

## Why Do Protestants Invent Doctrines?

By Steve Ray

Dear Baptist Friend Jerry:

I don't want you to think *all* my letters are unduly long so I will try to be brief; actually I just want to ask you a few questions. I just spent the weekend in Oscoda at Camp Cherith (very Fundamentalist and Evangelical) canoeing with my daughter Cindy at a Father/Teen Daughter Canoe Trip, complete with Bible Studies, "worship service", Gospel message, song-fests and *Bible Exploration*. We have been participating in their family and camp activities since the mid-1980's. Currently my daughter Cindy is a C.I.L.T. camp counselor for younger girls (editor's note: she's now married with children and a PhD in Philosophy). She has excelled in canoeing, Bible, riflery and nature studies. She'll spend most of the next few summers there working with the young girl campers.

I just have a few questions I would like to ask you. Catholics are always accused of adding man-made doctrines to the "clear teaching" of Scripture (cp. 2 Peter 3:15–16). I do not understand how the Fundamentalists can accuse Catholics of this and then merrily add words and doctrines to the Bible themselves. It seems like a double standard to me. Even though I used to be a Baptist, it seems so absurd to me now. Catholics are constantly fielding statements such as, "*I could never belong to a church that believes in 'such-and-so'*" or "*Catholics don't believe the Bible literally because they add all kinds of traditions and man-made doctrines that nullify the word of God.*"

My first question Jerry, is this: does the *Epistle to the Romans* mean what it says when it says "All have sinned." Let's look at the verses I want to questions you about. They are commonly used in Fundamentalist tracts and Gospel messages.

In Romans 3:23 it says,

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; (KJV)

And in Romans 5:12

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (KJV)

Let's ask the favorite Protestant Bible question: What do these verses mean to you? Do these verses mean *literally* that all have sinned? Does it apply to Jesus since he was a man? And does this apply to infants, children, "mentally challenged" (we do need to be politically correct), or insane? It must, right, since the Bible says what it means and means what it says. *All* means *all*, *all* means *everyone*. I know this is the case because I have been *told* it most certainly applies to everyone (Endnote 1). This has been dogmatically asserted whenever the issue of the Immaculate Conception arises (Mary could not have been sinless because *all have sinned*). So this must apply to children as well.

Are there any other exceptions to this word *all*, and if so, who decides? If we make exceptions aren't we really saying Paul was confused or didn't *really* mean *everyone*. I remember another place where the word *all* is used. Let's read Matthew 3:5. "Then Jerusalem was going out to him, and all Judea, and all the district around the Jordan; and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins." Does this mean that every single person from all these areas personally came out to see John? My this gets confusing, especially when you read Romans 5:19 that says that *many*, not all, were made sinners.

When I was a Fundamentalist I used to believe in a doctrine called the "age of accountability". Do you believe in this doctrine Jerry? It basically states that the Bible does not mean what it says when it says *all* have sinned. The Protestant doctrine of the "age of accountability" says that babies, young children, mentally retarded, etc. are not accountable for their sins since they are not old enough or capable of committing moral offence against God. They are therefore not sinners, or at least not held accountable.

But what about the other verse in the *Romans Road Gospel tract*, and in the tract you and your friend Don left me the other night. It states in Romans 6:23, "*For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* (KJV)

Now if we take these three passages together, out of context and interpreted the way a Fundamentalist interprets them—and as your Fundamentalist tracts preach them—we have a problem. How can God send innocent, sweet, cuddly babies to eternal perdition before they have an opportunity to sin willingly and outright? The Bible seems to teach that a baby is a sinner (because the Bible says *all* have sinned, right?) and that "the wages of sin is death", so if a baby dies, it must go straight to hell. Is there anything that can save them before they are mentally able to understand the Gospel and "accept Christ as their Savior"? Are all children thus given a death sentence for the first decade of their lives? My that seems cruel and heartless, contrary to the love and mercy of God.

It sure is convenient to have the man-made, invented doctrine of the "age of accountability". This makes some sense of these verses in the Bible. But, what chapter and verse do we turn to as a proof text for this doctrine Jerry? Where are these words in the Bible? We soon find they don't exist! Protestants *invented* them. In fact, Job 14:4, Psalm 51:5, John 3:6, Romans 5:14, Ephesians 2:3 and 1 Corinthians 7:14, only make the matter worse. But Fundamentalists know that this "age of accountability" must necessarily be so in order to keep God's mercy from being maligned and to keep with their Protestant traditions. In the Fundamentalist's wisdom the doctrine of the "age of accountability" has been added to the canon of Scripture as a dogma even though it is not found in *sola Scriptura*.

Do you agree that *all* are sinners and that if they die without personally accepting Jesus as their savior (by praying the "Sinner's Prayer") they go to hell? Do you agree with this "age of accountability"? Since the Bible is the "only infallible authority binding on our souls", where do we turn to solve this dilemma? Are the Fundamentalists inventing doctrines and

using nonbiblical words to explain away the key verses in the *Romans Road*? Isn't this what they accuse Catholics of doing Jerry? Aren't you trying to pull a splinter from my Catholic eye while you have a beam in your own?

Does one accept the Scriptures, or the Protestant tradition? There are however, simple solutions to these problems. The Church has resolved the problem; in fact, it never had the problem. For 2,000 years the Catholic Church has maintained the Apostolic teachings passed on as a sacred deposit. Protestants have to recreate the "theological wheel" every generation. When we talk or start a written correspondence we can solve problems like this together. There are some simple means to understanding these dilemmas, that make sense out of your self-imposed confusion.

You know, there are a lot of other Fundamentalist doctrines and extra-biblical words used by Fundamentalists, based on Protestant tradition and usage, which seem to be held by you as equal to Scripture. I sat down the other day and, not surprisingly, came up with a whole list of them. I have listed a few for your enjoyment. But, we can discuss the others at a later time. I m trying to keep this letter brief.

In the Blood of the Lamb,

Steve Ray

### **An Incomplete List of Man-made, Invented Protestant Words or Doctrines Not Found in the Bible**

Age of Accountability  
Total Depravity of Man  
Personal Lord and Saviour  
Ask Jesus into your Heart  
The Rapture  
Invisible Church  
Folding your Hands, Bowing your Head  
"Personal Relationship with Christ"  
Accepting Christ as Lord and Savior  
Enthroning the Bible in your Heart  
"Covered with the righteousness of Christ"  
Limited Atonement  
Imputed righteousness  
Altar Call  
Dedication; Rededication  
"Giving your Life to the Lord"  
Revival  
Inerrancy  
Eternal Security  
"Once saved, always saved"

Denominations

Faith *Alone*

*Sola Scriptura* or Scripture only

*Devotions*

Wedding rings

Full-time Ministry

Church as a building when we see the early believers meeting in private homes.

“Righteousness of Christ” (phrase never found in the New Testament)

Etc., etc.

### **Words Not Found in the Bible and Shared with Catholics**

Trinity

Incarnation

Protestant

Bible

Denomination

Endnote:

1. What do we do with Job in Job 1:1,8; 2:3; Zacharias and Elizabeth in Luke 1:6 and Paul in Philippians 3:6 to mention a few? I am not drawing any conclusions, just asking the question.