

Understanding

Roman Catholicism

Teacher

David James

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**ROMAN CATHOLIC EVANGELISM (EVAN203) Spring Semester 2015**

**WORD OF LIFE Bible Institute David James, Instructor**

# SYLLABUS

**SCOPE OF THE COURSE**

Ten class periods will be used to study Roman Catholicism, with a view to ministering to Catholics, both in terms of evangelism and discipleship. In these class periods we will note such things as the basic doctrines, the sacraments, understanding Roman Catholic thinking, major differences that divide Catholics and Evangelicals, some attempts to bridge that divide, and most importantly, evaluating all of these in light of Scripture. While there are other forms of Catholicism, most notably the Eastern Orthodox Church, this course focuses almost exclusively on the western or Latin church, headquartered in Vatican City in Rome.

**PURPOSE**

Roman Catholics do not uniquely need to be reached with the gospel message, but there are many things about Roman Catholicism that make it unique as a religious system. The main purpose of this course is to help the student develop a practical working knowledge of Roman Catholic doctrine and practice that will equip them to effectively reach Catholics for Christ and disciple individual Catholics who may be believers who have continued within Catholicism, as well as those who are new believers seeking a different direction with their lives.

**RATIONALE**

Word of Life Bible Institute seeks to expose the students to the major religions in the world with the goal of effectively presenting the gospel to followers of these religions. While unlike some other religions in which there are no born-again believers in Christ, this is not exclusively true of Roman Catholicism and so this presents some unique challenges in terms of understanding the theological and practical differences that exist between the Roman Catholic Church and conservative evangelicalism, as well as in terms of ministering to individual Catholics.

**COURSE GOALS**

Through the teaching, reading and exams the student should be able to:

* Understand the basic doctrines and practices of Roman Catholicism
* Know how to evaluate and biblically respond to Roman Catholic theology
* Understand the major areas that separate Roman Catholic theology from biblical evangelical theology
* Know how to effectively minister to Roman Catholics in terms of both evangelism and discipleship, as appropriate

**PROCEDURES FOR THE COURSE**

* Students will be expected to take thorough notes during the class lectures
* Students will read the entire notebook *Essentials of Roman Catholicism -* which will be reported on the final
* Students will take a final exam, based on both the lectures and the reading for the course

**READING ASSIGNMENTS**

Intro and Part I - due by the beginning of class, Wednesday, February 11 (6 pts) Part II and Appendix B - due by the beginning of class, Thursday, February 12 (6 pts) Part III - due by the beginning of class, Friday, February 13 (5 pts)

Appendix A - due by the time of the final exam (3 pts)

and Evangelicals and Catholics Together - due by the time of the final exam (5 pts)

**GRADING**

Final Exam: 75%

Reading: 25%

**UNDERSTANDING ROMAN CATHOLICISM**

# Introduction

1A. Why should Evangelicals study Roman Catholicism?

2A. Are there areas of theological agreement?

3A. Is Roman Catholicism a cult?

4A. Are Catholics Christians?

5A. Are “Evangelicals and Catholics Together”?

6A. What, then, should be our attitude?

# The Various Rites within Roman Catholicism

1A. Early regional developments

2A. The Roman Catholic Church

3A. Major Branches within Christianity

4A. Distribution of Catholicism

# Unofficial Categories of Roman Catholics

1A. Ultra-traditionalist Catholics

2A. Traditionalist Catholics

3A. Liberal Catholics

4A. Charismatic / evangelical Catholics

5A. Cultural Catholics

6A. Popular folk Catholics

# History of the Catholic Church

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| --- | --- |
| 70 | Rome replaces Antioch as center of Christianity |
| 99 | Death of Clement, successor to Peter |
| 100 | Christianity outlawed |
| 107 | Ignatius first uses “catholic” |
| 184 | Origen born |
| 196 | Latin for liturgy in West, Easter controversy |
| 257 | Emperor Valerian tries to destroy Christianity |
| 305 | Council of Elvira Spain imposes celibacy |
| 311 | Edict of Toleration by Galerius: church is tolerated |
| 313 | Edict of Milan by Constantine: church is legal |
| 325 | Nicaea I, Nicene Creed |
| 331 | Seat of Roman Empire moved to Constantinople |
| 336 | Earliest record of celebration of Christmas in Rome |
| 354 | Birth of Augustine of Hippo |
| 366 | Jerome commissioned to translate Vulgate |
| 381 | Council of Constantinople: Christianity made official |
| 397 | New Testament formalized at Carthage |
| 410 | Rome falls |
| 432 | St. Patrick arrives in Ireland |
| 451 | Council of Chalcedon, Papal authority, “Mother of God” |
| 480 | Benedictine order established |
| 533 | John II first pope to change name |
| 590 | Pope Gregory I becomes pope |
| 610 | Muhammad purportedly receives revelations |
| 711 | Muslims begin conquest of Spain |
| 726 | Iconoclastic controversy begins |
| 751 | Creation of Papal States |
| 787 | Nicaea I (iconoclasm condemned) |
| 844 | Language about the Real Presence developed |

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| 846 | Muslims invade Italy, attack Rom |
| 962 | Holy Roman Empire established |
| 993 | First official canonization of a saint |
| 1054 | Great (East/West) Schism |
| 1073 | Theory of papal infallibility proposed |
| 1098 | First crusade, Jerusalem taken |
| 1147 | Second crusade, Jerusalem lost |
| 1189 | Third crusade |
| 1202 | Fourth crusade |
| 1212 | Franciscans become first mendicant order |
| 1215 | Lateran IV (“transubstantiation”) |
| 1224 | Thomas Aquinas born |
| 1231 | Papal inquisition begins |
| 1274 | Temporary reunion of church in East and West |
| 1301 | King of France arrests pope |
| 1305 | Papacy moved to Avignon |
| 1377 | Papacy returned to Rome, but two popes elected |
| 1417 | Council of Constance ends Great Schism |
| 1453 | Muslims take Constantinople |
| 1456 | Gutenberg Bible printed |
| 1486 | Spanish Inquisition begins |
| 1492 | Columbus discovers Americas |
| 1506 | St Peter’s basilica begun |
| 1508 | Ceiling of the Sistine Chapel by Michaelangelo |
| 1512 | Lateran V (indulgences) |
| 1517 | Martin Luther’s 95 theses |
| 1519 | Zwingli triggers Reformation in Switzerland |
| 1533 | King Henry VIII excommunicated |
| 1540 | Jesuits established, Ignatius of Loyola |
| 1543 | Copernicus asserts heliocentricity |
| 1544 | Jesuit missions activity begins |

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| 1545 | Council of Trent (counter-reformation) |
| 1559 | Calvin sends out missionaries, “Forbidden Books” |
| 1566 | Latin mass standardized |
| 1633 | Trial of Galileo |
| 1789 | French Revolution fractures church |
| 1814 | Second Spanish Inquisition begins |
| 1854 | Dogma of the Immaculate Conception |
| 1858 | Apparitions of Mary in Lourdes, France |
| 1869 | Vatican I (papal primacy, dogma of infallibility) |
| 1917 | Apparitions of Mary in Fatima, Portugal |
| 1950 | Dogma of the Assumption of Mary |
| 1962 | Second Vatican council |
| 1967 | Catholic Renewal Movement begins |
| 1970 | Revision of Roman missal in vernacular |
| 1978 | Pope John Paul II chosen |
| 1992 | New Catechism of the Catholic Church |
| 1994 | Evangelicals and Catholics Together |
| 2005 | Pope John Paul II dies, Benedict XVI chosen |
| 2008 | Solemn declaration by between pope and Muslims |
| 2013 | Pope Benedict XVI resigns, February 11;Pope Francis chosen as 266th pope, March 13 |

**Selected Ecumenical Councils:** **Major Issues and Final Decisions**

1A. #1 - Nicaea I (325)

2A. #2 - Constantinople I (381)

3A. #3 - Ephesus (431)

4A. #4 - Chalcedon (451)

5A. #6 - Constantinople III (680-81)

6A. #7 - Nicea II (787)

7A. #12 - Lateran IV (1215)

8A. #16 - Constance (1414-18)

9A. #19 - Trent (1545-63)

10A. #20 - Vatican I (1869-70)

11A. #21 - Vatican II (1962-65)

# MAJOR THEOLOGICAL ISSUES THAT SEPARATE EVANGELICALISM AND ROMAN CATHOLICISM

**The Doctrine of Authority**

1A. The Personal Authority of the Bishop of Rome

2A. The Pope and Apostolic Succession

3A. The collective teaching authority of the bishops

4A. The authority of the inspired Word of God

5A. A biblical response

1B. Concerning Peter

1C. Scripture gives no indication that Peter was fulfilling a role like that of pope 2C. There is no indication of the papal office in general

3C. There is no mention of supremacy among the apostles

4C. Matthew 16 does not make Peter the primary apostle or pope 5C. In the Greek - petros vs. petra

6C. Aramaic - same word and it was a word play

7C. The Greek had to change the words or Peter would have been identified with a feminine name - so Jesus was probably referring to Peter

8C. Some try to make it the confession

9C. It was probably intentionally ambiguous 10C. But the solution is in Ephesians 2:19-22

11C. The church will be built on Jesus and the apostles as a group - with Jesus being the main cornerstone. There is only one main cornerstone. After you set the first one - it doesn’t matter

12C. There is no convincing scriptural or historical evidence the Peter was ever in Rome 13C. Peter was not infallible with regards to faith and practice (cf. Gal. 2)

2B. Concerning bishops and apostolic succession

1C. The apostolic office was unique: Acts 1:21-22, 2 Cor 12:12

2C. There is no Biblical instruction or even reference to apostolic succession 3C. No mention of any relationship between the office of bishop and apostle

3B. Concerning Scripture and Tradition

1C. Scripture alone is given as the rule of faith (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

2C. There are warnings against adding / subtracting from specific portions of the Word of God (Deu 4:2, Rev 22:18-19) - and a principle seems to be indicated

3C. When Jesus was tempted he quoted Scripture 4C. NT writers quote Scripture

5C. No indication that traditions are anything other than traditions of men

6C. The references to tradition are both negative and positive (negative when they violate Scriptural principles - positive when they are consistent with them)

7C. No references to tradition that indicate that it was revelatory

6A. Questions to ask

1B. If Peter was supreme among the disciples - why do they continue to debate the issue (Luke 22:24-30)?

2B. Why is Paul and not Peter the most prominent figure after Acts 13 and why is Paul the prominent NT theologian?

3B. When Iranaeus listed 12 bishops of Rome (2nd century) why did he not list Peter?

4B. Did you know that the New Testament never refers to any leader in a local church as a priest, including the apostles?

5B. Given the meaning of “thoroughly equipped” in 2 Tim 3:16-17, how does one explain the need for something apart from and in addition to Scripture?

6B. Why does Scripture never equate Tradition with the Word of God?

# THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION

1A. Categories of sin 1B. Original sin

2B. Mortal sin

3B. Venial sin

2A. The Seven Sacraments 1B. Baptism

2B. Confirmation

3B. Penance

4B. Eucharist

5B. Marriage

6B. Holy Orders

7B. Anointing the Sick

3A. The doctrine of salvation: Sin and the sacraments

4A. The doctrine of purgatory

5A. The doctrine of hell

6A. The Communion of the Saints

7A. Limbo

8A. A biblical response

9A. Questions to ask

# THE DOCTRINE OF THE MASS

1A. The first Mass

2A. The real sacrifice

3A. The effects of Holy Communion

4A. The Real Presence and John ch. 6

5A. Transubstantiation: Artistotle’s Pre-Scientific Ontology

6A. A biblical response

7A. Questions to ask

# THE DOCTRINE OF MARY

1A. The Immaculate Conception 2A. Mother of God

3A. Perpetual Virginity 4A. Co-redeemer

5A. Queen of Heaven 6A. Our Lady of . . .

7A. Her intercession 8A. Her appearances

9A. A biblical response

10A. Questions to ask

# THE ISSUE OF ECUMENICAL COOPERATION

1A. ECT: “Evangelicals and Catholics Together” 1B. The main issues

2B. Evaluation

2A. Two important questions for Evangelicals

1B. Should Evangelicals work with Catholics?

2B. Should Evangelicals evangelize Catholics?

# MINISTRY TO CATHOLICS

1A. Develop personal relationships

2A. People are not “projects”

3A. Do not assume all Catholics believe the same thing

4A. Be knowledgeable, yet humble

5A. Capitalize on areas of agreement

6A. Define your terms, but avoid debates

7A. Encourage an examination of beliefs

8A. Ask leading questions

9A. Be kind and patient - don’t give up

10A. They may initially become better Catholics

11A. Remember the difference between evangelism and discipleship

12A. Understand that family conflicts may develop