

 **MPI PUBLISHING**

REAL SAINTS DON'T PRAY TO SAINTS OR ANGELS

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Real Saints Don't Pray to Saints or Angels

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Printed in the United States of America.

Published by Metro Praise International Publishing,
Chicago, IL.

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I dedicate this book to all those who have joyfully left the man-made tradition of praying to saints and angels and now have a closer walk with God because of it. Specifically my Dad, in-laws, and to all those in my church- thank you for showing me that God's Word never fails. I rejoice with you and pray many more will join with you in sharing your testimony of experiencing God's great love and friendship in prayer to the Father, in Jesus' name, by the power of the Holy Spirit!

INTRODUCTION

John 14:6, “Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’”

Despite many refutations offered by Protestant scholars over the ages, the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches, respectively, persist in teaching the practice of prayer (or requesting the help of) to heavenly beings (including saints and angels), deceiving many of their own followers, and even enticing some Evangelicals to follow after it. This troubling trend continues on to today. Therefore, this book has been written to offer more nails in keeping that coffin of false doctrine- namely, praying to saints and angels- shut for any it has opened to.

The treasures of the New Covenant are so vast that an entire lifetime could be spent searching them out. Just take God’s love, for example, which is said to “surpass all our knowledge” (Ephesians 3:17-19, 21). Yet in all of God’s glory, wisdom, and sovereignty, He has granted us- mere humans- the privilege of being in a loving relationship with Him. What greater joy could one ever hope for than to know one’s Creator and be indwelt by Him? The Bible teaches that God does not just come to be with us, He comes to live in us (John 14:20). God the Son taking on humanity is not the only mystery in the incarnation, but also how sons and daughters of Adam can become sons and daughter of God (John 1:9-13). In other words, Jesus became like man, so that man might become like God. As the Son came to dwell on earth in bodily form, now the Spirit comes to dwell on earth in our bodies. Indeed, 1 Corinthians 3:16 declares that we are His temple.

Why, then, would any child of God feel the need to talk to someone in heaven other than his or her Creator? Only someone unfamiliar with the great privilege of being a “King’s kid” could come up with such a horrible idea. Worse yet, a demon might possibly tempt a saint to believe such a thing that implies they are still so far from God (1 Timothy 4:1-5). Thankfully, God, the great Lover of our

souls, has restored our fellowship Him, and we don't need anyone in heaven to pray to Him for us. For our prayers ascend to heaven and become like incense around His throne- how precious our prayers must be to Him (Revelation 5:8).

Sadly, it only took about two hundred years from the passing of the apostles for some to doubt the promises of God concerning the effectiveness of their prayers and intimacy with Him. Such promises, like in John 14:13-14, "And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it," are effectually nullified by such practices. And in vain attempts to honor the departed, they have turned the saints into idols, rendering them the objects of prayer and worship.

If these departed saints could hear what their fellow believers on earth were asking them to do in prayer, they would be so grieved. Now being in God's presence, they know full well how jealous is God for our trust and worship. They would never dare to try and intercept our prayers, nor would they think that God needs them to mediate for us as Christ Jesus is our Great and Only Mediator in Heaven (1 Timothy 2:5). The holy Trinity needs no other helpers in heaven to hear our prayers to Him because He alone has the power to rightly hear and to answer our prayers (1 Corinthians 2:11).

Therefore, dear friend, as you read this book, I pray that you will be stirred and strengthened to only pray to God the Father in the name of God the Son by the power of God the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). No matter how inadequate or unworthy you may feel at times, be encouraged and learn to pray and seek God while He may be found. Do not let anyone deceive you with their man-made traditions, to try to convince you that you need Mary to get to God, because she is more loved by Him than you. Or that somehow Jesus is too busy to hear your prayers, so you need His apostles to pray for you. God forbid! Believe with me today that even if your faith is the size of a mustard seed, you will cast mountains into the sea, raise the dead, and see the world changed when you go to God directly in prayer (Matthew 17:20).

Truly, for such a time as this, have you been brought into the Kingdom of God and have the power to avail with God through prayer (James 5:16). I pray to God that you will be like Elijah and see the very elements of nature obey your words in prayer because you carry the name of the who made all of nature (James 5:17-18). Praying for

one another on earth is biblical and godly, and that is all we need as it pertains to prayer partners- saints on earth (for we need no one else in heaven beside God). Ask, seek, and knock; your heavenly Father is waiting to hear and answer your prayers in Jesus' name.

Matthew 7:7-11, "7 Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. 9 Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? 11 If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"

CHAPTER 1

Praying to Departed Spirits and Angels in Heaven is Forbidden by God

Leave the Departed Saints and Heavenly Creatures Alone

The Bible is clear that any attempt to initiate contact with the dead—even with departed saints—is a forbidden practice, and the same is true of contact with angels. There are many reasons for this. First, there is no certain way of knowing who is actually in heaven, as there is no biblical way of determining it. Second, Scripture provides no injunction, command, or example for us to do so. In fact, the Bible condemns any attempt to initiate contact with heavenly spiritual beings, as is plainly stated in the Mosaic Law. This is what God commanded Moses concerning such practices:

Deuteronomy 18:10-14 (KJV), “10 There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, 11 Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. 12 For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee. 13 Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God. 14 For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the Lord thy God hath not suffered thee so to do.”

The terms listed in the above text seem to exhaustively cover any and all familiar practices that were used to talk with spirit beings in the Ancient Near East. For example, the Hebrew word for witch, “*kesep*” means, “to pray, to offer prayers or worship” to the dead, idols, false gods, etc.¹ The phrase “consulter with familiar spirit” refers to a “necromancer or medium” and means, “someone who conjures and

communicates with ghosts.”² If someone claims that these restrictions in Deuteronomy do not apply to what they do when they pray to saints or angels, then they need to answer this question: *If praying to saints and angels does not fall under these biblical prohibitions, then why doesn't the Bible ever mention someone asking departed spirits and angels for intercession?*

Concerning the afterlife, the ancient Jews basically believed in two realms: a natural realm and a spiritual realm. The natural realm included earth, sky, and outer space. The spiritual realm included the place of the dead (called “sheol”, beneath the natural realm for both for the wicked and righteous) and heaven (above the natural realm wherever God and His angels dwelt). They believed that departed spirits could come into the natural realm, just like God’s angels; however, they were not supposed to summon them.

Faithful Jews understood that help from the spiritual realm was not to be sought out, unless they were seeking God Himself. If praying to saints and angels for their intercession wasn’t considered a form of forbidden prayer and worship, then why didn’t Moses pray to Abraham and ask him for help while Israel was in the wilderness? Or why didn’t Daniel pray to Jeremiah during the time of the Babylon captivity and seek his intercession, or ask Michael to come assist him? The answer is simple: they knew it was a direct violation of God’s Law. Imagine if Moses saw Aaron praying to a statue of Noah in his tent while lighting candles before it. Do you think Moses would say, “Oh, that’s cool, just as long as it’s not a statue of Ba’al?” God forbid! The passages in the Law that spoke against the worship of other gods and forming images of things in heaven, also applied to consulting with dead ancestors. Read what God told the prophet Isaiah about consulting with the dead:

Isaiah 8:19-20, “19 When someone tells you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? 20 Consult God’s instruction and the testimony of warning. If anyone does not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn.”

How much clearer could God have been? Not only were the people of Israel not to consult mediums and spiritists (those who contact the dead), they were to be convinced that there was no

benefit in consulting the dead for the living for any reason. For a Jew, they were taught that their God was all powerful and was the only Creator, thus there was nothing a person or angel in heaven could do for them that their God couldn't do if they went to Him directly. The God of Israel, Yahweh, was radically different from the gods of other nations, because He wanted to speak to them directly. But sadly they had refused, and asked for a mediator instead (Exodus 20:19-20). How futile, then, would it have been for God to commend to them talking with spirit beings for help? And whatever the priests and prophets did in the way of mediation, it was only because they refused to meet with God directly. Certainly, both angels and priests had roles to play in the Jewish cultic practice, but they were never to be summoned in prayer or venerated as we see with the saints today.³

God only allowed specific images of cherubim to be visible in the temple, but even then they were not supposed to pray to them. What do you think Moses would do if he saw a priest attempting to beseech the cherubim over the Ark of the Covenant? Sadly, this is exactly what Roman Catholic and Orthodox adherents are now doing in the name of God. Once again, this is a major point of contention that bears repeating: *No godly person in the entire Bible ever asked a departed saint or an angel of any kind for their intercession, because they knew it was forbidden.* If a person believes otherwise, they must provide biblical proof, not just mere opinion and conjecture.

Take for example when Moses died, this would have been a perfect time for God to teach Joshua how to pray to Moses for help in the afterlife, however, he said the opposite. Please read the following account:

Joshua 1:1-9, “1 After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: 2 “Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites. 3 I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. 4 Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. 5 No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. 6 Be

strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them.

7 “Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. 8 Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. 9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

Notice how God was clear to tell Joshua that Moses was dead. God didn't overlook the actual death of Moses, and say he was spiritually still alive and was available in paradise to help just as when he had a body. God said plainly to Joshua, “*Moses my servant is dead.*” This meant that Moses was not going to have any interaction with him moving forward. Joshua was to understand there was a clear distinction between the land of the living and the place of the dead. Saying Moses was dead was not a denial that Moses' spirit was still very much alive in paradise, however, for Joshua, Moses was cut off from all communication with him, i.e., “dead.” Joshua's channel of communication with Moses was dead, just like Moses' body was dead.

Joshua was to wholly trust in God's abiding presence and the written Law: these were to be his perfect guides. Otherwise, God would have said, “Joshua, Moses is dead, but very much alive and ready to take your prayer requests. Just talk to him and then he will talk to me. It will be just like when you both prayed together while on earth.” To the contrary, Moses himself had already established that no one was to interact with the dead in any way. Knowing this, Joshua would never think to defy God's Law on this matter and thereby become accursed for praying to the departed spirit of his mentor.

Necromancing, Witchcraft, and Wizardry is Sinful Even When Christians Do It

Some will still try to dismiss Scripture's warnings against contact with spiritual beings; they will claim that what Scripture forbids are certain occult practices of the ancient pagan religions, and only in those contexts is it wrong. However, this is the same kind of fallacy that LGBT apologists use when discussing the prohibitions against homosexuality in Leviticus 18 and Romans 1. They proudly retort in the face of those passages, "Does the gay person attending your church fit this description of a God-hating pagan? The Bible never forbids same sex marriage. These texts are in reference to shrine prostitution and pederasty, not to loving, godly same sex relationships." Basically, their argument is that homosexual behavior is acceptable if done in a "loving, godly" way, and is not directly linked to a cultic pagan practice.

Likewise, the one who wants to pray to spirit beings will say, "Is Deuteronomy 18 really condemning the godly Christians throughout who have earnestly sought help from their departed brethren? This is only forbidding the pagan practice of interacting with the dead, which are really demonic spirits." However, homosexuality and communicating with the dead are sinful for the same reason: not because of how pagans have adapted them, but because they defy the created order. God's created order for sexuality is found in the beginning when he made them male and female to join together in a monogamous marriage (Genesis 2:24). Similarly, God's created order for prayer and worship was established in the beginning to be directed to Him alone, and to no one else (Deut. 18:10-11).

Consequently, those who hold to these unbiblical practices are looking for loopholes, and are missing the heart behind God's commands. Is this any way to interpret Scripture? Are these prohibitions limited to the very particular ways they were practiced by the pagans in Bible times? In that case, the Jews could have allowed orgies, along with sacred prostitution, as long as they were done in the name of the one true God, and not the false pagan gods. Shockingly, this was exactly how Aaron erred while Moses was atop Mount Sinai. He made an image in honor of the true God, and in His name held a party where they did their former practices. The Bible reads in Exodus 32:4, (NASB), "This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from

the land of Egypt.” Notice he didn’t say it was a different god; he called the image, “Your God.” If Aaron and his followers were punished, what do you think will happen to those who do the same kinds of things with saints and angels?

God’s people should be wary of incorporating spiritual practices that are not affirmed in Scripture. The one claiming their practice is biblically grounded must be able to show where said practice is taught and commanded in the Bible. Consider the faulty logic one must employ in order to argue that God’s prohibitions don’t apply to various practices:

Argument for Homosexuality

Premise 1: The Bible only forbids homosexuality in the context of paganism.

Premise 2: Bob and Mike are Christians.

Conclusion: Therefore, God doesn’t forbid Bob and Mike from practicing homosexuality together.

Argument for Praying to Departed Saints & Angels

Premise 1: The Bible only forbids praying to the dead and spirit beings in the context of paganism.

Premise 2: Mike is a Christian on earth and Paul is a dead Christian spiritually alive in heaven.

Conclusion: Therefore, God doesn’t forbid Mike from praying to Paul.

These kinds of arguments all fail for the same reason in that they fail to make a positive case for their practice. The Bible does not establish moral laws or worship practices to be based on silence, but rather on direct command. Those who worship God must worship Him in “spirit and in truth” (John 4:23) and those who live for Him must “obey His commands” (John 14:15). Christian liberty does not pertain to worship practices or moral behaviors, but to “adiaphora”- that is, areas of conduct where there is no clear command one way or another,

such as dietary laws and observance of holy days under the New Covenant (see Romans 14). Sin, however, is never a matter of dispute. Thus, for both of these arguments to be valid they need a third premise that affirms their previously forbidden behavior now as good. Review the arguments with the needed premises:

Argument for Homosexuality

Premise 1: The Bible only forbids homosexuality in the context of paganism.

Premise 2: Bob and Mike are Christians.

Premise 3: The Bible teaches that Christians can be in same-sex relationships.

Conclusion: Therefore, God doesn't forbid Bob and Mike from practicing homosexuality together.

Argument for Praying to Departed Saints & Angels

Premise 1: The Bible only forbids praying to the dead and spirit beings in the context of paganism.

Premise 2: Mike is a Christian on earth and Paul is a dead Christian spiritually alive in heaven.

Premise 3: The Bible teaches that Christians can pray to other Christians in heaven.

Conclusion: Therefore, God doesn't forbid Mike from praying to Paul.

In other words, the above arguments require statements of affirmation to override the previous prohibitions. An example would be when Jesus declared "all foods clean" in Mark 7:19 and Acts 13:13-15, thus abrogating the Old Testament dietary laws. Such statements do exist with regard to the New Covenant realities overtaking certain ceremonial laws of the Old Covenant, which were said to be "types

and shadows” of what was to come. However, we do not see any positive statements about praying to saints or homosexual practice.

Likewise, we should avoid undermining those Old Covenant commands because, as we have seen, that would lead to many harmful practices. It is better for Christians to base their morals and religious practices from the specific commands of God to general applications. One does this by understanding the specific commands in their historical context and then making them into general rules for the times in which they live. Below are some of the practices that could have been allowed in Israel if the Jews thought the way people who pray to saints do today in regard to Deuteronomy 18:10-11:

1. **Jewish witches and wizards:** As long as the witches and wizards used the name of God in their spells and incantations, they could have been good because they were not the pagan kind of witches and wizards God was against in Deut. 18. Sadly, this actually exists now for some Romans Catholics who practice “Santeria” and some Jews who practice “Kabbalah.” Why didn’t the Jews have a school for witches and wizards like Harry Potter?
2. **Role play as angels and saints so God’s people can pray to them because they represent heavenly realities:** The Jews could have called it, “Sacred Role Playing.” In other words, if praying to, kneeling before, and kissing statues and images get a pass today because they are “sacred” then why didn’t the Jews do sacred role playing in the temple?
3. **Pray to departed animals, especially one’s pets:** Since God allowed animals to speak in the past and certain creatures in heaven have animal like features (Revelation 4:6-8), Jews could have prayed to departed animals. Why didn’t the Jews pray like the Hindus to all their pets and animals?

Do you see how silly it gets when we reject the standard of God’s Word? Why does praying to the saints and angels get a pass, but the above practices don’t? It is a dangerous precedent to forsake the clear teachings of Scripture for the opinions and traditions of men. Once more, the reason we never read about Abraham praying to Adam for help, Moses praying to Noah, or Daniel praying to Jeremiah is because God was plainly against it. He was clear that His people were

not to initiate contact with spirit beings for whatever reason. It is the same reason why they didn't build a swimming pool in the temple area with a waterslide. They were commanded in regard to spiritual matters to follow the Law without trying to sneak in other things where they found empty space. God was not okay with people making up their own forms of worship.

In point to fact, we learn from the Bible that whenever people broke God's protocols in religious matters they were severely judged. Take for example the incident with Uzzah touching the ark and being killed by God (2 Samuel 6:6 & 1 Chronicles 15:13). God never said what to do if the ark was about to fall off a cart. However, the Law specifically stated that only Levites were to handle the Ark. Even if it was going to fall off the cart (which it should have never been on), no one other than a Levite was to touch it. Likewise, God will be severe with those who go outside of what He has authorized regarding prayer, which is to Himself alone. And though prayers to each person in the Godhead is acceptable, the prescribed way, as Jesus taught, was to pray to the Father, in His name (Jesus), by the power and leading of the Holy Spirit. How, then, do we even begin to entertain the idea of praying to saints and angels? Just pray like Jesus and the apostles taught and you will never pray to anyone but God!

Below are just a few of the many passages that teach Christians how to pray and none of them teach us to ask for the help of spirit beings in heaven:

1. **Deuteronomy 4:7-8**, "7 What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the Lord our God is near us whenever we pray to him? 8 And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today?"
2. **Psalms 5:1-3**, "1 Listen to my words, Lord, consider my lament. 2 Hear my cry for help, my King and my God, for to you I pray. 3 In the morning, Lord, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait expectantly."
3. **Psalms 32:6-7**, "6 Therefore let all the faithful pray to you while you may be found; surely the rising of the mighty waters will not reach them. 7 You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance."

4. **Jeremiah 29:11-14**, “11 For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. 12 Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. 13 You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. 14 I will be found by you,” declares the Lord, “and will bring you back from captivity.”
5. **Matthew 6:9-13 (KJV)**, “9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.”
6. **Philippians 4:4-7**, “4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! 5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”
7. **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**, “16 Rejoice always, 17 pray continually, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

What About Saul and the Witch of Endor?

As a last-ditch effort to support their belief in praying to saints, some will point to Saul’s apparent contact with the spirit of Samuel at Endor (1 Samuel 28). Many early church fathers, like Tertullian, along with the Reformers, like John Calvin, held that it was an evil spirit that came to Saul in that instance, demonstrating the point that all initiated contact with departed spirits is demonic at bottom.⁴ I believe the spirit Saul contacted was not that of Samuel either for the following reasons; first, the Bible states that God had already determined not to answer Saul’s cries for help (1 Samuel 28:6). Why would God change

his mind and affirm Saul's evil intent by granting him a visitation from Samuel initiated by a witch?

Second, God never breaks His Word. Everyone, on all sides of the debate, agrees that witches and spiritists are forbidden, thus why would God break His word just to give a fallen king who was already demon possessed what he wanted? Furthermore, if we wouldn't accept this kind of practice today as legitimate, then why would we affirm it in the past? Saul was clearly outside of the will of God. Just imagine if a pastor couldn't hear God's voice because he was in sin and he went to a witch to conjure up Billy Graham for advice. Do you think God would send Billy Graham to that man? Certainly not! And if a spirit claimed to Billy Graham, would you actually believe it was Billy Graham? God forbid!

Third, the spirit who appeared as Samuel was hidden from Saul and only seen by the woman as a "ghostly figure." This probably was because the spirit would not have been able to fully convince Saul that it was Samuel because he had been very close to him. Fourth, the spirit spoke without any kind of grace and only wanted Saul to join him in sheol. By all accounts Saul would not end up in the same place as Samuel. As Jesus would later reveal, in sheol, there was a place of torment for the wicked, and a place of comfort for the righteous (Luke 16:22-31).

Some might ask why the witch was so surprised to see the spirit if it wasn't really Samuel? I believe it was because she probably made a living deceiving people into thinking she could talk to the dead, but didn't. However, this time a real spirit visibly appeared because God was handing Saul over to the devil for judgment. Another question is why didn't the author of 1 Samuel let the readers know it was a demonic spirit? I believe this is because the author was using a technique called, "focalization." Dr. Kent, an Old Testament Literature expert, in his in-depth study of this passage, notes that often times narrators would not interject the validity of an event or make a moral judgment because they wanted the reader to experience the story as the characters do (like a documentary). This can be seen when Samson asked to die with the Philistines, when a woman murdered her husband to become David's wife, and when the disciples cast lots to replace Judas. None of these events would be considered godly but were presented without clarifying commentary.⁵

In regard to being deceived by evil spirits, consider what happened during the time of King Ahab in 1 Kings 22:19-23. The

Bible teaches us that God sent a lying spirit to deceive the prophets as a form of judgment. This spirit most likely was an evil spirit that was allowed around God's throne like Satan was in Job 1:6-12. Notice how the spirit was given permission to deceive people already turning from God's commands and ask yourself, "Could the visitations and miracles around worshipping saints by a form of God's judgment?"

1 Kings 22:19-23, "19 Micaiah continued, "Therefore hear the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne with all the multitudes of heaven standing around him on his right and on his left. 20 And the Lord said, 'Who will entice Ahab into attacking Ramoth Gilead and going to his death there?' "One suggested this, and another that. 21 Finally, a spirit came forward, stood before the Lord and said, 'I will entice him.' 22 "By what means?" the Lord asked. "I will go out and be a deceiving spirit in the mouths of all his prophets," he said. "You will succeed in enticing him," said the Lord. 'Go and do it.' 23 "So now the Lord has put a deceiving spirit in the mouths of all these prophets of yours. The Lord has decreed disaster for you."

Paul warned regarding spiritual deception in 2 Corinthians 11:14, "And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light." Moving forward it should be clear for anyone wanting to obey God that you should stay away from praying to created spirit beings. And as for times you believe you have been visited by the people to whom you were praying, they were, in all likelihood, evil spirits. Think about it. What is more likely, has God changed his mind? Is He now breaking His own commands? Or have you been visited by an evil spirit?

CHAPTER 2

Praying to Departed Spirits and Angels is Different than Praying with People on Earth

The Equivocation Fallacy of Praying to Saints & Angels

Let the reader understand clearly: there is not one passage in the entire sixty-six books of the Bible that teaches the practice of requesting the intercession of angels or of saints. To the contrary, the Bible is clear that God alone is worthy of religious prayer as He alone is worthy of worship. However, instead of accepting God as the only one worthy of prayer, some insist on praying to saints and angels, and change the definition of prayer in order to suit their practice. In regard to God, they say their prayer is worship, but in regard to the saints, they say they are simply requesting intercession.

In other words, they claim that their “prayer” to a saint is merely a request for the saint’s intercession, and so it is not the same as worship. For them, the saint is not a god-like figure, but rather a prayer partner in heaven, just like how Christians have prayer partners on earth. They go on to say that because departed saints are still included the Body of Christ while in heaven, they can participate in prayer with them and it not be idolatry. Does this sound confusing? The reason why it is confusing to some is because they are committing a fallacy in logic called the “Equivocation Fallacy.”

The equivocation fallacy occurs when one term is defined in two or more different ways to make an argument seem valid. For example, *All dogs bark, bark is on trees; therefore, all dogs are trees.* Here, the word “bark” was used in two different ways, and thus made the statement illogical. The same is true when people confuse prayer and use it in two different ways. Below are the two main equivocations we will refute in this section:

1. Ascribing God’s attributes to saints in heaven while praying is not the same thing as worshipping them.

2. Praying with people on earth is the same thing as praying to people in heaven.

Refuting the Claim that Ascribing God’s Attributes to Saints in Heaven While Praying is Not the Same Thing as Worshipping Them

To make the case that the prayers offered to saints and angels by Roman Catholic and Orthodox adherents are equal to worship is quite easy to demonstrate from Scripture. First, let us be reminded of this great commandment found in the Ten Commandments:

Exodus 20:4-6, “4 You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. 5 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, 6 but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.”

Therefore, everyone should agree that if a person worships another god or an image of something related to God, they are an idolater. Likewise, an idolater cannot be a Christian in good standing with God, according to 1 John 5:21. Now the person who prays to saints and venerates their statues will try to say what they are doing is really not worship. Here it is good to remember what the equivocation fallacy is and see how it applies to the words “prayer” and “worship.” Notice how the website *Catholic Answers* teaches its readers that prayers to Jesus is worship, but prayer to saints is not worship because it is really just asking them to pray for us.

“Catholic doctrine absolutely rejects the worship of anyone but God and rejects all worship of statues, whether of Christ or the saints. What the Church *does* allow is praying to the saints in order to ask for their intercession with the one true God. The Church also allows one to make statues to remind a person of Christ or the saint.”⁶

And here,

“*Of course* one should pray directly to Jesus!” But that does not mean it is not also a good thing to ask others to pray for one as well. Ultimately, the “go-directly-to-Jesus” objection boomerangs back on the one who makes it: Why should we ask any Christian, in heaven or on earth, to pray for us when we can ask Jesus directly? If the mere fact that we can go straight to Jesus proved that we should ask no Christian in heaven to pray for us then it would also prove that we should ask no Christian on earth to pray for us.”⁷

Did you catch it? They change the definition of prayer from one context to another. Hence, they are committing the fallacy of equivocation (changing definitions). The way Christians ask their friends to pray for them is entirely different than the way people pray to saints, and the way people pray to the saints is exactly like how a Christian prays to God. Consider the following example to see this in action:

How a Person Could Ask Their Mother on Earth to Pray for Them: Mother, please ask God to heal me because I am sick.

How Roman Catholics Pray to Mary in Heaven: Hail Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our Life, our Sweetness, and our hope. To thee we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To thee we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn then most gracious advocate, Thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this, our exile, show unto us, the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. (*Hail Holy Queen Prayer*)⁸

It is clear that the kind of prayer a Roman Catholic is offering up to Mary is not simply a request like how one would ask their earthly mother to pray for them. The Roman Catholic and Orthodox person are worshipping the person they are praying to, as one would worship God in prayer. They claim that they are just using the English word “pray” to mean “request or ask” like how the King James Version does in places like Genesis 13:8, “Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I *pray/ask* thee, between me and thee.” However, in actuality they are using the word pray as a religious act of worship, like how

one prays to God. Here are just a few of the ways they worship Mary in the prayer cited above:

1. They say Mary is the source of their life, sweetness, and hope.
2. They offer her their cries, sighs, mourning, weeping, and tears.
3. They give her the title of being their gracious advocate.
4. They claim that from heaven she can show them Jesus.

Many Scriptures can be cited that show them all of these things only belong to God in a religious sense (John 14:6, etc.). Yet, they will continue to say they are not worshipping Mary in their prayer because they are just asking for her help like you would ask a friend for help on earth. Well, let's give it a try and see how it would work if you went up to a female friend in church today and make the following request:

Hail Holy Queen *Michelle*, Mother of Mercy, our Life, our Sweetness, and our hope. To you *Michelle* we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To you *Michelle* we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. *Michelle*, turn then most gracious advocate.

If anyone talked to their prayer partner like this, they would be corrected immediately. At this point, they might say, "Mary is different. She gets special adoration." But isn't that the problem? They have moved so far away from the Bible that they think Mary deserves to be treated like the "Queen of Heaven" when the Bible teaches no such thing. According to the Bible, Mary is just a normal Christ-follower that had a special calling. The gospel records Jesus' rebuke to Mary and her other sons (James and Jude) because they thought they deserved special privileges:

Matthew 12:47-50, "47 Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you." 48 He replied to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" 49 Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and

my brothers. 50 For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”

Certainly, Mary was spoken of highly by Gabriel when he came to initiate the calling on her life, but so were Abraham, Jeremiah, and Gideon, among other notable biblical figures. However, none of the attributes that the above prayer ascribes to her were mentioned by Gabriel (ex., “Queen,” “Gracious Advocate,” etc.). In point to fact, all that the greetings from God or an angel show is that God thinks highly of us because He knows what His power and grace can accomplish in our lives. Read Mary’s greeting, alongside others in the Bible and see the similarities:

1 // Mary’s Greeting from Gabriel in Luke 1:28-33: “28 Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.” 29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30 But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. 31 You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”

2 // Abram’s Greeting from the Lord in Genesis 12:1-3: 1 The Lord had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. 2 “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

3 // Jeremiah’s Greeting from the Lord in Jeremiah 1:4-10: 4 The word of the Lord came to me, saying, 5 “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.” 6 “Alas, Sovereign Lord,” I said, “I do not know how to speak; I am too young.” 7 But the Lord said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am too young.’ You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. 8 Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the Lord. 9 Then the Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, “I

have put my words in your mouth. 10 See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant.”

4 // Gideon’s Greeting in Judges 6:12-14: 12 When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, “The Lord is with you, mighty warrior.” 13 “Pardon me, my lord,” Gideon replied, “but if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our ancestors told us about when they said, ‘Did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt?’ But now the Lord has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian.” 14 The Lord turned to him and said, “Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian’s hand. Am I not sending you?”

Do you see anything from the greeting given to Mary by Gabriel that would make her into some kind of demi-god, possessing the attributes that only belong to God? Certainly not! It could even be argued that she had a lesser encounter with God, because most prophets met with God and saw him, whereas she was only visited by an angel. Isaiah and Ezekiel saw God’s throne, Moses heard the voice of God from a burning bush, Abraham ate with God, and even most scholars believe that the angel of the Lord that visited Gideon was Christ in a pre-incarnate state. Therefore, there is nothing in the biblical account regarding Mary that would give her such a place of worship. Further, the exaltation of saints does not stop with Mary; other saints now in heaven are given worshipful prayers too. Read the following prayers to various saints below with my comments:

Prayer to Mary’s Mother, St. Anne: Good St. Anne, you were especially favored by God to be the mother of the most holy Virgin Mary, the Mother of our Savior. By your power with your most pure daughter and with her divine Son, kindly obtain for us the grace and the favor we now seek. Please secure for us also forgiveness of our past sins, the strength to perform faithfully our daily duties and the help we need to persevere in the love of Jesus and Mary. Amen.⁹

Comment: Notice how Anne is given the attribute of having “power” to help the person praying, “obtain grace and favor.” The Bible is clear that no one can possess any spiritual power except that which the Holy Spirit gives. Yet, she is said to have “power” to help people

“obtain grace and favor” without citing her dependence on God as the source. This is not an accidental oversight, but rather a deliberate pattern in the prayers to saints. This is nothing short of idolatry. There may be things that God can give us to give others, but no one in heaven or on earth has the power to give grace and secure forgiveness of sins aside from God.

Prayer to Saint Anthony, Disperser of Devils: Dear St. Anthony, it is still as St. Peter said: The devil prowls about, lion-like, looking for someone to devour. I confess that I don’t always resist him; I sometimes toy with temptation. St. Anthony, Disperser of Devils, remind me of my duty to avoid all occasions of sin. May I always pray in temptation that I may remain loyal to my Lord Jesus. Pray for my other intentions, please.¹⁰

Comment: Who beside God can bear the title, “Disperser of Devils?” And how is St. Anthony able to remind the person praying of their “duty to avoid all occasions of sin?” Both of these statements are blasphemous because only God is the disperser of devils by the name of Jesus and only God, through the Holy Spirit, can remind our spirits of truth (John 16:13). Think about it: does Anthony’s spirit now replace the Holy Spirit to be able to do such a thing?

Many more examples of idolatrous prayers to the saints could be provided, but for the sake of brevity, I would ask any serious student of the Bible to try and find just one example where a person on earth possesses the kinds of attributes that are ascribed to the saints heaven by these prayers. And if someone were to say that their location in heaven now grants them this type of status, then the burden remains on them to find scriptural examples of departed saints bearing these kinds of attributes. Suffice it to say, they will not find any.

All we see from Genesis to Revelation is one true God who is revealed in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and He alone is given such adoration and worship in prayer. If someone were to say, “I don’t add any attributes to them, I just say things like, ‘Paul, please pray for me.’” Then they might have slipped through the worship correction, but they are still guilty of attempting to contact the dead (which is necromancy), and are breaking Jesus’ command to only pray with saints on earth, which we will now be discussing in the section below.

Refuting the Claim that Praying with People on Earth is the Same Thing as Praying to People in Heaven

Once again, it is easy to show that praying with people on earth is totally different than praying to people in heaven. Jesus said in Matthew 18:19, “Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.” Jesus limited prayers partners to be among those “on earth.” Where can they show one passage that prayer to people in heaven is accepted? Also, consider the difference in wording, we pray “with and for people on earth,” that is totally different from praying “to people in heaven.” I pray *with and for* my friends on earth, not *to* my friends in heaven.

People who pray to saints may claim they are praying with the saints in heaven, but that is a categorical error. They do not pray with saints in heaven in the same way they pray with saints on earth. How do they know when to say “Amen” when the heavenly saint is done praying? Some might try to say that people praying in heaven is like people praying for Paul in a different city. But once again, we have an example of that in the Bible, but what we don’t have is an example of someone in heaven praying for someone on earth. Also, when someone prays for you on earth, they rely on the Holy Spirit to do the work, not another person mediating between them and God. Why would we need someone else doing the work of the Holy Spirit? Who else in heaven do we need beside God? No one.

David rightly said in Psalm 73:25, “Whom have I in heaven but you?” Therefore, in actuality, everything they do when praying to saints is different than both praying to God and asking people to pray for you on earth. Requesting the mediation of saints and angels is in a category all to itself, and the category is called, “idolatry.” Idolatry is giving worship to another person other than God and/or practicing spirituality outside of the authorized way taught in the Bible.

In short, we do not have any command or example of praying to a person in heaven so they can pray for us. Jesus set the limits for prayer partners to be “on earth.” Just claiming it is the same thing does not make it the same. Think about it from a strictly biblical standpoint: when we ask a person on earth to pray for us, we have scriptural commands and examples to do so. Conversely, we do not have scriptural grounds to pray to those who have died or angels in

heaven. Also, logically speaking the practices are established in two different ways: one with a clear command, and the other one from silence. Consider the syllogisms below and note the differences:

Argument for Praying Together with People on Earth

Premise 1: God commanded Christians on earth to pray for and with other Christians on earth (Matthew 18:19 & 2 Timothy 2:1-7).

Premise 2: Mike and Bob are Christians on earth.

Conclusion: Therefore, Mike and Bob are commanded to pray for each other (if they are aware of each other's need). As seen in places like Philemon 1:6, Hebrews 13:18, 1 John 5:16, and 3 John 1:2.

Argument for Praying to People in Heaven

Premise 1: *Missing premise: There is no command to pray to spirit beings of any kind.*

Premise 2: Mike is a departed Christian.

Premise 3: Bob is a Christian on earth.

Conclusion: Therefore, Bob is commanded to pray to Mike. *Missing example: Nowhere seen in the Bible.*

It is sometimes said by well-meaning people that, while praying to saints cannot be established the same way we are commanded to pray for others, it can be established in a similar way to praying to the Holy Spirit. They say, "Nowhere in the Bible does it command us to pray to the Holy Spirit or give examples of people praying to the Holy Spirit, but we know it is acceptable. The same is true with praying to saints, as we can make a cumulative case. Thus, if we reject praying to saints because it is based on a cumulative case, then we should also reject praying to the Holy Spirit." Once again, this person is failing to see the logical differences. Note below that cumulative cases still need valid premises, not just claims from silence or invalid interpretations of biblical passages:

Argument for Worshipping & Praying to the Holy Spirit

Premise 1: The Bible teaches God is to be worshipped and prayed to.

Premise 2: The Bible teaches the Holy Spirit is God.

Conclusion: Therefore, the Holy Spirit is to be worshipped and prayed to.

(Though there are no biblical examples of worshipping or praying to the Holy Spirit, the above premises ensure that the practice is valid because it is based on biblical doctrine in a cumulative way.)

Argument for Praying to Departed Saints & Angels

Premise 1: *Missing premise: There is no example or teaching to pray to spirit beings of any kind.*

Premise 2: The Bible teaches Paul is a saint in heaven.

Conclusion: Therefore, saints on earth can pray to Paul in heaven to pray for them.

(Since the first premise is missing the cumulative case cannot be made the same as with the Holy Spirit).

To compare praying to the Holy Spirit versus praying to saints is not valid because the Bible teaches that God is a divine person and divine persons are worthy of prayer and worship. The Bible doesn't talk about departed spirits being deserving of prayers from those on earth. At this point, a person may try to abandon the cumulative case and go back to working out another argument like the one below:

Argument for Praying to Departed Saints

Premise 1: The Bible teaches that saints are commanded to pray for each other.

Premise 2: Saints are still saints in heaven.

Conclusion: Therefore, saints on earth can pray to saints in heaven and ask them to pray for them.

Did you spot the faulty logic? It is in the conclusion. Just because saints are commanded to pray for each other on earth and saints are still saints in heaven, it doesn't follow that saints on earth should pray to saints in heaven. This kind of fallacy is called a "non-sequitur fallacy," which basically means, the conclusion doesn't follow from the premises. Notice how easily this type of reasoning is fallacious when applied to other activities.

Argument for Departed Saints Pastoring Churches

Premise 1: The Bible teaches that saints are commanded to pastor each other.

Premise 2: Saints are still saints in heaven.

Conclusion: Therefore, saints on earth can be pastored by saints in heaven.

Argument for Departed Saints Giving Offerings to the Church

Premise 1: The Bible teaches that saints are commanded to giving offerings to the church.

Premise 2: Saints are still saints in heaven.

Conclusion: Therefore, saints on earth should receive offerings for the church from saints in heaven.

For the conclusion to follow, it has to be true in the same sense the above premises are true. In the arguments presented above, the Bible is the arbiter of truth; thus, the conclusions must follow biblically from the premises. To make an exception for a conclusion not found in the Bible would be called, "special pleading." Special pleading is when you want to give a premise or a conclusion a special right to jump over being proven—it just is assumed. Why would we want to give a special right for the saints' role as intercessors based on "saints being saints in heaven" and not do the same for saints pastoring from

heaven and giving offering to the church? The better solution is to reject all special pleading-based arguments and to not commit the non-sequitur fallacy—otherwise anything goes! Any biblical command binding upon saints on earth would also apply to saints in heaven by this error.

Likewise, just showing verses where angels and departed saints could have the potential to hear and answer prayers doesn't work either. For example, some point out that in heaven John was given a vision that enabled him to hear everyone chanting to God (Revelation 5:13). They then conclude, God gives all saints in heaven this same ability for the purpose of hearing all our prayers to them.

However, just because we see in the Bible specific abilities given to specific people for specific tasks, this doesn't mean those abilities apply to everyone at all times in all imaginable ways. Likewise, some will say since Abraham shared his knowledge of the Law and Prophets with the rich man in paradise from Luke 16:29, thus all departed saints can know all things happening on earth in all our personal lives. We cannot argue from specific cases to make the point that those cases now apply in ways outside of their context. This is called the "hasty generalization fallacy." It occurs when you naively make exhaustive conclusions based on one instance, and then apply your conclusions to situations where the evidence doesn't support the generalization. For example, *Some spirit creatures have wings, Gabriel is a spirit creature, therefore Gabriel has wings.* Can we prove that from the Bible? We can't at all with any certainty. We can only show that those we're told have wings, are in fact those with wings, mainly the spirit creatures around the throne. Consider the following examples below for further proof that is kind of thinking is illogical:

Argument for Asking Departed Saints and Angels for their Intercession

Premise 1: The Bible teaches that angels and departed saints have the potential to hear our prayers to them and intercede for us because of their God-given abilities to have extensive visions and knowledge (Luke 16:29 & Daniel 10:12, 8:15).

Conclusion: Therefore, Christians can pray to angels and departed saints to make intercession for them.

It is obvious that they are missing a second premise, which is, *Premise 2: The Bible gives examples of angels and departed saints using their God-given abilities to hear prayers and make intercession.* Notice once again how this kind of reasoning would lead to all kinds of silly doctrines:

Argument for Asking Angels to Clean Your House

Premise 1: The Bible teaches that angels have the potential to clean your house because of their God-given ability to have human like bodies (Genesis 19).

Conclusion: Therefore, Christians can ask angels to clean their house.

Argument for Asking Departed Saints to Star in a Movie

Premise 1: The Bible teaches that departed saints have the potential to appear in the natural realm because God gives them the ability to be seen and heard at times (Genesis 19).

Conclusion: Therefore, Christians can ask departed saints to star in a movie.

In all of these examples the fallacy is clear: the argument is missing a very important premise, mainly, that the Bible teaches a connection between the various God-given abilities and the acts assumed the angels and departed saints can perform. It is the responsibility of the one making the affirmative claim to show positive evidence for such actions.

Refuting Seven Popular Proof Texts for Praying to Saints & Angels

Listed below are some the most common proof texts that are used in support of the practice of praying to saints and angels. After each passage I offer my commentary to show that the texts don't come close to presenting what they claim they do.

1 // Revelation 6:9-11, “9 When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. 10 They called out in a loud voice, “How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?” 11 Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the full number of their fellow servants, their brothers and sisters, were killed just as they had been.”

Comments: Some might point to this passage to argue that saints in heaven can, at minimum, pray for saints on earth. However, where in this passage do we see the practice of people praying to the martyrs under the throne of God? Or where does the passage say that they hear the specific prayers of God’s people? All this passage shows is that those slain from the Great Tribulation are praying to God and asking how long it will be until Jesus judges the earth and avenges their blood. That is all. No evidence is found here.

2a // Revelation 5:8, “And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God’s people.”

2b // Revelation 8:1-5, “1 When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. 2 And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. 3 Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all God’s people, on the golden altar in front of the throne. 4 The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of God’s people, went up before God from the angel’s hand. 5 Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake.”

Comments: Another common argument is to point to the above passages in Revelation to show the twenty-four elders and the angels around the throne are offering up the prayers of the saints as an example of saints in heaven being able to receive our prayers and offer them to God. However, where do you see the affirmation of praying to saints in these passages? All we see in these two related

passages is that the four living creatures and twenty-four elders were holding bowls of incense, which are symbolic of the prayers of God's people. They then take the "incense/prayers" and cast them to the earth and they result in thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake. Here is what you don't read:

1. That the prayers were directed to the four living creatures, the twenty-four elders, or anyone else in heaven beside God.
2. That the prayers gave worship and special attributes to anyone in heaven other than God.

To insert "prayers to saints" in a censer that had "prayers to God" is to argue from silence. We can know that these were prayers to God because there is not one prayer in the entire Bible directed towards anyone else in heaven other than God! In Revelation 5:9-14, the only one being addressed is God. If a person wishes to add in those censers prayers directed to saints and angels, they must first prove that godly people in the Bible prayed to angels and saints. We can easily prove that people all throughout the Bible prayed to God, but why can't they prove their claim? The reason is that their beliefs are not based on the Bible, but on man's sinful traditions and "private interpretations."

3a // Jeremiah 31:15-18, "15 This is what the Lord says: "A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more." 16 This is what the Lord says: "Restrain your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears, for your work will be rewarded," declares the Lord. "They will return from the land of the enemy. 17 So there is hope for your descendants," declares the Lord. "Your children will return to their own land. 18 "I have surely heard Ephraim's moaning: 'You disciplined me like an unruly calf, and I have been disciplined. Restore me, and I will return, because you are the Lord my God.'"

3b // Matthew 2:16-18, "16 When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. 17 Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: 18 "A

voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.”

Comments: In hopes to establish some evidence for praying to saints, some people might use the prophecy about Rachel weeping over Israel found in Jeremiah 31:15. Matthew cited this passage as being fulfilled in the time of Herod’s persecution of the first-born males in Israel. Do you see evidence in these verses that establishes praying to departed saints or heavenly angels? Of course not. All we see is the symbolic usage of Rachel weeping, and this representing the women of Israel weeping for their murdered sons. Nowhere does it say the people of Israel were praying to Rachel and asking for help or that Rachel was literally there weeping over them in a way that could be heard. If one were to take this literal, and not symbolic, the following questions must be answered:

1. How did Israel literally hear Rachel weeping? Did she fly around the area and make loud grounding noises, like a ghost in a haunted house? (I am not trying to be disrespectful or rude, but sincerely wondering how she made her way through the land weeping?)
2. Why was she able to refuse to be comforted, are we able to refuse God’s comfort in heaven, was she pushing back the angels and Jesus, like a grieving mother at her child’s grave site? (Please don’t let this question offend you and you miss the point—I’m asking seriously, how could she refuse to be comforted while in the presence of the Lord—aren’t all those in heaven in perfect submission to God’s perfect will?)
3. Was Ephraim also heard moaning? Is that literal too?

Clearly, there was no visit from Rachel or Ephraim during that sad day in Israel and their noises weren’t heard by the people. God was using them as symbols for people groups. God did this all the time. (See “Jacob” and “Esau” in Malachi 1:1-5 representing the nations of Israel and Edom.)

4 // Psalms 148:2-4, “2 Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his heavenly hosts. 3 Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you

shining stars. 4 Praise him, you highest heavens and you waters above the skies.”

Comments: This is a perfect example of Roman Catholic eisegesis (reading one’s view into the text), because they just like to take the part where David commands the angels and heavenly hosts to praise God as a sign that we, too, can talk to spirit beings in heaven. But they conspicuously forget the portion where he speaks to the sun and moon! The context of this passage is obvious: David is speaking from the place of God’s heart and commanding everything to praise God. He is not trying to ask anything or anyone in creation to pray for him.

Also, remember, that the Bible does teach we can communicate with angels when they come to visit on behalf of God and that we can rebuke evil spirits in spiritual warfare. However, what the Bible never teaches is that we are to initiate contact with them via prayer and ask for their intercession. The differences are very clear and easy to see for anyone who reads the Bible with an open mind. Read the breakdown below for further clarification:

1. Talking to angels when God sends them to us: *GOOD*. Praying to them and asking them to do things for us in heaven: *BAD*.
2. Talking to departed saints in visions or dreams: *GOOD*. Praying to them and asking them to do things for us in heaven: *BAD*.
3. Rebuking evil spirits in spiritual warfare: *GOOD*. Praying to them and asking them to do things for us: *BAD*.

5 // Luke 9:28-36, “28 About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. 29 As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. 30 Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. 31 They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. 32 Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. 33 As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, “Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” (He did not know what he was saying.) 34 While he was speaking, a cloud

appeared and covered them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. 35 A voice came from the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.” 36 When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone. The disciples kept this to themselves and did not tell anyone at that time what they had seen.”

Comments: Nothing in this unique and miraculous occurrence affirms the practice of praying to saints and angels for their intercession. All this passage shows is that God the Father sent Moses and Elijah to affirm the work of Jesus in the presence of Peter, James, and John and discuss the process ahead which was spoken about in the Bible (v. 31). Moses most likely was a representation of the Law and Elijah represented the prophets. In Jesus’ time, the Jews summarized the whole Old Testament in the phrase, “The Law and the Prophets” as seen in Luke 16:16. Notice that Jesus did not initiate the visit by praying to them, nor did He ask for their help. Even when angels came to assist Him after His temptation, and while praying in the garden before the cross, He never asked for them to come, but God sent for them by His own will. Once again, true saints affirm that departed saints are still alive and that angels can assist us on earth, but it does not follow that we are to pray to them.

6 // Hebrews 12:1-3, “1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”

Comments: This passage has been often brought up to prove that departed saints are still in the natural realm and are watching us ready to help with prayer. Once again, nothing in this text suggests that they are hearing or receiving our prayers, let alone, praying to God on our behalf. All the passage teaches is that the departed saints’ lives and testimonies (mentioned in Hebrew 11) are here for us as reminders of God’s goodness to his faithful people. Even for the sake of argument if this passage was letting us know that God has granted them a view

of earth's activities, it mentions nothing about us praying to them and them praying for us.

Also, if you take the analogy in its context it is most likely referring to the Olympic style games in Greece (and similar in Rome). The fans would cheer on their favorite players, but not interfere in the race or game. Likewise, even if they could watch us like fans at the Super Bowl, that doesn't mean they can intervene in our lives. So instead of this passage being a proof for receiving help from the departed saints, at best, it shows they can only watch us and cheer us on, and that we can be encouraged by their testimonies.

7 // Matthew 27:45-49, “45 From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. 46 About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”). 47 When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “He’s calling Elijah.” 48 Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. 49 The rest said, “Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to save him.”

Comments: Some claim that since this passage proves that since certain Jews believed in praying to saints (because they thought Jesus was calling out to Elijah), that it was not an unbiblical practice. First, Jesus wasn't calling out to Elijah, but he was crying out to God, so they were wrong in what they heard. Second, the Jews were very superstitious during the time of Christ, and held many wrong beliefs, including reincarnation (Matthew 16:13-14) and a karmic cycle of punishment in one life from a previous sinful life (John 9:1-3). Third, just because the Jews believed something, doesn't mean it was biblical. The Jewish religion was supposed to be based on God's Word, not their traditions or false interpretations of the Bible. Truly, both Roman Catholic and Orthodox adherents, like the Jews of Jesus' day, are misunderstanding Jesus' Words. They are violating God's Word and worshipping Him in vain when they pray to saints and angels.

2 Peter 1:20-21, “20 Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. 21 For prophecy never had its origin in

the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

Matthew 15:6-9, “6 Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition. 7 You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: 8 ““These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. 9 They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules.””

CHAPTER 3

Praying to Departed Spirits and Angels is Not Needed

Christians Do Not Need the Prayers of Departed Saints or Angels

One of the saddest things about those who seek intercession from saints and angels is that they think they need it for their spiritual well being. While the Bible speaks clearly to the need we have for the prayers of other people on earth, it is equally clear in saying we do not need the prayers of departed saints or angels. But in support of their practice, some will attempt to argue from the lesser to the greater, saying, “If we can benefit from people’s prayers on earth even though they still live in their sinful flesh, how much more should we benefit from the prayers of departed saints who are free from their earthly bodies and, therefore, are more righteous?” By that same thinking, they say we can gain great blessing from the prayers of perfect spirit beings like Gabriel and Michael.

Below is a brief outline of the argument:

Argument for Praying to Saints and Angels Because They Are More Righteous

Premise 1: The Bible teaches a righteous person’s prayer is more effective than an unrighteous person’s prayer (James 5:16-18 & Proverbs 15:8).

Premise 2: Departed saints and angels are more righteous than saints on earth.

Conclusion: Therefore, the prayers of departed saints and angels are more effective than those who pray together on earth.

Everything in the above argument rises and falls on the second premise- *departed saints and angels are more righteous than saints on earth*. But does the Bible support this notion? No, not even close. Let us take a look at both of the passages that teach the effectiveness of a righteous person's prayer with my comments below.

1 // James 5:16-18, "16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. 17 Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. 18 Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops."

Comment: Notice that the context of this verse is about Elijah and his prayers during his time on earth. Elijah is an example of how to pray. There is nothing in the text about praying to Elijah or that Elijah prayed to saints and angels. James even goes out of his way to say in verse 17, "Elijah was a human being, even as we are." How much clearer could he have written the fact that earth dwelling humans can have the highest level of effectiveness possible in their prayers? His entire point is to be like Elijah- not like a departed saint or angel.

2 // Proverbs 15:9, "Proverbs 15:8, "The Lord detests the sacrifice of the wicked, but the prayer of the upright pleases him."

Comment: Those who believe in prayers to saints would have to show, first of all, that departed saints and angels are in view in this passage. Further, where do we see that there are different levels of righteousness and, thus, greater efficacy in prayer?

Nothing in either of these passages gives the impression that there is a hierarchy of righteous people, and that we are to ask departed saints and heavenly beings (who are inherently more righteous than us) to pray for us. Furthermore, where does the Bible ever claim that an angel or departed spirit can add to the power of prayers that are prayed in Jesus' name? Jesus taught that the righteous ones who could pray the most powerful prayers were those on earth, like Elijah who could stop and start rain. In point to fact, there is not one example of a prayer being answered that came from a departed saint or angel- only from those living on the earth.

As shared in a previous chapter, the martyrs' prayer in Revelation was not a prayer of intercession for those still on earth; it was a prayer of vengeance for their own blood (Revelation 6:10). Further, we find no examples of someone praying *to* a departed saint or angel, let alone receiving an answer from their prayers on their behalf. In total we only have one example in the whole Bible of departed saints even praying at all, and it is for justice on behalf of their deaths. And there is no example of an angel ever hearing or answering a prayer either. We only see angels dispatched *by* God when people pray *to* God, but never to them directly (Daniel 9:20-23). Let us then consider Jesus' words in Matthew 18 in light of Psalm 115:16.

Psalm 115:16, "The highest heavens belong to the Lord, but the earth he has given to mankind."

Matthew 18:18-20, "18 'Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. 19 'Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.'"

Jesus gave disciples on earth the authority to pray in this manner because God has given the earth to mankind. Notice in Matthew 18:18 that we bind from earth first, not heaven. For the authority to be enacted it must come from someone on earth to God. Therefore, we do not need anyone to pray to Jesus for us in heaven. We already have Jesus in heaven; we need people on earth praying to Jesus in heaven so He might bind and loose on our behalf. We find no other way to pray in Scripture.

Also, though angels might be above us spatially because we dwell on earth (below) and they in heaven (above), the Bible teaches that they are actually our servants according to Hebrews 1:14, "Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?" Likewise, though departed saints are still in the Body of Christ, they do not currently dwell in their earthly bodies and, thus, do not have the same authority to bind and loose or to receive on earth whatever they ask for in prayer.

Consider the argument below for more clarity:

Argument for Praying only with Saints on Earth

Premise 1: Jesus commanded His righteous ones to only pray with each other on earth (Matthew 18:18-20).

Premise 2: Righteous people obey God's commands.

Conclusion: Therefore, righteous people only pray with other righteous people on earth.

Scripture declares that righteous people on earth have the greatest efficacy in prayer. To believe otherwise, one would have to show the following:

1. The Bible teaches saints on earth to pray to departed saints and angels.
2. That the prayers of departed saints and angels are more effective.
3. Show the evidence of someone praying to a departed saint or angel and receiving an answer they would not have received otherwise.

Furthermore, prayer, according to Scripture, is a form of communication one has with God to worship him and ask to receive on earth His blessings from heaven- not to ask others to pray for you. Asking my friend on earth is not considered "prayer" as the only one we should be praying to is God. That is why when Jesus taught us to pray, we were supposed to pray like the *Our Father*:

Matthew 6:9-13 (KJV), "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."

Do you notice that other than "hallowing God's name and ascribing to him the kingdom, the power and the glory," everything else is a petition regarding the needs of people on earth? This doesn't mean

angels or departed saints can't make requests of God or communicate with God in a way similar to prayer in their heavenly state. But the main purpose for prayer as seen in the *Our Father* is for people on earth to worship God and receive His blessings so that His Kingdom might come to earth. Saints on earth are the only ones who have the God-given authority to join together in this kind of prayer.

Before moving on, read again about the amazing power and authority that God has given us on earth in His name in the two passages below:

Matthew 17:20, "Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."

John 14:12-14, "12 Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. 13 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it."

How much more power do you need? By God's grace, we can move mountains with faith the size of a mustard seed! We can do greater works than Jesus because He is now in heaven and has sent the Holy Spirit to multiply His miracles across the earth. Anyone who thinks they need more "effectiveness" than this is not in touch with God's reality. Certainly these passages doesn't exclude our need to pray together with other saints on earth as commanded by Jesus in Matthew 18, but they do close the door to any claim that states we need spirit beings in heaven to pray for us. Think about it like this:

Our faith-filled prayers on earth to Jesus + Other saint's faith-filled prayers on earth to Jesus = All the power and effectiveness we will ever need to see God's Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.

Believing God's Word Over The Council of Trent

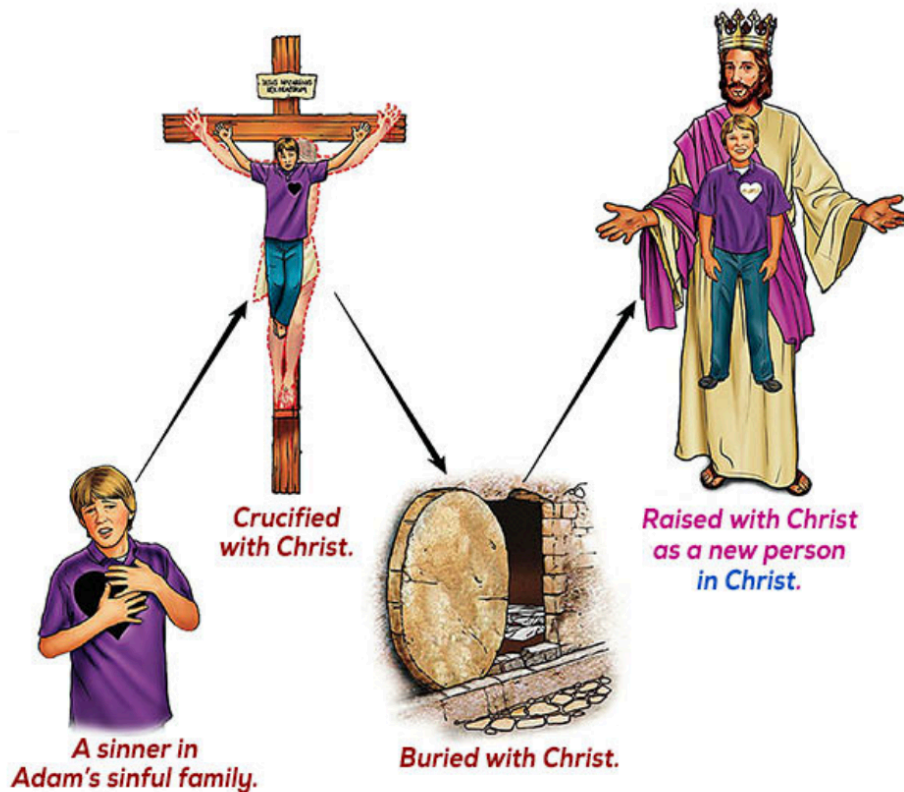
Next, we want to explore whether there are different levels or kinds of righteousness between saints on earth and saints in heaven. First, we

as Christians on earth are just as righteous and perfect in our spiritual souls as the departed saints and angels are. After all, death is not what makes us righteous, nor is losing our sinful body- it is being born again by the Holy Spirit that makes us righteous (John 3:3). Second, as children of God, we are no more our sinful flesh than we are our clothes. We have a body of flesh, but we are not our body, we are spiritual souls that live in a body. Read what Moses wrote in Genesis 2:7 (KJV), “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” We are not dust though we live in a body of dust; we are living souls. The source of our soul is our spirit.

The Bible speaks of “man’s spirit” in such places as 1 Corinthians 2:11 (KJV), “For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.” That is why Jesus said to Nicodemus:

John 3:5-7, “5 Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. 6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. 7 You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’”

Being born of the Holy Spirit means that our spiritual soul has been made new. Just like Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!” At the moment of salvation we are ontologically a new creation- one that has never existed before. I like to say it like this, “We were born as sinners because of Adam, but we are born again as saints because of Jesus.” That is why in the epistles, Christians are called, “saints.” The word saint in Greek, *hagios*, means, “holy or sacred one.” It is the exact same word used of Christians in heaven. As a result, you and I are now in our inner being at the same level of holiness, perfection, and righteousness as those in heaven. In other words, you are as righteous as God could ever make someone. Consider the image below as you remember what salvation actually accomplished in your life:



Consider this: how much more righteous can you get then being the “righteousness of God” and how much closer to God can you get then being, “in Jesus?” Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:21, “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him [Jesus] we might become the righteousness of God.” According to Paul, those who are now in Christ are as righteous as Jesus is and are as close to God the Father as the Son of God is. To the extent we were sinful in our Adamic nature, we are now righteous in our new nature. Though it is true we still live in a sinful body, it is also true that our spiritual soul lives with Christ in heavenly realms by the Holy Spirit who indwells us.

The first two chapters of Ephesians delve into our new identity with terms like, “in Him” and “in Christ.” This great theme by the apostle Paul can be summarized in the passage below:

Ephesians 2:6-10, “6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable

riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

Paul wrote that the instant we were saved by God’s grace, through faith, we were raised up with Christ, seated with him in heavenly realms, and made God’s handiwork in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. We as Christians are not to think of our salvation as a process, like God is working on us day by day, making us better Christians. Rather, once we were saved we became God’s completed, finished, lacking-nothing kind of masterpiece! Similarly, the good works we do after being saved don’t help progress our salvation, but rather they express the marvelous work God did in granting us salvation. Good works are the fruit which grow from Jesus our root (John 15:1-17)!

Consider an example from childbirth. What comes first, a child learning to read and write? Or them being born? Being born, of course. Only after being born can a child learn to read and write. Do the child’s good works ever add to or complete their birth? Of course not. Likewise, what comes first, being born again or doing good works? The Bible is clear that we first must be born again to then do good works. In the same way, the good works we do after being born again do not contribute to giving us a new nature or being born again—they simply are evidence (fruit) that we have been born again.

This is the exact opposite of what was made dogma concerning the relationship between salvation and good works at the Roman Catholic Council of Trent. Consider the following from Canon XXIV:

If any one saith, that the justice received is not preserved and also increased before God through good works; but that the said works are merely the fruits and signs of Justification obtained, but not a cause of the increase thereof; let him be anathema.

It is no wonder that Roman Catholics (as well as many Orthodox adherents) believe that they need the merit and help of saints and angels for their salvation to progress. Their leaders have told them that good works are not the fruit of their justification, but rather what

preserve and increases their salvation! For this reason, many Catholic and Orthodox adherents pray to spirit beings because they are hoping it will add to their salvation. Like a progression bar at a fundraiser, the more righteousness they get from others, the closer they to the goal of availing with God. Not only is this progressive view of salvation depressing it is completely unbiblical.

Consider what was written in Hebrews 10:14 (KJV), “For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.” Notice “perfected” in the past tense. Perfection is not something Christians strive toward or are waiting ‘til heaven for. Rather, their spiritual souls have already been perfected upon the new birth. After all, we don’t need to be born again, again, again, and again! Follow the flow of thought in Hebrews in regard to how and when spiritual perfection came to God’s people, both on earth and in heaven:

1 // Hebrews 10:14 (KJV), “For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.”

Comment: According to the author of Hebrews, all saints, whether in heaven or on earth, have been perfected by the one offering of Jesus on the cross. This correlates to what we read in the next passage concerning the saints who lived before Christ, that they, too, have been perfected in the same way and at the same time.

2 // Hebrews 11:39-40, “39 These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, 40 since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.”

Comment: Prior to the cross, the souls of saints who passed are said to have waited in Sheol, in Abraham’s bosom (Luke 16:22-24). Hebrews teaches that they had to wait to be perfected because Jesus hadn’t offered His life up to God yet as a perfect sacrifice. Once Jesus offered himself, those in Abraham’s Bosom, along with the first Christians, were made perfect together. Now since then, all who are born again receive the same spiritual rebirth and perfection as the first saints did. In other words, no one has to wait until after they die to be perfected. Perfection came with Jesus’ perfect sacrifice, and now everyone who believes in Jesus is spiritually perfected.

3 // Hebrews 12:22-23, “22 But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, 23 to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect.”

Comment: This passage shows that the saints who comprise the universal church, both in heaven and on earth, are “spirits of the righteous made perfect.” No one can belong to the church (whether they are in heaven or on earth) unless they are a righteous spirit made perfect in Christ. Think of it this way- the church has only one requirement to belong to it: you must be a righteous spirit made perfect. Likewise, the gospel is one message for all people: repent of your sin (imperfection) and receive Jesus’ perfection by believing in His death, burial, and resurrection. As a result, God perfects His people’s spirits on earth before they come to heaven. When a saint dies there is no extra step of purification called “purgatory,” nor does leaving the body make one’s spirit perfect; spiritual perfection comes at the moment of spiritual rebirth and remains for eternity.

The perfection one receives at salvation lasts “forever” as the author wrote in Hebrews 10:14, “... he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.” That means your spiritual perfection doesn’t change while you live in your sinful body on earth, or when you become disembodied and dwell in heaven waiting for Jesus’ second coming, or when you return with Christ in a new resurrected body- once you are saved, you are spiritually made perfect forever!¹¹

Progressive Salvation vs. Complete Salvation

View the chart below to better understand the difference between the false teaching of *Progressive Salvation* and the biblical teaching of *Complete Salvation*:

PROGRESSIVE SALVATION	VS.	COMPLETE SALVATION
 <p>MINDSET: Jesus didn't make my spiritual soul perfect at salvation so I must earn more righteousness by doing good works.</p> <p>SLOGAN: The more good works I do, the better person I become.</p>		 <p>MINDSET: Jesus perfected my spiritual soul at salvation by His grace and I can do every good work He prepared for me by the same grace.</p> <p>SLOGAN: I do good works because Jesus already did the work of perfecting me.</p>

It is in line with the false view of progressive salvation to ask for the help of angels and departed saints because if we are not totally righteous, then we need all the help we can get to be perfected and to avail with God. However, that is not at all what the Bible teaches. When Jesus said in John 19:30, "It is finished," He was speaking to every person who would ever call on His name to be saved. The author of Hebrews, along with Jesus, calls this the Sabbath rest from works, because Christ completed our work for salvation. Thus, when you remove the false belief of progressive salvation, the supposed need for the intercession of heavenly spirit beings disappears.

Hebrews 4:9-10, "9 There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; 10 for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his."

Matthew 11:28-30, "28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Be encouraged by the following verses that clearly teach the doctrine of *Complete Salvation*:

1 // 2 Corinthians 5:17,21, “17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!” “21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

2 // Ephesians 2:8-10, “8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

3 // Hebrews 10:14 (KJV), “For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.”

4 // Romans 8:29-30, “29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. 30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.”

5 // 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, “9 Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”

Below are Some of the Most Common Proof Texts for Progressive Salvation, with My Comments Below:

1 // Philippians 2:12-13, “12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.”

Comment: Some think Paul is saying that we are to “work for” our salvation with fear and trembling. However, what he said was to

“work out,” as in, “work out something you already have.” He had already stated in Philippians 1:4-6, “4 In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, 6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” Thus, Paul is commanding them to continue in the salvation they have already received so it can be complete at the resurrection when they get new bodies.

2 // Philippians 3:8-16, “8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: 10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; 11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. 13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

15 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. 16 Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

Comment: This lengthy passage is at the conclusion of Paul’s major thought, which he began in chapter one, verses 4-6. There he prayed with confidence in God completing His work in their lives. This is the same subject Paul was discussing when he commanded them to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, mainly, that we are to not stop doing the work of God. And according to Jesus what is the work of God in regard to our salvation? It is summarized in John 6:29, “Jesus answered, ‘The work of God is this: to believe in the one he

has sent.” It was worth noting that Paul makes a very similar point in Romans 10:9-10- it is when you “believe in your heart” that you are saved.

Thus, in Philippians 3, Paul wanted to make clear that even he had not been completed and perfected in regard to God’s entire salvation plan. However, what he was lacking and still pursuing had nothing to do with his spiritual soul, but rather with his body. In other words, Paul had not yet attained the perfection of his body (nor has anyone still to this day). That is why he desired to share in the sufferings of Christ (death) that he might be closer to receiving his new body in Christ’s second coming (resurrection).

Follow his train of thought starting in verse 10, “That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect.” Notice that what he had not attained yet was the perfection of his body. Yet, at the same time, he wrote in verse 15, “Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule.” Therefore, there was a perfection he had not yet attained (the resurrection of the body) and a perfection he had already attained (a perfect spiritual soul). Consider the breakdown below for further clarity:

1. In Philippians 1:4-6 Paul declared that he was confident God would complete His good work in their lives.
2. In Philippians 2:12-13 Paul commanded the saints to continue to work out their salvation so God would fulfill His good purpose in them.
3. In Philippians 3:8-16 Paul let the saints know that he had not attained the final stage of his salvation; that is, a resurrected body (physical perfection). Yet he reminded them that they should live up to that which they had already attained (spiritual perfection).

It is easy to see how Paul’s phrasing might confuse some in this letter, but let us remember that Paul is never going to contradict himself in Philippians, or in any of his other letters. The “already and not yet”

was a common theme in Paul's writings. There were things he taught that Christians have "already" and there were other things they do "not yet" have. With regard to salvation, we "already" have a new spirit, but have "not yet" received our new bodies. Shockingly, Paul had to combat false teachers that claimed they did. That was actually a subject Paul addressed in 2 Timothy 2:17-18;

17 Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, 18 who have departed from the truth. *They say that the resurrection has already taken place*, and they destroy the faith of some.

Hymenaeus and Philetus taught that Jesus had already secretly returned and had given them their resurrected bodies and, thus, they were super-apostles with special authority and wisdom. He had to warn of their false teaching because it was destroying people's faith in the real second coming of Jesus. So let's put this in perspective: the problem Paul faced was not people thinking they hadn't been spiritual perfected, but rather that they had been physically perfected as well! That is why he takes the time to explain what God has done already, and what God will do in the future. Therefore, let us not fall into either of the two ditches: one ditch is believing we are not perfect in our spiritual soul because we live in a sinful body; the other ditch is believing that because our spiritual soul has been perfected our body has been perfected too.

3 // Romans 7:21-24, "21 So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. 22 For in my inner being I delight in God's law; 23 but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. 24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?"

Comments: As with Paul's thought in Philippians, most people do not allow the entire book or immediate context of Romans speak to give clarity to this passage. Nothing Paul described in Romans 7:7-24 has to do with being a born again Christian, but rather he is describing his life as self-righteous, unregenerate Jew. The reason he used present verbs is because he is re-telling his past with the knowledge he now has in the present. This is called an "autobiographical

reconstruction.”¹² We do this whenever we tell a story and say things like, “I believed his lies because I am gullible.” Certainly, the person in the present isn’t gullible anymore because they now know what the person said was untrue. But when they tell the story they speak in the present tense, “I am gullible.”

That is exactly what Paul is doing both here and in 1 Timothy 1:16-17, “But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life.” How could Paul literally be the worst of sinners in chapter one and at the same time in chapter three of the same book command Timothy to appoint elders that are “above reproach... temperate, self-controlled, respectable, etc.?” If Paul wasn’t using the literary technique of autobiographical reconstruction in both Romans 7 and 1 Timothy 1, then Paul is a terrible hypocrite and shouldn’t be a leader in the church because he is wretched, the worst of sinners, a slave to sin, and unable to control his actions.

Thankfully, there is a much better way to understand Paul in Romans 7:21-24, just keep reading into chapter 8 to see the full context and point Paul is making:

Romans 7:24-8:4,9-11, “24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? 25 Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God’s law, but in my sinful nature a slave to the law of sin. 1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, 2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”

“...9 You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. 10 But if Christ is in you, then even though

your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. 11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.”

In the wider context, Paul’s point is that prior to being born again, it is impossible to live for Jesus because we are still “in the flesh.” The flesh is too powerful of a slave master for the soul to break free from, even if we know the commands of God and the good we ought to do. The only way to actually obey God’s commands and be delivered from the slave master of our flesh, what Paul calls, “the body of death,” is to be born again and set free by the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit-led life is one in which the spiritual soul is perfected, free from bondage to the sinful flesh, to love and serve God. Though we still live in the body it is no longer our slave master, Jesus is. We live free from the flesh by offering our body as a living sacrifice and setting our mind on the Spirit so we can be renewed in our thinking every day. To this end, Jesus called his disciples to deny ourselves and take up our cross (Mark 8:34). Also, this is why Paul summarized his point again in Romans 12:1-2;

1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is —his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Therefore, you have no excuse to live in the realm of the flesh, but have all the power and resources to live every moment in the Spirit. God’s good, pleasing, and perfect will is not just a hope to discover when you get to heaven, but the reality in which you are supposed to live as a disciple of Jesus Christ on earth.

Now you as the reader have a choice: to believe the Bible or the Council of Trent, because you cannot hold to both. You must decide what master you serve: a master that teaches you are made His masterpiece currently because of Jesus, or a master that teaches you

that you must make yourself God's masterpiece by your good works and that you'll never be good enough or strong enough without the help of saints.

What You Really Need to Do is Get Baptized in the Holy Spirit and Pray in Unlearned Tongues

Often times, we don't know how to pray and need an advocate, a helper, and that is exactly who the Holy Spirit is for us as Christians! And for this reason, it is the Spirit who is most insulted whenever we feel the need to pray to saints and angels. It is His role to help us pray and to intercede for us; how can we ascribe this ministry to mere creatures? Paul clearly taught that when we don't know how to pray, the Holy Spirit prays through us with groans:

Romans 8:26-27, "26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God."

Who helps us in our weaknesses? It is the Holy Spirit! Who intercedes for us when we don't know what to pray? The Holy Spirit! Who searches our hearts and prays the will of God for us? The Holy Spirit! That is why Jesus said in Acts 1:4-5,

"4 ...Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. 5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

According to Acts 2:1-4, how did the disciples know that they had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit? They spoke in unlearned tongues (languages).¹³ Some people point out that other people understood the languages, and try to assert that unless the tongues are known languages, then tongues are not legitimate. However, whether the languages were understood or not is beside the point. Whenever

someone is baptized in the Holy Spirit and given God's power, they will speak in tongues they have not learned, be they earthly languages or heavenly. In Acts 2, the tongues were used to preach the gospel to those who were in Jerusalem from different parts of the world. Conversely, Paul wrote about another purpose for the languages in 1 Corinthians 14, mainly as a form of prayer for one's personal edification:

“2 For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to people but to God. Indeed, no one understands them; they utter mysteries by the Spirit.”

“4 Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves... 5 I would like every one of you to speak in tongues...”

“14 For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. 15 So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my understanding; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my understanding.”

“18 I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you.”

Thus, we see in Scripture that the baptism of the Holy Spirit gives the supernatural ability to speak in both earthly and in heavenly languages, which were unknown to the speaker. Consider what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 13:1, “If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.” The Bible teaches that when another person understands their Spirit-inspired tongues, it is a tongue/language of men. However, if no one understands them, it is considered a language of angels, a heavenly utterance of mysteries.

Similarly, Paul taught in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 that both the gift of tongues and the gift of interpretation are two gifts of the Spirit which work in tandem. When a tongue is interpreted and is understood by others, it functions similar to prophecy. But in 1 Corinthians 14:2,4-5,14-15,18 he taught that tongues can be used as a form of prayer by which an individual can speak or sing mysteries to God. This second purpose, the one in which we speak mysteries to God, is what we ought to be doing instead of praying to saints and angels.

Below is a break down to help you understand better the purpose of two-fold purpose of speaking in Spirit-inspired unlearned tongues/languages:

1. **Tongues as a Message to People to Edify Them:** As seen in Acts 2 and described by Paul as two of the nine spiritual gifts (tongues and interpretation of tongues) in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11.
2. **Tongues as a Mysterious Prayer to God for Personal Edification and Power:** As taught in 1 Corinthians 14:2,4-5,14-15,18 and seen in Acts 10:44-48,19:1-6.

The Holy Spirit has given God's people all power for prayer we could ever need. There is not one single reference anywhere in the Bible where a saint or angel is prayed to and they are shown to have given power to God's people on earth. Conversely, there are many examples in the Bible, especially, in Acts, that demonstrate the power of God that came from the Holy Spirit when people prayed to the Father in Jesus' name! While some may be unfamiliar with this kind of teaching regarding Spirit baptism and heavenly tongues, there is far more biblical backing for it than for the intercession of saints and angels. The Bible says nothing about praying to saints and angels, but you can find entire chapters devoted to operation of tongues and other spiritual gifts. Therefore, you can either do something that is never affirmed, but is actually forbidden, in the Bible, and endanger your soul, or you can do what every true saint has done (just like Peter, Paul, John and Mary) and receive the power God intended to you have through the Holy Spirit. Remember: all the Christians in the book of Acts spoke in tongues, but none of them prayed to saints or angels.

While many outside of the Pentecostal movement may find this hard to understand, they ought to recognize that the number one Christian denomination in terms of growth and conversion rates is Pentecostalism. Throughout Latin America, Asia and Africa, the Pentecostal movement is exploding among Catholics and Orthodox adherents because they are seeing for themselves what they were sorely missing.¹⁴ They realize that they never needed the prayers of saints or angels; all they needed was the power of the Holy Spirit!

I personally know of many who have ceased praying to saints and angels in favor of receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit, including my in-laws (former Greek Orthodox) and my Father (former

Roman Catholic). They testify to how much joy and power they have received from God, and that they would never go back to praying to spirit beings. Even some former Roman Catholics I know testify that when they prayed to saints it actually brought them into contact with demonic powers, just like with Saul and the witch of Endor. Further, I have never heard anyone who converted from Roman Catholicism or Eastern Orthodoxy say that they are now lacking a power they once had from praying to saints and angels. They are gloriously saved, now knowing the power of God, and they have zero desire to ever return to what they now consider man-made traditions and idolatry.

CHAPTER 4

Praying to Departed Spirits and Angels is Not Apostolic

Accidental Oversight or Purposely Dishonest?

Most scholars consider the apostolic age to be from the time of Jesus' ascension around 33 A.D., to the death of the last apostle, John, around 100 A.D. According to the *Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States'* website, the following historical sources are reliable to understand this approximately 70-year period:¹⁵

1. All the books of the New Testament
2. Didache & Didascalia¹⁶
3. Writings of the Apostolic Fathers. These writers may be considered the “disciples of the first disciples,” and includes Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Ignatius, Hermas, and Papias.
4. Early second century authors who were close to the disciples of the first disciples. This includes Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Hegesippus.
5. Fourth century church historian Eusebius who wrote about the period.

Out of all the sources listed above, *Catholic.com*, in an article defending the practice of praying to saints and angels as apostolic, is only able to cite one passage to anchor it in early church history.¹⁷ The quote comes from Hermas' letter known as, “*The Shepherd*;”

“[The Shepherd said:] ‘But those who are weak and slothful in prayer, hesitate to ask anything from the Lord; but the Lord is full of compassion, and gives without fail to all who ask him.

But you, [Hermas,] having been strengthened by the holy angel [you saw], and having obtained from him such intercession, and not being slothful, why do not you ask of the Lord understanding, and receive it from him?” (The Shepherd 3:5:4 [A.D. 80]).

There are many important things to consider when looking at this passage. First, church history experts such as Graydon F. Snyder and A.D. Howell-Smith place the period of the writing of *The Shepherd* to be mid to late second century, around 140-154 A.D., not 80 A.D. as *Catholic.com* claims.¹⁸ This is because it was said that Hermas was the brother of Pius, bishop of Rome, who also lived during this later time. As a result, the letter most likely does not fit into the timeframe of the apostolic age.

Second, and more concerning, the passage is ripped out of its context to teach something that the author never intended. Consider the passage in its context from the beginning of chapter 4, Book III, Similitude 5:

I prayed him much that he would explain to me the similitude of the field, and of the master of the vineyard, and of the slave who staked the vineyard, and of the sakes, and of the weeds that were plucked out of the vineyard, and of the son, and of the friends who were fellow-councillors, for I knew that all these things were a kind of parable.

Notice how “pray” is used in the first sentence. Does it mean “pray” as in, “Hermas is praying to the Angel from earth,” or that he is in the presence of the angel in the vision and is praying/asking him for an explanation? It is obvious he is with the Angel and is simply praying/asking for more understanding. I discuss this further in *Appendix A* and how the word “pray” can have dual meanings: to ask for something in a personal sense, or to ask for something in a spiritual or worshipful sense. The context is clear that Hermas is asking the angel to explain something to him, just as if I were to say to my wife in Old English, “Nancy, I pray thee to please explain why thou art madest with me.” Certainly, I am not praying to her in a spiritual sense, but simply asking her to explain why she is mad at me. Furthermore, the context explains how the Angel interceded for him:

And he answered me, and said, You are exceedingly persistent with your questions. You ought not, he continued, to ask any questions at all; for if it is needful to explain anything, it will be made known to you. I said to him, Sir, whatsoever you show me, and do not explain, I shall have seen to no purpose, not understanding its meaning. In like manner, also, if you speak parables to me, and do not unfold them, I shall have heard your words in vain. And he answered me again, saying, Every one who is the servant of God, and has his Lord in his heart, asks of Him understanding, and receives it, and opens up every parable; and the words of the Lord become known to him which are spoken in parables. But those who are weak and slothful in prayer, hesitate to ask anything from the Lord; but the Lord is full of compassion, and gives without fail to all who ask Him. But you, having been strengthened by the holy Angel, and having obtained from Him such intercession, and not being slothful, why do not you ask of the Lord understanding, and receive it from Him? I said to him, Sir, having you with me, I am necessitated to ask questions of you, for you show me all things, and converse with me; but if I were to see or hear these things without you, I would then ask the Lord to explain them.

The holy Angel did not intercede for Hermas before God on behalf of a spiritual prayer, but rather the holy Angel made clear the information he was asking for. The Angel was a go-between, a messenger, and was merely doing his job. Literally, the word “intercession” means, “the action of intervening on behalf of another.”¹⁹ Furthermore, Hermas is told to stop asking the Angel for help and go directly to the Lord and receive any further understanding he desires, “Why do not you ask of the Lord understanding, and receive it from Him?” So much for this passage supporting prayers to saints and angels; it actually teaches the opposite. Sadly, one has to ask if the authors of the *Catholic.com* article are being purposely dishonest, hoping their readers will not study the actual sources for themselves (much like how they might hope people will not read the Bible in context), or are they just ignorant of how to understand what they are reading?

Lastly, and most shockingly, the holy Angel is capitalized in the version found on the Roman Catholic site, *NewAdvent.com* (which I am using here) because in Hermas’ letter, the Angel is supposedly

the Holy Spirit! Angel, just means, “messenger,” and according to Hermas, the messenger/angel, is the Holy Spirit. For this reason and many other similar reasons, Hermas’ letter is rejected as authoritative. Read what scholar A.D. Howell-Smith wrote about this letter:

The Shepherd speaks of a Son of God; but this Son of God is distinguished from Jesus. “That Holy Spirit which was created first of all, God placed in a body, in which it should dwell, in a chosen body, as it pleased him.” This is Martini’s translation. F. C. Conybeare renders the passage: “God made His Holy Spirit, which pre-existed and created all creation, to enter and dwell in the flesh which He approved.” In this text the Holy Spirit appears to be a divine substance. But we must not suspect Patripassionism. The “flesh” is spoken of as a person who “walked as pleased God, because it was not polluted on earth.” “God, therefore, took into counsel the Son and the angels in their glory, to the end that this flesh might furnish, as it were, a place of tabernacling (for the Spirit), and might not seem to have lost the reward of its service. For all flesh shall receive the reward which shall be found without stain or spot, and in it the Holy Spirit shall have its home.” This passage appears to make the “tabernacling” of the Holy Spirit in Jesus a reward for the purity of his life. Jesus then *becomes* divine through the power of God, after consultation with the Son of God, who elsewhere in *The Shepherd* is identified with the Holy Spirit. “The most venerable angel,” “the glorious angel,” “the holy angel” are titles that Hermas gives to Jesus in his allegory; but it is understood that the angelic status of Jesus is not his by nature. His labours on earth to save and to cleanse have gained him a co-inheritance with the Holy Spirit, God's primary Son, so that Jesus now is the second Son of God.²⁰

Talk about seeing what you only want to see! Those who try to smuggle praying to saints and angels into the apostolic age do so to the detriment of their own Christian doctrine. If this is the only argument they have, they are to be rebuked. Further, if that is any indication to the extent they are willing to twist history into their false narrative, we should all reject the authority of Rome and the Orthodox church, “for they know not what they do.”

Nothing, Nada, Zip, Zilch

At this point the truth is crystal clear: there is zero evidence that anyone in the apostolic age either taught or practiced praying to saints and angels. The following argument demonstrates how we as Christians can use the apostolic age to defend our doctrines and core practices:

Premise 1: If something is taught in the New Testament and affirmed by the church in the years 33-100 A.D., then it is apostolic in nature.

Premise 2: Praying to saints and angels is neither taught in the New Testament, nor affirmed by the church in the years 33-100 A.D.

Conclusion: Therefore, praying to saints and angels is not apostolic in nature.

To affirm this kind of reasoning consider Jude 1:3, “Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God’s holy people.” Whatever was to be considered “apostolic” was handed down by the apostles to their disciples. These disciples of the first disciples were then responsible to hand down the teachings of the apostles to future generations until the return of Christ.

Some might try to argue that the apostles did not hand down the entirety of the “once for all” faith. For example, they did not provide a clear definition of the Trinity or the canon of the New Testament, and thus New Covenant revelation is not to be limited to the apostolic age; it has, in fact, continued throughout the church age. However, in their writings, the apostles were clear that their letters were to be taken as revelation, and that the only doctrines and practices to be followed by Christians could be derived from their letters. In other words, they gave the church the tools to discover the canon and expound on doctrines such as the Trinity. Consider what Peter wrote about Paul’s writings and what Paul wrote about Scripture itself;

2 Peter 3:15-16, “15 Bear in mind that our Lord’s patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. 16 He writes the same way

in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.”

2 Timothy 3:16-17, “16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

These two passages alone explain why the early church fathers, like Ignatius, Clement of Rome, and Polycarp quote the writings of the apostles extensively, yet they never considered their own writings to be equal with that of Peter, Paul and John. As the church grew over time, this became the key criteria for distinguishing the books of the New Testament: Which writings could verifiably traced to the apostles? The following arguments make this point clear:

Argument Against the Apostolic Nature of Praying to Saints & Angels

Premise 1: If something can be supported by the apostles in their writings or in their disciples’ writings from 33-100 A.D., then it is considered apostolic in nature.

Premise 2: Praying to saints and angels is neither found in the disciples’ writings, nor in their disciples’ writings from 33-100 A.D.

Conclusion: Therefore, praying to saints and angels is not apostolic in nature.

Now notice how the New Testament canon and doctrines like the Trinity can be affirmed to be apostolic by this same reasoning:

Argument For the Apostolic Nature of the NT Canon & Trinity

Premise 1: If a teaching is supported by the apostles writings from 33-100 A.D., or in the writings or in their disciples, then it is considered apostolic in nature.

Premise 2: Preserving the writings of the apostles and doctrines like the Trinity can be found in the apostles' writings from 33-100 A.D., as well as in their disciples' writings.

Conclusion: Therefore, preserving the writings of the apostles and doctrines like the Trinity is apostolic in nature.

No matter how you look at it, there is no room for praying to saints and angels in the apostolic period. Those who practice this unbiblical form of prayer, do so, not on the basis of its apostolic nature, but rather on man-made tradition. A good question to ask is, "Does something unbiblical ever become biblical?" Or, "Does something non-apostolic ever become apostolic?" Later developments in the church that allowed for praying to saints are irrelevant because those teachings can never be traced to the apostolic period. There is not one shred of evidence anywhere in the apostolic period of such a practice among Christians.

Also, consider how most of the apostles' letters in the New Testament are corrective in nature. Why? Because by that time, false teachers had already begun to infiltrate the church and gain a following. Think about it: if false teachers in the lifetime of the apostles could convince people in the church to doubt Paul's authority, how much easier would it be hundreds of years later to do the same and multiply false teachings? Consider Paul's warning against false teachers coming to Ephesus. This was the church he spent the most amount of time with, yet he told them the following:

Acts 20:26-31, "26 Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of any of you. 27 For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God. 28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. 29 I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. 30 Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. 31 So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears."

Also, consider what Jesus Himself said about some of the churches founded by the first disciples. We can see false teachings were adapted within 30 years of their acquaintance with the apostles!

1. **Revelation 2:4-5**, “4 Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. 5 Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.”
2. **Revelation 2:14-16**, “14 Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: There are some among you who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin so that they ate food sacrificed to idols and committed sexual immorality. 15 Likewise, you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. 16 Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.”
3. **Revelation 2:20-23**, “20 Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. 21 I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. 22 So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. 23 I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.”
4. **Revelation 3:1-3**, “1 “To the angel of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. 2 Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have found your deeds unfinished in the sight of my God. 3 Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; hold it fast, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.”

5. **Revelation 3:15-18**, “15 I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! 16 So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. 17 You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. 18 I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.”

If the churches founded and pastored by the apostles could apostatize, adapt heresies and become “lukewarm” and “dead” within decades, how much more so the churches that came hundreds of years later?

When Did the Church Begin Praying to Saints and Angels?

In my research of church history I could find no support of the practice of praying to saints earlier than the first part of the fourth century. The already mentioned *Catholic.com* article has quotes from church fathers in 208-233 A.D., but each of those quotes only reflects a belief that some authors believed that saints and angels could pray in heaven. This is not the same as teaching that saints and angels hear our prayer requests and intercede for us before God. Thus, the following passage from Cyprian is often cited as the earliest, but notice once again how it fails to make their point:

“Let us remember one another in concord and unanimity. Let us on both sides [of death] always pray for one another. Let us relieve burdens and afflictions by mutual love, that if one of us, by the swiftness of divine condescension, shall go hence first, our love may continue in the presence of the Lord, and our prayers for our brethren and sisters not cease in the presence of the Father’s mercy” (*Letters* 56[60]:5 [A.D. 253])

Did you notice that the context is not for us to pray to saints and ask them for help, but rather, that they are still praying for us while in heaven (which we cannot know either way, but even if they did pray

in heaven, that is between them and God, not between us and them)? So even in regard to this supposedly clear passage, it is still lacking the kind of specifics that are needed to ground the current practice of praying to saints and angels. Perhaps the earliest passage from the church fathers to do so is from Methodius in the early fourth century, more than 200 years removed from the apostolic age:

“Hail to you for ever, Virgin Mother of God, our unceasing joy, for to you do I turn again... Hail, you treasure of the love of God. Hail, you fount of the Son’s love for man” (*Oration on Simeon and Anna* 14 [A.D. 305]).²¹

Finally, in 305 A.D., we have a shred of evidence for what Roman Catholics and Orthodox adherents have been trying to argue for. However, it is too late to help their case. Many novel teachings had already been introduced in the church by this point, but it could not be considered “apostolic” unless it can be traced to 33-100 A.D. If someone chooses to follow a practice from the fourth century, so be it. But they can neither claim it to be biblical or apostolic any more than a Mormon can claim wearing sacred undergarments is biblical and apostolic.

What About All the Good the Pre-Nicene Fathers Did by Preserving the Bible, Canonizing the New Testament, and Clarifying Core Doctrines like the Trinity?

For those who don’t give up easily (even after being shown that their practice is nowhere to be found in the Bible or the apostolic age), they might try to appeal to all the good the pre-Nicene church fathers did for Christianity. After all, they preserved the Bible during Roman persecution, they canonized the New Testament, and clarified core Christian doctrines, like the Trinity. On that basis, one might argue that all they taught and practiced is worth following. As noble as that might sound, that is not what Jesus or the apostles taught. Jesus didn’t say, “Follow my commands, and whatever people teach in my name two hundred and fifty years from now, follow that too.” Paul understood that in the course of time false teachers would come and try to change Jesus’ teachings and add commandments to the New

Covenant. That is why he wrote the following passages below, inspired of the Holy Spirit;

1. **1 Timothy 4:1-5**, “1 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. 2 Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. 3 They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. 4 For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, 5 because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.”
2. **Colossians 2:8**, “See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.”

We as Christians are called to defend the faith that was once delivered to the saints. Conversely, we are called to resist “traditions of men,” “hollow philosophy” and “doctrines of demons.” If something was not taught clearly by the apostles, it should not be taught today; it is really that simple. Just because the pre-Nicene fathers taught some very true and helpful things, it does not make them infallible in all things. Even Peter was not above correction as Paul rebuked him for not tabling with Gentiles (Galatians 2:11-21).

Certainly Christians, both pre and post Nicene council (325 A.D.), were used of God to preserve the Scriptures and help clarify the core tenants of our faith. However, to the extent that their teachings are not found in the Bible, or are even to the contrary to the Bible, we must judge them as false, according to the Bible. No one has the right to add teachings to Scripture, or to place their teachings on the same level as Scripture. So if a church father happened to believe in the Trinity, which is scriptural, while holding to an unscriptural teaching, such as praying to saints and angels, they may be right and wrong at the same time, and Scripture tells us the difference. In all this, God in His sovereignty has made His truth known to and through men who yet lack perfect theological insight.

Remember that the Jews also added extra-biblical traditions over time, and we don't hold to those either. As a matter of fact, their extra-biblical traditions were the very things Jesus condemned them for. He never corrected them for upholding the Old Testament or affirming the Laws of Moses. Their problem was with what they followed in addition to the Bible, things not taught by Moses or any of the prophets. The same rebuke still applies to anyone who now teaches things outside of the Bible, whether Jew or Christian. According to Jesus, these traditions only serve to "nullify" the commandments of God (Matthew 15:3). Even so, God used the Jews, despite their error, to preserve the truth, just as he has done, and continues to do, with Christians. The saying is true: "God can use a crooked stick to draw a straight line."

Also, it is good to note that just because a church father taught something, it does not mean that all Christians everywhere were teaching it. Take for example in our time, that the Roman Catholic church teaches the doctrine of transubstantiation, which means the priest has the power to change the communion bread and wine into the actual body and blood of Jesus. However, current statistics show that only about 31% Catholics believe what Rome teaches; the other 69% believe rightly that they are symbolic.²²

Read how Jesus rebuked those who add their own traditions to God's Word:

1. **Matthew 23:1-4**, "1 Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: 2 "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. 3 So you must be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. 4 They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them."
2. **Matthew 23:15**, "15 Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when you have succeeded, you make them twice as much a child of hell as you are."
3. **Mark 7:13**, "13 Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that."

The Conclusion is Simple

In summary, nothing in all the apostolic age, including the New Testament, supports the practice of praying to saints and angels. Therefore, you the reader have a simple choice: will you follow Jesus and His apostles, or will you follow those who never knew Him or walked with those who did? I simply choose to follow Jesus and those who knew Him, and I pray you do the same. Be exhorted by Paul's letter to the Galatians and consider how they were so "quickly" deceived, even during Paul's life and ministry. And how much more susceptible to deception are we in the absence of Paul and the other apostles?

Galatians 1:6-10, "6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel — 7 which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse! 9 As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let them be under God's curse! 10 Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ."

CONCLUSION

1 Timothy 2:5-6, “For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time.”

I pray that this book will have accomplished the purpose for which God gave me to write it: to encourage and instruct true saints on earth not to pray to departed saints or angels, but only to God in heaven. Jesus taught that we are to pray to the Father (Matthew 6:9) in Jesus’ name (John 14:13-14) by the leading of the Holy Spirit (John 16:12-15). This formula for prayer is truly the only way that pleases God.

Some have asserted that Protestants misuse 1 Timothy 2:5-6, saying that in the verses prior, Paul commanded all Christians to pray for one another, and, thus, we as saints on earth already believe in other mediators (i.e., “prayer partners”). They say, “Why pray only with saints on earth, why not pray also with the saints in heaven?” However, our prayers for one another are not the basis of our access to God- the atoning work of Christ is. We pray *with* each other, not *to* each other, and the difference matters. Only Jesus could atone for our sins and that is the reason we only pray to God in His name. We should never direct our prayers to anyone but the Father in Jesus’ name.

Consider using the Lord’s Prayer as a model for your own prayers, taking each of the main statements to represent different areas of communication between you and God. If you prayed each of the six statements for ten minutes you would have prayed for one hour. And as you daily pray, it will condition you to better follow Paul’s command in 1 Thessalonians 5:17, to “pray continually.” It is our times of focused, solitary prayer that allow us to be mindful of God and remain in constant communication with Him. I assume that if you have picked up this book, you must have some desire to pray, and to live in close fellowship with God. I want to give you all the tools you

need to have a great prayer life with God. Consider doing the following:

1. ***Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name:*** Begin by worshiping God. Sing your favorite worship songs and hymns, or read the Psalms out loud. Also, be sure to give God thanks for all your blessings- family, health, etc. (Philippians 4:4-7).
2. ***Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven:*** Pray for God's kingdom- that is, His power and authority to be realized - in your life and in your community. Read specific Scriptures that describe promises you desire to see fulfilled. For example, pray for the fruit of the Spirit: "Lord, I ask for love, joy, peace, patience..." (Galatians 5:22-23).
3. ***Give us this day our daily bread:*** Ask God to bless you to be a blessing to others. Notice you are to pray for "us," not "me." Once again, study Scripture to learn the promises of God in this area. A good place to start would be praying Psalm 34 aloud as a confession of faith.
4. ***And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors:*** Ask God to forgive you of the sins you have committed (be specific) and forgive those who sinned against you. Ask God for the strength to forgive those who have hurt you the most. Remember, forgiveness is not permission for you to keep sinning or for others to keep sinning against you. Ask God to set you free from your sins and for freedom from people's sins against you (John 8:31-32).
5. ***And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:*** Pray for God to show you your weaknesses and give you wisdom to remain undefiled by sin. It is important to be vulnerable and honest with yourself before God. Pray Psalm 139:23-24 and 1 Corinthians 10:13 aloud for starters.
6. ***For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen:*** End rejoicing and declaring the Word of God over your life. Find specific promises that encourage you to see God's

kingdom, power and glory everyday, such as Psalms 23, 91 and 139.

Philippians 4:4-7, “4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! 5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

APPENDIX A

Understanding the Major Words for Prayer in Both the Old & New Testament

The Hebrew word, *atar*, which means, “entreat or supplicate in a religious sense,” is found 22 times in the Old Testament, and is only ever used in regard to entreating God.²³ And though certain translations, like the King James Version, use the English word “pray” in the sense of entreating other people, the Hebrew, *atar* is never used in the context of communicating with other people, whether on earth or in heaven. *Atar* is so connected to worship that in Zephaniah 3:10 it is translated “worshippers.” “From beyond the rivers of Cush my *worshippers (atar)*, my scattered people, will bring me offerings.” Some might mention that the Hebrew word, *na*, used 172 times, can also mean “to pray,” but it is never used in the sense of prayer to God or of people in heaven. This is why most modern versions translate word *na* as “ask” or “beg.”

Likewise, the primary root word for prayer in the New Testament is, *euchomai*. It is found 131 times and is only used in relation to God. The Greek lexicon *Louw-Nida* goes so far as to define the most popular form of the word, *proseuchomai*, as, “speaking to and asking God.” As with the Hebrew word *na*, the Greek word *deomai* is translated in some versions as “pray,” but it is never in a religious sense to a person. Modern versions are correct to translate it as, “ask” or “beg” in relation to other people, and “pray” in relation to God. However, this is like splitting hairs, because it is accurate to use the English word, “ask” for both religious purposes and in human affairs. However, the context determines whether it becomes a form of worship.

When I ask my wife for a glass of water, I am not worshipping her, I am simply making a request. However, when I ask God to do something on my behalf, I am worshipping Him. The meaning of “ask” is determined by the context. Similarly, *deomai* can mean different things in different contexts. For example, when the Ethiopian Eunuch asked Philip in Acts 8:34, “Tell me, *please (deomai)*, who is

the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” Do you think he was worshipping him and talking to him in the same way he would *ask (deomai)* God something? Certainly not. Look at Jesus’ usage of *deomai* in Luke 21:36, “Be always on the watch, and *pray (deomai)* that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.” Even a beginner in biblical languages can see that *deomai* should only be translated “pray” in English when the request is directed towards God, and as “please/ask” when directed towards other persons. Therefore, from the above word studies, the following is true:

1. Though there are certain words that can be used in a religious context with God and in a common context with people, the way most people “pray” to saints is never like the common word for pray (ask), but rather in the context of religious prayer (worship).
2. The Bible has no instances of anyone ever praying to someone in heaven with the religious words used for “pray.” Further, there are no examples of anyone ever asking for help from beings in heaven by using the more common words for “pray/ask.”

APPENDIX B

Quick Guide to Answering Objections

Objection 1: The Bible Only Forbids Praying to the Dead in the Context of Paganism

Untrue, like with homosexuality, it is forbidden in paganism because it is forbidden to everyone at all times. Though the sins found in Deuteronomy 18:10-14 are in the context of paganism, it still applies to praying to the Christian dead. If praying to the dead was allowed, why is there not one positive mention of people doing it in the entire Bible? For example, why doesn't Joshua pray to Moses or Abraham to Adam? Yet, we see God tell Joshua that since Moses is dead, he must rely upon God alone and His Word for guidance (Joshua 1:1-9).

Notice below that if Christians simply want to overrule the command against praying to saints because the command was originally in the context of rebuking pagan practices, then Christians would have to allow things like child sacrifice or homosexuality. Notice the similarities in argument.

Argument for Sacrificing Your Children & Practicing Homosexuality

Premise 1: The Bible only forbids sacrificing your children and committing homosexuality in the context of worshipping Molek or being a pagan as taught in Leviticus 20:1-6,13,22-23.

Premise 2: Bob is a Christian who wants to sacrifice his child to Jesus and be in a sexual relationship with Mike, who is also a Christian.

Conclusion: Therefore, the Bible doesn't forbid Bob sacrificing his child to Jesus and being in a sexual relationship with Mike.

Argument for Praying to Departed Saints & Angels

Premise 1: The Bible only forbids praying to the dead and spirit beings in the context of paganism in Leviticus 20:6.

Premise 2: Mike is a Christian on earth and Paul is a dead Christian spiritually alive in heaven.

Conclusion: Therefore, God doesn't forbid Mike from praying to Paul.

The above arguments require statements of affirmation to override the previous prohibitions- if in fact they were only limited to bad things pagans do. If people try to get around the need for a positive affirmation in the Bible- like Jesus declaring all foods clean in Mark 7:19 and Acts 13:13-15, then anything once deemed a sin in the pagan context could be allowed (homosexuality, child sacrifice, etc.). However, that is not how the Bible works. Notice the proper arguments below:

Argument Against Child Sacrifice, Homosexuality & Praying to Departed Saints

Premise 1: If the Bible forbids homosexuality, child sacrifice, and praying to departed saints, then those who do it are sinning- unless they can site another command from God that overrides the previous commands found in Leviticus 20:1-6,13,22-23.

Premise 2: The Bible does not give any commands that override Leviticus 20:1-6,13,22-23 pertaining to practicing homosexuality, child sacrifice, or praying to the dead in either the Old or New Testaments.

Conclusion: Therefore, those who practice homosexuality, child sacrifice, or attempt to contact the dead are sinning.

Isaiah 8:19-20, "19 When someone tells you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? 20 Consult

God's instruction and the testimony of warning. If anyone does not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn."

Objection 2: We are Not Praying to Saints and Angels Like We Pray to God, We are Just asking them to Pray for Us to God like You Would Ask Another Christian on Earth to Pray for Us to God

Untrue, the kind of prayers that are given to Mary, the Saints, and angels ascribe to them attributes that only God has (See the *Hail Holy Queen Prayer & Prayer to Saint Anthony, Disperser of Devils*). Next, praying to someone in heaven is not the same as praying with someone on earth because I never pray to my partner, I pray with my prayer partner. There are biblical commands to pray with people on earth, but there are zero commands in the Bible to pray to people in heaven.

Lastly, Jesus limited prayer partners to those on earth as a means of encouraging us and helping us experience His presence. Jesus said in, Matthew 18:19-20. Likewise, we don't need anyone else in heaven praying for us, because Jesus is already there- He alone is our High Priest (Hebrews 4:14-16). Notice the difference in reasoning below:

Argument for Praying to People in Heaven

Premise 1: *Missing premise: There is no command to pray to spirit beings of any kind.*

Premise 2: Mike is a departed Christian.

Premise 3: Bob is a Christian on earth.

Conclusion: Therefore, Bob is commanded to pray to Mike. *Missing example: Nowhere seen in the Bible.*

Argument for Praying Together with People on Earth

Premise 1: God commanded Christians on earth to pray for and with other Christians on earth (Matthew 18:19 & 2 Timothy 2:1-7).

Premise 2: Mike and Bob are Christians on earth.

Conclusion: Therefore, Mike and Bob are commanded to pray for each other (if they are aware of each other's need). As seen in places like Philemon 1:6, Hebrews 13:18, 1 John 5:16, and 3 John 1:2.

Therefore, unless you can show in the Bible where we are commanded to pray to departed saints and angels in heaven, you are not doing the same thing as keeping the command to pray with people on earth.

Matthew 18:19-20, "19 Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."

Objection 3: We Need the Prayers of Departed Saints and Angels in Heaven because they are More Righteous and Closer to God than Other Christians on Earth

Untrue, it is false to assume that saints in heaven and angels are more righteous because they are in heaven and closer to the throne of God than saints on earth. Paul made it clear that Christians on earth are saints (Eph. 1:1), covered in God's righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21), promised to do greater works than even Jesus (John 14:12), and are literally in Christ, seated with Him in heavenly places through the Holy Spirit (Eph. 2:4-10). Experiencing death or being around the throne of God doesn't make one more righteous or closer to Jesus.

Once again, the passage where we are taught the power of a righteous person's prayer is in the context of Elijah praying for the rain to stop and start- it has nothing to do with departed saints or angels (James 5:16-18). There is not one example of any person or angel praying from heaven and it doing something on earth. All the

examples we have regarding the power of prayer come from people on earth praying directly to God.

For the argument below to be valid, a person would have to prove the following two points: (1) That we are commanded to pray to departed saints and angels, and (2) Departed saints and angels are more righteous than saints on earth.

Argument for Praying to Saints and Angels Because They Are More Righteous

Premise 1: The Bible teaches a righteous person's prayer is more effective than an unrighteous person's prayer (James 5:16-18 & Proverbs 15:8).

Premise 2: Departed saints and angels are more righteous than saints on earth. *(No biblical proof for praying to saints or them being more righteous).*

Conclusion: Therefore, the prayers of departed saints and angels are more effective than those who pray together on earth.

Since the above argument is missing the biblical proof for premise two, we are left with the argument below, which is by far more biblical in regard to who we should pray with and who are the most righteous.

Argument for Only Praying with Saints on Earth

Premise 1: Jesus commanded His righteous ones to only pray with each other on earth (Matthew 18:18-20).

Premise 2: Righteous people obey God's commands (James 5:16-18).

Conclusion: Therefore, righteous people only pray with other righteous people on earth.

James 5:16-18, "16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. 17 Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and

it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. 18 Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.”

Objection 4: Praying to Departed Saints and Angels in Heaven is Apostolic in Nature

Untrue, for something to be considered apostolic in nature it would need to be affirmed by the Bible and the church fathers' writings from 33-100 A.D. and praying to departed saints and angels is absent from both the apostles' writings (i.e., "The New Testament") and their disciples. The first clear mention of praying to saints is around the beginning of the fourth century- over 200 years from the apostolic period (see Methodius' letter, *Oration on Simeon and Anna* 14, 305 A.D.).

The burden of proof rests squarely upon the person who claims something is apostolic by producing the evidence in the apostolic age. If a person cannot produce the evidence they cannot argue from silence and claim it was there, but none talked about it. If that were true than Mormons could claim that the apostles wore sacred underwear, but just didn't write about. It is clear from the writings of both the New Testament that they wanted the church to have all that Jesus wanted them to have (2 Tim. 2:2 & Jude 1:3). Paul went to great lengths to describe how to ordain elders and deacons (1 Tim. 3:1-13), take care of widows (1 Tim. 5:1-16), order the family (Eph. 5:21-6:4), etc. And these kinds of things continued in books such as the *Didache* and in Clement of Rome's letter to the church of Corinth--- however, there is not one mention on praying to departed saints or angels in any of the apostles' writings or in their disciples' writings. As a result, the argument below clearly shows that praying to saints is non-apostolic in nature.

Argument Against the Apostolic Nature of Praying to Saints & Angels

Premise 1: If something is able to be supported by the apostles in their writings or in their disciples' writings from 33-100 A.D., then it is considered apostolic in nature.

Premise 2: Praying to saints and angels is neither found in the disciples' writings, nor in their disciples' writings from 33-100 A.D.

Conclusion: Therefore, praying to saints and angels is not apostolic in nature.

If someone were to say that the same kind of reasoning above with invalidate such things as the canon of the New Testament or the clarification of Christian doctrines like the Trinity, the argument below would settle the matter.

Argument for the Apostolic Nature of the NT Canon & Trinity

Premise 1: If something is able to be supported by the apostles in their writings or in their disciples' writings from 33-100 A.D., then it is considered apostolic in nature.

Premise 2: Preserving the writings of the apostles and such doctrines like the Trinity can be found in the apostles' writings, as well as, in their disciples' writings from 33-100 A.D.

Conclusion: Therefore, preserving the writings of the apostles and such doctrines like the Trinity are apostolic in nature.

Therefore, it is clear from the argument above and the passages cited below that everything a Christian would ever need was promised to be contained in Scripture and that God would preserve it and make sure the church could easily discover what letters were in fact from the Lord's apostles.

1. Matthew 24:35, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away."
2. 2 Peter 3:15-16, "15 Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. 16 He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction."

3. 2 Timothy 3:16-17, “16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

Jude 1:3, “Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God’s holy people.”

ENDNOTES

¹ Gesenius, W., & Tregelles, S. P. (2003). *Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures* (p. i). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

² Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)* (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

³ Most, if not all, encounters with the person called, “the angel of the Lord” in the Old Testament are pre-incarnation visitations of Jesus (the Son of God) and do not change the above statements- see Genesis 48:16.

⁴ Kent, Grenville J.R. “Call Up Sameel’: Who Appeared to the Witch at En-Dor? (1 Samuel 28:3-25).” *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (2014): 142.
<https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3311&context=auss>.

⁵ *Ibid*, 157-158.

⁶ Source, <https://www.catholic.com/magazine/print-edition/the-bible-supports-praying-to-the-saints> (accessed 28 August 2019).

⁷ Source, <https://www.catholic.com/tract/praying-to-the-saints> (accessed 28 August 2019).

⁸ Source, <https://www.rosarycenter.org/homepage-2/rosary/prayers-of-the-rosary/> (accessed 28 August 2019).

⁹ Source, <https://www.catholic.org/prayers/prayer.php?p=149> (accessed 28 August 2019).

¹⁰ Source, <https://www.catholic.org/prayers/prayer.php?p=162> (accessed 28 August 2019).

¹¹ Though I believe a person can shipwreck their faith and lose their spiritual perfection, it is not lost in the sense of it's qualities diminishing, but rather a person no longer being "in Christ" and thus they lose the "forever-lasting" benefit of being perfect. For as surely as someone can come into Christ via faith, they can be cut via unbelief as Paul wrote in Romans 11:20-23.

¹² For more on this perspective being Paul's autobiographical reconstruction read, *A Study of Romans 7:14-25 as Paul's (Auto)biographical Reconstruction*, by Chan Tsz-on at <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/48535863.pdf> (accessed 2 September 2019).

¹³ For further depth and defense of speaking in tongues, read my article, *Is Speaking in Tongues for Today and For Everyone?* : <https://mpichurch.org/2013/04/24/is-speaking-in-tongues-for-today-2/> (accessed 5 September 2019).

¹⁴ Barker, Isabelle V. 2007. *Charismatic Economies: Pentecostalism, Economic Restructuring, and Social Reproduction*. *New Political Science* 29 (4): 407–27. doi:10.1080/07393140701688305 (accessed 2 October 2019).

¹⁵ Source, <https://suscopts.org/coptic-orthodox/church/apostolic-age/> (accessed 18 September 2019).

¹⁶ Surprisingly they include the *Diascalia* even though it is known by most scholars to be fraudulent. Though the *Diascalia* was written as if it was from the time of the council of Jerusalem, most scholars agree it is from the third century. Visit, <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/didascalia.html>, for evidence that most scholars date it around 200-250 A.D. However, even if it were from the proper time it has no evidence of praying to departed saints or angels.

¹⁷ Source, <https://www.catholic.com/tract/the-intercession-of-the-saints> (accessed 18 September 2019).

¹⁸ Source, <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/shepherd.html> (accessed 18 September 2019).

¹⁹ Source, <http://english.oxforddictionaries.com/intercession> (accessed 18 September 2019).

²⁰ Source, <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/shepherd.html> (accessed 18 September 2019).

²¹ Source, <https://www.catholic.com/tract/the-intercession-of-the-saints> (accessed 18 September 2019).

²² Source, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/08/05/transubstantiation-eucharist-u-s-catholics/> (accessed 18 September 2019).

²³ See the entry for *atar* in the Hebrew lexicon; *Brown, Driver, & Briggs*.