

**Comments on Mr. Patrick Madrid's book entitled:  
“Does the Bible Really Say That?”**

**Truth and Discernment**

An air of reasonability can sometimes be heard in the words of men. It is when those words take us from the truth of God's Word, the Bible, that we must take special care. In his book, “Does the Bible Really Say That?” author Patrick Madrid opens God's Word in the hope of showing Biblical roots for Roman Catholic teaching. While the words have an air of reasonableness, there are clear points where God's Word is subtly diverged from. Making the statement that “God's Word” does not always refer to the Bible, Mr. Madrid call Scripture in question, introducing uncertainty and doubt. Is not God's creative work clearly and completely attested to in His Bible? Likewise is the Bible not the inerrant Word of God as revealed to holy men, inspired by the Holy Spirit?<sup>1</sup> Finally, does God's Bible not fully reveal the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, and give us the full revelation of His Truth, that we might know Him? Discernment of the truth in Scripture is ill fated if it is begun with an unclear definition of what God's Word even is. Our discernment of the Scriptures does not come from ourselves, but from God and based in His Wisdom as revealed to us in His Word.<sup>2</sup>

Matthew 13:24-30 is referred to as encouraging Roman Catholics to stick with the Roman Catholic church, despite setbacks, downfalls, blemishes or failures within the Roman Catholic church. While there are weeds – or tares – present in the Church in general, and in the Roman Catholic church specifically as Mr. Madrid suggests, this does not excuse or condone any practice by mankind that is contrary to God's Word as revealed in the Bible. If the Roman Catholic church is engaged in practices contrary to Scripture, than either those practices must cease, or Christians must come out from that organization and renew their practice of worship in line with God's Word. This is what occurred during the Reformation when Protestant denominations came out from Roman Catholicism. The Church, that is all who are God's, is not to be confused with the Roman Catholic church, any Protestant denomination, the Eastern Orthodox church, or any other organization of mankind.

Gentle inclusions of chapters such as that on Humility must not relax our special care as we consider the entirety of Mr. Madrid's book. Full of Scripture, this and some other chapters carefully point out clear and plain Bible teaching. The truth of these points must not bleed into other points made, as each must be carefully examined in their own right, with a renewed concern to give special care to each.

Apostolic Succession, however, presents a case carefully made, founded mainly on the assertion that the office of Bishop is both different from and the same as that of Apostle. Matthias succeeded Judas Iscariot as an Apostle.<sup>3</sup> After that, Scripture teaches that Bishops were ordained

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<sup>1</sup> “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” (II Peter 1:21)

<sup>2</sup> Psalm 119:105; Proverbs 3:5; Proverbs 19:3; 1 Corinthians 3:19; John 4:24, John 8:32; John 8:44; John 14:6; John 14:17; John 16:13; John 17:17.

<sup>3</sup> Acts 1:26

as overseers in the Church.<sup>4</sup> Why would Bishops be ordained, and there not be a continued example of Apostolic succession in Scripture, unless the requirement to have worked alongside Jesus during his earthly ministry did not “quickly fall away” as Mr. Madrid asserts, though citing no Scripture in doing so? The word “implied” is used soon after by Mr. Madrid, again leaving the plain clear teaching of Scripture to suggest something more than or close to, but not exactly the teaching of God's Word as revealed in the Bible.

Sacred tradition is discussed by Mr. Madrid in a manner that likewise warrants our special care and discernment. Can we accept the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory, or that of infant baptism, as true in light of traditional teaching? Doing so would apparently overlook the clear Scripture. Regarding purgatory, Scripture fails to even once mention the existence of such a middle ground between Heaven and Hell as purgatory. Regarding baptism, the Bible shows us the example of Jesus himself being baptized as an adult, and is consistent that His example is to be followed – not directly forbidding infant baptism, but instead commanding otherwise. It is a grave matter when one allows a deviance from God's Word, however slight, that appears on the surface to be neutral but in its substance is in fact contrary to the command and example of God in His Word.

### **Intercession and Sacrifice**

Statues in the Roman Catholic church may be seen as images both pleasing to God and important for communicating remembrances of God's Word and great servants of God to the people. Scripture cited by Mr. Madrid deals with Jesus as the image of God. In no instance does God command that we are to build statues of Moses or Elijah or Jesus. Certainly it is questionable in light of the commandment against graven images that one should make an image of Jesus – how dangerous it is to make an image of Him who is to be worshipped, while forbidding the worship of that image! With regard to Roman Catholic Saints, the depiction of heroes of the faith is perhaps less questionable, though it does have the potential to blur the line between potential idols and visual remembrances. Consider what Jesus said in Matthew 5:30 and Mark 9:43,45 about our own hands and feet – if they cause us to sin we are commanded to cut them off! How much faster should we discard something nonessential such as a visual representation when spoken and written words are available, and in fact the commanded mode of preaching and teaching.<sup>5</sup> It is even more interesting to note 1 Corinthians 2:4 in light of the nature of the impact of preaching – a living, powerful mode of communication, not simply a silent image. Even more caution is warranted after a reading of Revelation 14, where it is shown that the Beast and his image will be worshipped in place of God, during the end times. The clear trend in Scripture is definite – images are to be avoided in the place of worship!

Roman Catholicism's definition of Saints falters when its scriptural foundation is tested. The intercession of the dead on behalf of the living is in particular contrast to Scripture accounts. Scripture cited by Mr. Madrid mentions such things as saved people in God's presence after death, but these references are used only to lend credibility to this traditional teaching that is not primarily defined in terms of Scripture. In the same light, we can consider Mr. Madrid's chapter

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<sup>4</sup> 1 Timothy 3:1-2; Titus 1:7

<sup>5</sup> Jonah 3:2; Matthew 3:1; Matthew 4:23; Acts 8:4; 1 Corinthians 1:18; 1 Corinthians 2:4

on Mary, the mother of Jesus. Mr. Madrid notes the account of subjects requesting the favor of Bathsheba, the Queen mother of Solomon, and draws a parallel to the wedding at Cana, where Mary, referred to as “the mother of Jesus,” asked Him to help with the wine supply. Instead of interceding on behalf of those running the feast, Mary appears to actually be in some position assisting with the meal, perhaps as a close relative of those being married. Mary petitioned Jesus directly, and then commanded the servants – who appear to have reported to her – to do as Jesus told them. There is no intercession here, and no petitioning of Mary for intercession. Further, calling Mary the mother of Jesus “blessed” does not appear to be in line with giving her the office of Queen Mother, of whom requests are appropriately made in Christ's stead. Any doctrine that places another person between the sinner and Christ the Saviour runs into disagreement with the many examples we can clearly see in Scripture where children, lepers, those who could not walk or see, tax collectors, Samaritans, the rich young ruler and indeed anyone in need of Christ, went or were brought directly to Him, and received directly by Him – no middle man, no intercessor (1 Timothy 2:5). Certainly, none who were dead were ever in Scripture seen to have interceded on the part of the living – neither before Jesus walked with us as a man, or since.

Praying the Rosary is presented by Mr. Madrid as a helpful means to establish order in prayerful meditation, considering certain Bible themes in a particular order and manner. On the surface this seems helpful and positive, though not explicitly prescribed by Jesus at any point, nor exemplified in Scripture. What requires great concern and careful discernment is to whom much of this prayer is directed – Mary. While indeed blessed to be the virgin mother of Jesus, she is by no means the mother of God nor the Queen of Heaven. The references made to the Scriptures asserting this are again stated by Mr. Madrid as “alluding” to these facts. How can we place allusions and implied meanings above the plain clear truth of God's Word as revealed in the Bible? 1 Corinthians 9:25 is said to allude to Mary being the Queen of Heaven, though this does not appear in line with the Scripture. Similarly, 2 Timothy 4:8 is referenced. In fact, this Scripture clarifies the concern that is raised by Mr. Madrid's support for Mary being an intercessor for living Christians. Mr. Madrid cites 2 Timothy 2:1-4 and suggests that, while acknowledging this Scripture refers to all Christians, He suggests that since she is blessed of God – which is true – her prayers for us are more powerful, even most powerful. In truth, Mary is asleep, and no one who is asleep can do anything until the Resurrection. Revelation 20:5 and Ecclesiastes 9:5-6,10 further indicated quite plainly and clearly that when we die, we rest. At rest, we will no longer intercede on behalf of those still living, and according to Luke 16:26-31 we cannot, nor even can any greatly blessed child of God who now sleeps. Consider the ability of living men and women to intercede for others living men and women, and also the status as intercessor attributed to the Holy Spirit, and to Christ.<sup>6</sup> Can any similar Scripture be found that shows Mary the mother of Jesus to hold a status above that which 1 Timothy 2:1 commends to all, and that teaches Mary does not sleep, but is resurrected already?

Matthew 6:7 is discussed in a chapter on Prayer. Again, Mr. Madrid draws fine lines between what is not expressly forbidden by Scripture, and what Scripture might mean if interpreted in a particular manner. Surely, we are not forbidden from repeating a prayer once prayed already, or written by someone else. The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9, Luke 11:2) is clearly the prime

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<sup>6</sup> Roman 8:26-27; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25; 1 Timothy 2:1

example of this. Disconcerting is the failure on the part of Mr. Madrid to discuss the meaning and nature of prayer. Not a ritualistic activity that should or must be done to please God, prayer is in very real terms talking directly with Our Saviour and Our Lord, and again 1 Timothy 2:1 comes to mind. Time and time again God commands us in His Word the Bible to pray to Him, praising Him, thanking Him, asking Him. Sometimes His answer might be “no,” or “wait,” but He always answers. If repetition can lead to dullness and a loss of the very real intimacy and communication we are to have with God through prayer, is it not far more important to defend against that loss of intimacy, rather than to defend a practice where that intimacy is put at risk? Mr. Madrid tries and fails to make the case for repetition, such as is found in the Rosary, in light of these concerns.

Sacraments are discussed by Mr. Madrid in a manner that appears to support the Roman Catholic church's traditional seven. Following a pattern that appears to be consistent in his work, Mr. Madrid suggests implications that add to and in some cases change the nature of the explicit text of Scripture. For example, while Baptism, the Lord's Supper (or Eucharist, meaning “Thanksgiving”) and Marriage are clearly Scriptural – explicitly – the others require one to add just a little to the written Word. This adding and changing will alert us to use great caution, if we are to carefully discern God's truth.

Referencing the Scripture Mr. Madrid cites, one can find no reference to penance in the form of either work or payment for sin. We are commanded to repent, to turn from our sin and to God, but the wages of sin is death, and only the Blood of Christ can and does redeem us. While passages are referenced that talk about the Apostles being given the power to forgive sin, this and other gifts are clearly shown in Scripture to be limited to them, and not extended or transferred by them to others. Further, it is clear in Scripture that the Apostles knew Christ personally and deeply, and had completely surrendered their wills to His – a truly unique qualification.

The traditional practice of the Confirmation is clearly not exemplified in Scripture, though the cited passages deal with the gifts of the Apostles and with Baptism. Confirmation is clearly seen as a means to involve, and spur revival in, young men and women in the Roman Catholic church. While perhaps not a bad practice, it is not clearly exemplified or commanded in Scripture as it is currently practiced, and thus might well be replaced with a practice more in line with Scriptural revival.<sup>7</sup>

Holy Orders, which is the ordination of Priests in the Roman Catholic church, also is not clearly exemplified for us in Scripture. Would such a high office and specific set of duties not be exemplified for us in Scripture if it were commanded by God? Jesus gave His Apostles special spiritual gifts. It is stretching the words and meaning of these Scripture references to found upon them the office of Priest in the New Testament church. Would this office not have been more clearly outlined in other places in Scripture, specifically places such as Ephesians chapter 4? Careful scrutiny is in order when any office of man is set up between man and God, especially one that claims the place of Christ, especially on such unstable grounds. 1 Timothy 3 and 4 cannot be ignored when considering the office of Roman Catholic priest. Is this what was

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<sup>7</sup> Romans 14; Psalm 51:10; Psalm 85:6; Isaiah 57:15

foretold and warned against? And what of penance? It is clear throughout Scripture that we are to ask God to forgive us our sins, and when He does it is in His Grace and Mercy that He forgives us through the Blood of Christ – not with the stipulation that we do something in exchange or direct gratuity for that forgiveness. Scripture clearly speaks of our inability to save ourselves or bring anything of any value to the table – save thanksgiving in love, and even that is a gift He gave us.<sup>8</sup>

Mr. Madrid discusses the Mass as an experiencing of Christ's once for all sacrifice on the cross, as a Roman Catholic Priest offers Christ as an atonement for sin, in unity with Christ's once for all offering of Himself, transcending time and space in a mystical way, so that the Word of God is not contradicted. An extreme degree of special care must be taken in examining this, as this concept appears to take simple Scripture truth and cloud it with a significant degree of mystical added material that is claimed to be implied by, yet is not plainly seen in the Bible. The Last Supper, at which Jesus presented the bread and the wine to be eaten “in remembrance of Me,”<sup>9</sup> does not see any special office instituted to do this for other Christians. Jesus simply taught that we as Christians should do this in remembrance of His death until He returns, as a continuation of the Passover meal. We are commanded to remember His death on the cross as the once for all atonement for our sin. Special care must be given to the claim by Mr. Madrid that Christ somehow implies we are to present His sacrifice to the Father at the Mass, not simply remembering Christ's completed work, but somehow continuing it. Where in Scripture can it be seen that Christ's sacrifice is anything but finished, complete, and done? To be remembered, surely – it is so commanded by Christ. To be remembered does not mean to be made again or to be continued, and clouding that fact with the temporal confusion of “time and space” as Mr. Madrid does cannot and does not change that. The example Jesus gave in the Scripture account shows that Christians can gather and remember Christ's death by sharing a meal following Christ's example. The sacrificial priesthood of the Old Testament can be seen as a foreshadowing of Christ, and now Christ has fulfilled the role of Priest, and that work is indeed finished. As to ministering to the Church and leading the Church, Jesus has clearly established roles of leadership and Church government, to give order to the body of believers, as can be seen in 1 Timothy 2 and Ephesians 4.

### **Sin and Salvation**

Instead of focusing on God's mercy and grace, even on the Scripture of James 5:20 and 1 Peter 4:8, Mr. Madrid chooses to focus on guilt and fear. As we look forward to standing before God after we die, as a Christian we are commanded in God's Word to approach His Throne boldly.<sup>10</sup> Romans 14:4 shows us that He is able to make us stand, though left alone in our sin we never could. 1 John 4:18 further reminds us that there is no fear in love, neither should we be tormented by fear of our sin at some future point – if our relationship with God is one of love, He will or has made provision that we should not fear in that way. Isaiah 44:22 and Acts 3:19 complete this clear and simple truth. Special care, even extreme caution, must be exercised by anyone considering Mr. Madrid's words on this matter, representing the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church.

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<sup>8</sup>1 John 4:19

<sup>9</sup>Luke 22:19

<sup>10</sup> Hebrews 4:16

Dealing with Divorce and Remarriage, Mr. Madrid gently glosses over the annulment of marriage which in the context of the book appears to provide a legal circumvention for the sinfulness of adultery, which remarriage after divorce scripturally constitutes.<sup>11</sup> How can such a matter be left out of this chapter, and the only mention of God's forgiveness of all sin, including adultery, only come shadowed in the mention of advice to contact a priest for sacramental confession? Surely repentance and forgiveness through Christ directly, the turning away from one's sin that only His strength can bear and the forgiveness that only He can provide, must be mentioned when discussing this topic.

Alcohol consumption is dealt with in a similar manner, with a fog of uncertainty woven into the issue. Scripture is clear that drunkenness is sinful. If drunkenness is sinful, should it not be clearly and strongly avoided by all means? How can any teaching encourage one toward almost sinning for carnal pleasure, and still be considered inspired by Holy God? Yet while a reading from the book of Proverbs clearly teaches one to cautiously avoid wine, Mr. Madrid follows with a reading from the book of Sirach, considered by many to be not part of the inspired Word of God, that appears to do just that – wine should be used for pleasure, but keep short of drunkenness. Mr. Madrid then continues by further clouding the waters by citing a passage in Deuteronomy, where directions for a feast unto the Lord are misapplied to common practice outside of that particular setting. This same passage discusses specific food laws and a specific activity of worship for God's people at that time. Further, Mr. Madrid uses Luke 7:34 to suggest that because Jesus was mocked for eating (food and beverage, or “bread and wine,” not “wine when it is red” or “strong drink”) we somehow gain license to drink alcohol when other beverages are available, for the purpose of what? Unwinding? Relaxing? Using the drug of alcohol to deaden our senses just a little, legally short of outright drunkenness? Clearly this is not Christ's example. We are commanded to live simple, quiet lives, and we are told by Jesus that as He, the Master, was treated poorly by the world, how much less consideration of the world we, the Master's Servants, can expect.<sup>12</sup>

Purgatory is taught by the Roman Catholic church to be a place of suffering and purification after death, before one enters heaven, reserved for those who die with certain spiritual deficiencies. Let us consider Scripture, and discern if this is in line with God's Word. Scripture teaches that we are to “put on Christ”.<sup>13</sup> Psalm 51:7 shows us that God can purify us, and make us holy – He has in fact done that through the blood of Christ! 1 Peter 1:18-23, and also Ephesians 2:13 and Hebrews 9:14 all attest to the truth of God's Word. Special care is needed here, as the truth of Christ's redemptive work on the cross appears to be clouded by this traditional teaching, seen by some as implied in Scripture, but in fact contrary to the clear teaching of the whole of God's Word as revealed to us in the Bible. Mr. Madrid cites 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 as referring to “some souls.” In fact, the Scripture is clear that this applies to all mankind, and is in fact referring to that final day when the redeemed of Christ shall stand before God, our lives made manifest before Him, and we shall either receive rewards or suffer loss, though we, the redeemed of Christ, shall all be saved because of Christ.

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<sup>11</sup> Luke 16:18

<sup>12</sup> 1 Corinthians 10:31-33

<sup>13</sup> Galatians 3:27

The Bible clearly teaches that all men are to be known by their fruit, and among the fruits of the Spirit – that is, the fruit that should be seen in the life of a Christian – is good works.<sup>14</sup> All throughout the Bible God commands us to love Him, and each other – can “good works” be not also called love or charity? God commands us to do good works, and we will if we are living for Him, saved from our sin by Him. Our good works don't – can not – redeem us from our sin, they are a manifestation of the redemptive work done by Christ.

In Luke 3:16, John the Baptist talks about the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which is given by Christ. Why, if there are no clear references to people bringing infants for water baptism, should this practice be inferred? Why should infants be brought for baptism by water, unless they must be for some reason? Would a child be condemned to hell if not baptized by water? Surely this is not seen in God's Word, as revealed in the Bible. True, Jesus said, “suffer the little children to come to me,” in Luke 18:16. In Luke 18:17 He shows the context of His command, rebuking us not to think too highly of our ways and thoughts, and to remember Proverbs 3:5-7. So then, we have the clear example in the Bible of adult believers coming to be baptized by water, following the example of Jesus. Following on the comments on the chapter on Good Works, the act of baptism can be seen as something one does because of their salvation, and not something that mankind must do to earn or otherwise make possible their salvation, or the salvation of their children.

Assurance of salvation<sup>15</sup> is one thing the Devil – who is a real person, a powerful fallen angel bitterly opposed to God – wants to cloud with doubt. How better to keep the Christian from walking with God, and receiving the blessings and joy of that proper relationship with their creator, than to tell the Christian, “You can't do it – and even if you can do it for a while, Hell's just waiting for you to slip up, and fall in!” Surely, if Scripture like John 10:28 (and that's not the only place it's written in the Bible) is true – and God says it is true – than we can rest assured that Our Saviour is just that – Our Saviour. He saved us from sin and death by his sinless life and death on the cross. His blood washed away our sin – past, present, and future. If He has given us eternal life, not even we can take our lives away from Him. The Devil wants us to sit down and give up on the battlefield of the spiritual warfare, and this is one way he works in the minds of men to accomplish this goal.<sup>16</sup> Further, by our fruits we will be recognized as children of God, according to Scripture – surely, if our fruit is unrepentant sin, that is not indicative of a loving relationship between us and God. If we are saved, then we love Him as He first loved us, and we daily die to self and seek to serve Him, even as we sin and repent after we are saved (Romans 7:15, as an example). The Bible teaches us to have faith that He can save us even from ourselves – and if we are saved, and yet persist in rebellion, can He not stop us even to the point of taking us from this life? Death is, of course, certainly not the fate He desires for us. God's command to us is to turn from our sins, to Him and live.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 5:9

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<sup>16</sup> Ephesians 6:13

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