

Study for the Month of September 2017

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The 'Man of Sin' of Bible Prophecy and his activities and career - Part XVI

How, when, who, and where are human beings made saints? By whom?

First of all, it is vital to make it as clear as possible at the outset to the reader, whether a generic Christians (Catholic, Protestant, Evangelical, Pentecostal, Reformed, Baptist, etc.), that there is a world of difference separating the concept and doctrine of saints and sainthood espoused by Roman Catholic Church's—the more popular one accepted even by the passive, nominal and even unchurched,—and that which the Bible teaches.

To begin, I am quoting substantial passages from authentic sources delineating facts, that, on their own, point out that there are absolutely no grounds of agreement between the Roman Catholic Church's doctrine of sainthood with that of the Bible because the former, for centuries even to the present time though not as virulent as during the Dark Ages, is at enmity towards the latter. It If you pay close attention to anything the pope and the bishops announce or pronounce publicly on whatever pressing “global issues” of the day, they do not cite or quote the Bible as the absolute authority and basis for their pronouncements and/or decrees/ encyclical letters. It is always “by the church's authority” or “the pope's authority.”

The typical, historic Christian unwaveringly claimed from the very beginning that the basis of their faith was *sola scriptura*, “the Bible and the Bible only,” and that is *only* through Jesus Christ, the Son of God, that anyone has access to the Father in heaven and that ultimate salvation from sin and its wages, eternal death, are exclusively received by faith of the penitent sinner in the perfect atoning blood of Christ shed at Calvary and through His closing work since after His ascension, as mankind's only all-merciful yet all-powerful High Priest, Intercessor, Advocate, and Mediator in the heavenly sanctuary before the unapproachable glorious throne of the Father in heaven.

Edwardson says:

“Could it be thought possible that an all-wise Creator could bring so many

millions of people into existence, as the inhabitants of this earth, and give them no information as to why they are here, or what His will is concerning them? No, that would be unreasonable. Just as surely as there is a judgment day coming, on which we all shall be called to account for our conduct, so surely He must have given us an infallible rule of life. But what is this 'infallible rule'?

"The Roman Catholics say it is 'The Church, with its traditions.' But the Church has changed so greatly since its origin that if the apostles could arise from the dead they would not recognize it as the church they established. As for 'tradition,' it is like a story that grows and changes as it travels. No government would be satisfied with oral laws. In so important a matter as our eternal happiness we need a rule that is more stable and unchangeable, and this we have in God's infallible word, the Bible.

"THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

"The Bible is not the product of man's thoughts and planning. 'For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' 2 Peter 1" 21. (Compare Isaiah 55: 8, 9; 2 Corinthians 3:5.) Peter says: 'The Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake,' and David himself declares: 'The Spirit of the Lord spake by me.' Acts 1: 16; 2 Samule 23; 2. Of Jeremiah we read: 'Then the Lord put forth His hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold I have put *My words in thy mouth.*' Jeremiah 1: 9. Thus the whole Bible is God's word, spoken through human instrumentality, for 'God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.' (Acts 3: 21), and His hand guided them while they wrote. 'All this,' said David, 'the Lord made me understand in writing by His hand upon me.' 1 Chronicles 28: 19. And so, the prophets, after writing of Christ's coming, were 'searching' their own writings to find out 'what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.' 1 Peter 1: 11." - *Christian Edwardson, "Facts of Faith," pp. 10-12, Southern Publishing Assso. Nashville, TN. 1948.*

"How Pope Francis is Revolutionizing The Process of Who Becomes A Saint in The Catholic Church"

By Mathew Schmalz on 8/6/17 at 2 PM. This article originally appeared in The Conversation.

My first reaction to this startling headline, and probably yours, too, was "Is the Roman Catholic understanding and doctrine of sainthood that it has propagated and considered with great demonstration of ceremony and outward sanctity for centuries, changing now, in these end-times? Why?"

What happens now to all those in the past, even to this late, late hour of earth's

history, who, without much thought or more likely were conditioned by tradition, culture, upbringing, and yes, religion to accept assertions, interpretations of religious practices, particularly the dominant religion such as state churches, who, in the past and even to the present time, employ the powers of civil government to enforce their decrees and sustain their institutions. Unnumbered millions through the centuries were coerced into abandoning the most precious and sacred of all liberties and freedoms ever given to mankind—the responsible freedom of the rational mind to think and decide for himself (intellectually and spiritually) regarding who, what, where, when, and how to *worship God* according to the dictates of conscience—not by the dictates of fellow mortals and institutions—whether religious or civil, worse, the abominable combination of both—which underwrote the darkest chapters of human history and civilization, and will underwrite, according to Biblical prophecy, the last and final global, Heaven-daring rebellion against God—finally filling its iniquity cup to maximum.

Will Pope Francis’ “revolutionized process of beatification” be retroactive? If not, why? Does mortal time limitations and “change of church leadership” *on earth* ever change divine rules and distinctions *in heaven*? Not ever and by any stretch of the imagination---if one believes in the inerrancy of Bible and the omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence of its real Author, who alone is “the same yesterday, today, and forever.”

I am reprinting Schmalz’s article as it is an excellent “primer” of sorts or a jolting eye-opener for those who want to understand this mysterious and confusing subject of “beatification” and “sainthood” by and in the Church of Rome—which can only begin to be considered as a “cause” (originally 50 years, recently reduced to 5 years *after* your death!). If successful, you will be officially assigned your own “feast day” in the Catholic Calendar. Thereafter, the Catholic faithful can pray to you, as a ghostly *intercessor* with God in heaven, even as you left your body on earth to decompose and return back to the dust of the earth.

It is very, very hard to believe—and this is no “fake news” or some Alex Jones-type conspiracy theory but the “good” or “bad” news is, depending on what you were expecting to learn is that the beatification and sainthood processes are still undergoing “revolutionary” changes since it became a Roman Catholic doctrine. It appears that it depends on the “times” and who is currently occupying “Peter’s seat” in the Vatican. Question: when will it stop changing? Is there any possibility of being “de-sainted” after one has already been sainted? According to Catholic history

The article quoted addresses the latest changes/”improvements” of the Roman Catholic process of beatification which precedes sainthood” which the current *active* pope, Francis, (his predecessor, the German Benedict declared as “Pope Emeritus” is still very much alive and “retired” in the Vatican—the one and only smallest city-state in the world, and as such, enjoys, *as a church*, the privileges and rights as a sovereign nation such as its own army, its own bank, its own

Gathers themPs. 50: 3
 Keeps them1 Sam. 2: 9
 Counts them preciousPs. 116: 15
Intercedes for themRom. 8: 27
 Will glorify them2 Thess. 1: 10

From the very beginning, after the fall, all the sinful, erring, yet humble and teachable sinner who have followed Christ and obeyed His law out of love, and accepted His divine plan of redemption according to the light they had received in their generation, are called SAINTS by God! Not only saints but adopted *sons and daughters* of God. Not only adopted sons and daughters of God but *co-laborers* with God in the proclamation of the gospel and the saving of souls from deception and sin. Not only co-laborers with God but *heirs and joint-heirs* with Christ of the eternal, imperishable riches of God. Not only heirs and joint-heirs with Christ but those who Christ was revealed “to the world, to man, and angels” in their life and deeds: Christ in you, the hope of glory!”

Aren't you glad and relieved, dear fellow Bible-studying Christian that the “process” of becoming a “saint” in God’s kingdom on earth and in heaven is the “same yesterday, today, and forever” – not subject to any changes or improvements such as “fast-tracking,” etc., for the God that we serve is *not a* human being with corruptible flesh and mortal nature but is no less *than God in the flesh, Creator of heaven and earth and yet our humble, loving Savior and merciful High Priest, Intercessor, Advocate, Mediator and the Judge of the earth*---who died in Calvary to redeem us. He owns us twice (or we are indebted to Him twice); first, by creation, then, by redemption! Praise Him forevermore!

Francis himself predicted early on after his election that he “sensed his would be a short papacy.” See “Pope Francis Predicts Short Papacy, Announces Jubilee Year of Mercy.’ Huffington Post 03-13-2015.

Pope Francis creates new category for beatification

“Pope Francis has created a new category for beatification, *the level immediately below sainthood*, in the Catholic Church: those who give their lives for others. This is called ‘*oblatio vitae*,’ the ‘offer of life’ for the well-being of another person.

“Martyrs, a special category of saint, also offer up their lives, but they do so for their ‘*Christian faith*.’ And so, the pope’s decision raises the question: Is the Catholic understanding of sainthood changing?

“Who’s a Saint”?

“Most people use the word ‘saint’ to refer to someone who is exceptionally good or ‘holy.’ In the *Catholic Church*, however, ‘saint’ has a more specific meaning: someone who has led a life of ‘heroic virtue.’

“This definition includes the ‘*cardinal*’ virtues prudence, temperance, fortitude and justice; as well as the ‘*theological*’ virtues: faith, hope and charity. A saint displays these qualities in a consistent and exceptional way.

“When someone is proclaimed a saint by the pope—*which can happen only after death*—public devotion to the saint, called a ‘cultus,’ is *authorized for Catholics* throughout the world.”

In the Bible, in the New Testament, and in the epistle of Peter specifically, God does not specify two classes of **virtues**, “cardinal,” and theological.” Rather, let us cite what the apostle alleged to be the “rock” on which the Roman Catholic Church is founded:

v 1 Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ [a true saint!] , *to them that have obtained like precious faith with us* through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ [fellow saints]

v 2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord,

v 3 According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hast called us to glory and **virtue**:

v 4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be *partakers of the divine nature*, having escaped the corruption that in the world through lust [unsanctified desire].

v 5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue’ and to virtue knowledge;

v 6 And to knowledge temperance [self-control] ; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

v 7 And to godliness brotherly kindness’ and to brotherly kindness charity [Christian *agape* love]

v 8 And if these things [virtues] be in you and abound [by partaking of the divine nature], they make you that you shall *neither* be barren nor unfruitful of the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

v 9 But he that lacketh these things [virtues] is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath *forgotten* that he was purged from his old sins.

v 10 Wherefore, the rather, brethren. *Give diligence to making your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:*

v 11 For so an entrance shall be ministered [supplied] unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

v 12 Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though you know them, and be established in the present truth.” 2 Peter 1: 1-12, King James (Authorized) Version.

Yes indeed, the Bible’s definition of and standard by which any *sinner* will qualify as a *saint* in the eyes of God the Creator, Lifegiver, Savior, and Judge of all the earth—including all the world’s venerated religious leaders such as ministers,

pastors, priests, bishops, archbishops, and especially the popes who claim to be Christ's vicegerent and "verily God Himself on earth," is clearly summed up by the wise man Solomon and shown to John in vision by Christ Himself as especially distinct in these last hours of earth's probation after the full proclamation of the three angels' messages of Revelation 14.

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Ecclesiastes 12: 13, 14, K.J.V.

"Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Revelation 14: 12, K.J.V.

If only any rational being will simply put on his thinking cap and set to work his mental faculties endowed upon him by God! This is why education is deemed precious and absolutely necessary for success by nations and societies (The RCC itself is the most prominent religion that has set up world-renowned universities and other educational institutions)—he would ask himself these most basic of questions in life: what is the difference between life and death, if one instantly becomes alive as a "soul" or a "spirit" and either goes straight to heaven, purgatory, or hell? Since he is inevitably headed towards one of these three designated destinations *after death*, that is, according to the Roman Catholic Church doctrine that has been taught, accepted, and repeated in a thousand different ways and in a thousand occasions and forms by both religious and secular---wherever and whenever the "Grim Reaper," death, makes his visit.

(a) Where are these three places located? Don't you think we all need to demand more information than what we have now or as we have settled down to accept with little or no explanation? Does Heaven have a definite address somewhere out there in the vast expanse of space of our solar system or in the now known universe that NASA's space-travelling spacecrafts have been sending astounding photos of back to earth since their launching. If, as the Roman Catholic Church claims, is the true church of God and that the pope is its "visible head," as both "vicegerent of Jesus," even taking the office, work, and authority of the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Godhead, and then, as the height of all the "high and mighty words" that the pope is "verily God on earth"! With all these authority of divinity would they not have revealed to mankind, or at least, to their devotees where Heaven is actually located?

(b) Where is this "eternally-burning hell" – that most dreaded and dreadful place where the supposedly offended "God" employs the devils to eternally torture the unholy and unrighteous throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity those whom the Church has judged to be "heretics" Isn't it strange that the "God of love" is complicit, moreover, is in active partnership with Satan---the "enemy of Christ and man," in inflicting eternal torture on man whom God created "in His own image and likeness" and came down to earth to make the ultimate sacrifice to redeem from the power of sin and Satan?

(c) Where is “purgatory” or “limbo”? Is this place really “between heaven and hell”? How can it be another place of literal burning for the sake of “purging” and “purifying” souls so that they are fitted as such to “enter Paradise.” But it isn’t automatic. Loved ones on earth should be so concerned that they will constantly have masses said for them—for a fee—until they are finally considered purged or purified and set free to continue their soul-journey to Paradise? No one really knows when this liberation point is ever reached and the burning and torture has mercifully accomplished its terrible work!

A cult is any group of people or church who worships a mortal being. All are fallen, sinful, mortals who need to be saved by the everlasting gospel of Christ. As the prophets wrote: “All we, like sheep have gone astray.” Isa. 53: 6. “For all our righteousness [or professed holiness] are like filthy rags.” Isa. 64: 6. Paul echoes this incontrovertible truth: “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” Rom. 3: 23.

“Canonization.

“The process for being named a saint *in the Catholic Church* is called canonization, the word ‘canon’ meaning an authoritative list. Persons who are named saints are listed in the ‘canon’ as saints and given a special day, called a ‘feast,’ in the Catholic calendar.

“*Before approximately the year 1000*, saints were named by the local bishop. For example, St. Peter the Apostle and St. Patrick of Ireland were considered ‘saints’ long before any formal procedure has been established. [So how did they become saints before all the formal procedures were established, and now added to?]. But as the papacy increased its power, it claimed the exclusive authority to name a saint.

“The Investigation

“Today there are *four stages* in canonization.--

“Any Catholic or groups of Catholics can *request* that the bishop open a case. They will need to name a formal intermediary, called the ‘**postulator**,’ who will promote the cause of the saint [to-be]. *At this point the candidate is called ‘the servant of God.’* A formal investigation examines ‘servant of God’s’ life. Those who knew the candidate are interviewed, and affidavits for and against the candidate are reviewed.”

“Also, the candidate’s writings---if any exist---are examined for consistency *with Catholic doctrines*. A ‘promoter of justice’ named by the local bishop ensures that proper procedures are followed a *notary* certifies the documentation.

“The proceedings of the investigation, called ‘Acts’ or ‘The Acts,’ are forwarded

to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints in *Rome*. The Congregation for the Causes of Saints is large, with a prefect, a secretary, undersecretary and a staff of 23 people. There are also over 30 cardinals and bishops associated with the congregation's work at various stages.

“The Congregation for the Cause of the Saints appoints a **‘relator’** (one of the five who currently work for the congregation) who *supervises* the postulator in writing a *position paper* called a ‘positio.’ The position argues for the *virtues* of the servant of God and can be *thousands of pages long*. The congregation examines the position and members *vote* ‘yes’ or ‘no’ in the cause. ‘Yes’ must be unanimous.

“The final decision *lies* with the pope. When he signs a ‘Decree of Heroic Virtue,’ the person becomes ‘venerable.’ Then two stages remain: beatification and sainthood.

“Throughout most of Catholic history, the canonization process was rigorous. One of the key figures in the investigation in the Vatican was the **‘devil’s advocate,’** who functioned like an *opposing attorney* by *challenging the candidate’s holiness*. [Who among fallen mankind has the ability to judge a *dead person’s holiness*, especially if the person has long been deceased? Who has the ability to read the *secrets* of the minds and hearts of man? And by what infallible, unchanging standard does he go by? Incredible, isn’t it!]. “This is the origin of the often-used English phrase referring someone who takes a position to challenge another person to prove a point more fully.

“Few people have received the title of ‘saint,’ although *there are more than 10, 000 that the Catholic Church venerates*. Even *15th century famous spiritual writer German Thomas a Kempis didn’t make it through the process*. His body was exhumed and examined during his case for sainthood. *There were stories that there were scratch marks on the inside of his coffin and splinters of wood under his fingernails. These discoveries suggested an escape attempt after being buried alive. The issue would have been that Thomas a Kempis did not peacefully accept death as a saint should. His case did not move forward.*

“Changes to the Process. In the early ‘70’s, Pope Paul VI revised the canon of the saints to exclude those whose historical existence could not be verified. For example, *St. Christopher, the protector of travelers, was removed*, although many Catholics still have a St. Christopher medal in their automobiles. [So where did all the prayers of those seeking intercession and protection for their trips and travels, particularly the risky ones go? That’s a faith-busting decision of a pope! How will you know if the saint/s you are praying to or through will be deleted from the official listing of saints, i. e., Roman Catholic, not Biblical saints?]

“In 1983, John Paul II, *who became a saint himself, changed the waiting period from 50 to 5 years after the candidate’s death*. [Unfair to the other previous saints, is all I can say!]. He also reduced the role of the ‘devil’s

advocate.’ [Again, unfair to all the previous saints!].

“These changes led to criticism that the Vatican had become a ‘saints’ factory.’ This quicker process, however, *has not reduced the six-figure costs* necessary for those who support the cause to *fund* an investigation and hire a postulator.’ [Ahem. In the Bible, no amounts are specified as necessary in order to become a “saint.” God does all that. The life records, both public and secret are recorded by the angels who are constantly at our side—not only as protectors but as heavenly recorders.]

[NOTE: How cruel! Thomas a Kempis therefore, was not *martyred* but *murdered*. God reminds the world and the churches: “Vengeance is Mine. I will repay, saith the Lord.” Rom. 12: 19 (last part).” “For we know Him that hath said, “Vengeance belongeth unto Me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” Heb. 10: 30, 31. “For all shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ.” Rom.14: 10.

“**Types of Saints.** While the title of ‘saint’ is used for all those who are canonized, there are different categories of saints, such as ‘martyr,’ and ‘confessor.’ A ‘martyr’ has been killed for his or her Christian beliefs; a ‘confessor’ has been tortured or persecuted for his or her faith, but not killed

“**Miracles and Martyrs.** Miracles are an important part of canonization. A miracle is an event that cannot be explained by reason or natural causes. The process begins with the person praying to the saint who ‘intercedes’ with God, usually to cure an illness. The potential miracle is then investigated by a medical board of 9 members, *who are sworn to secrecy*. [Why?] *They can be paid for their work only through bank transfer*, a rule to prevent under-the-table payments that could corrupt the process. After the occurrence of a second miracle is established, the candidate’s title will change from ‘blessed’ to ‘saint.’ With Saint John Paul II, this happened in a record time of 9 years. First, there was a French nun who was cured of Parkinson’s disease. Then there was a healing of a Costa Rica woman from brain aneurysm.

“Martyrs have a different path to sainthood. They become ‘blessed’ when the pope makes a ‘Decree of Martyrdom.’ After a single miracle, martyrs are ‘raised to the glory of the Altars,’ a phrase that refers to the public ceremony in which a person is formally named a saint.

“**A New Kind of Saint?** Given this complex history of Catholic sainthood, it’s fair to ask whether Pope Francis is doing anything new.

“The pope’s declaration makes it clear that someone who gives his life for others should demonstrate virtue ‘at least as ordinarily possible’ throughout life. This means that someone can become ‘blessed’ not just by living a life of heroic virtue, but also by performing a *single* heroic act of sacrifice.

“Such heroism might include dying while trying to save someone who is drowning or losing one’s life attempting to rescue a family from a burning

building. A single miracle, *after death*, is still necessary for beatification. Now saints can be persons who lead a fairly ordinary life until and extraordinary moment of supreme self-sacrifice.

“From my perspective as a Catholic scholar,’ Mathew Schmalz concludes in his fascinating article, ‘is an expansion of the Catholic understanding of sainthood, and yet another step toward Pope Francis making the papacy and the [Roman] Catholic Church *more relevant* to the experiences of ordinary Catholics.”

(To be continued next month)

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