3-6 against idolatry are considered the 2nd commandment. Thereafter the division is the same.)

Man's Traditions Over God's Word

Rome claims that it follows a version of the Ten Commandments established in the late fourth century by Augustine, which in turn was allegedly based on a then-current Jewish synagogue version. But this is one of the many cases in which Roman Catholicism places the traditions of men in authority over the Word of God. The commandment against idolatry is clear, strong, and specific. It was principally for their flagrant, persistent violations of this commandment that God evicted Israel and Judah from the Promised Land and sent them into captivity. Man has no right to arbitrarily remove the second commandment from the Decalogue.

The Reason for Rome's Revisionism

The Vatican must maintain the fiction of the revisionist Ten Commandments in order to perpetuate its extensive idolatry. Rome commands its faithful to bow before statues and crucifixes, light candles, burn incense, and pray to the dead. Rome commands veneration of the host, the wafer which it claims a priest turns into the body of Christ by an incantation.

(The Latin words the priest uses are *hoc est corpus*, from which the magician's incantation *hocus pocus* is derived.)

Catholics also venerate so-called "relics" - the remains of saints, ranging from an entire corpse to fragments such as a finger or a bone. A few years ago I was in San Antonio, Texas. I saw what were said to be the remains of some dead saint housed in an ornate, gold-plated chest on poles. This chest was being carried aloft by priests through the streets of the city, as crowds of Catholics on the sidewalks bowed or kneeled in worship and made the sign of the cross.

The altar is the focal point of every Roman Catholic church. By Vatican edict, every altar contains a cavity in which some part of the remains of a dead saint's body is placed. According to Rome, the presence of these human remains in the altar cavity is necessary in order for the altar to be consecrated and used. Wherever possible, the remains are from the body of the saint for which the church is named. It is upon this altar-sepulchre that the priest, according to Rome, turns bread and wine into the actual body and blood of Christ in order to offer a fresh sacrifice for sins at every Mass.

Vatican teaching alleges a distinction between what it calls *dulia* (venerating saints and bowing before statues and human remains) and *latria* (worship directed toward God). But it is a distinction without a difference. Idolatry by any name is an abomination to God. These words of the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy chapter 32 condemning Israel's idolatry are also the condemnation of Roman Catholic idolatry today:

Then he [Israel] forsook God who made him, and scornfully esteemed the Rock of his salvation. They provoked Him to jealousy with foreign gods; with abominations they provoked Him to anger. They sacrificed to demons, not to God, to gods they did not know, to new gods, new arrivals that your fathers did not fear. Of the Rock who begot you, you are unmindful, and have forgotten the God who fathered you. And when the Lord saw it, He spurned them, because of the provocation of His sons and His daughters. And He said: "I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end will be, for they are a perverse generation, children in whom is no faith." (Deuteronomy 32:15-20)

Authentic Christianity in Contrast

God commands true believers in Christ to forsake idols, trusting in the Savior who has made the one efficacious sacrifice for sins, forever:

Do not turn to idols, nor make for yourselves molded gods: I am the Lord your God. (Leviticus 19:4)

Therefore say to the house of Israel, "Thus says the Lord God: 'Repent, turn away from your idols, and turn your faces away from all your abominations.' " (Ezekiel 14:6)

We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God. For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance. . . you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come. (1 Thessalonians 1:2-10)

And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. (Hebrews 10:11-13)

As we shall see in our next article, Rome's emphasis on the visible church instead of the invisible means that it teaches a doctrine of the purpose of water baptism that is far different from Biblical Christianity.

Next: Should a Roman Catholic Who Becomes a Christian Be Re-Baptized?

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