



Confession

THE SACRAMENT OF CONFESSION WHY DO CATHOLICS CONFESS THEIR SINS TO A PRIEST?

Question: Why do Catholics confess their sins to a priest, rather than going straight to God alone?

Answer: Because that's the way Jesus set it up for us to receive forgiveness for our sins. Nowhere does the Bible tell us we are to confess our sins to God and God alone.

Question: Where does the Bible tell us to confess our sins to men?

Answer: James 5:14-16, "Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord...and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another..."

The Bible clearly tells us to confess our sins to men. But, not just to any men, rather, to those to whom authority has been given for the forgiveness of sins. In the passage from James we see that the "elders" of the church were to be called. These were the bishops and the priests - the leaders of the church who had been given such authority.

Question: Where in the Bible does it say that men have the authority to forgive sins?

Answer: Matthew 9:2-8, the story of the paralytic. In verse 6, Jesus says, "But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins..." And, then, in verse 8, the Word of God tells us, "When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, Who had given such authority to men."

The Bible clearly tells us that Jesus had "authority on earth to forgive sins," and then it further tells us that "such authority" had been give "to men" - plural. Not just to a man - Jesus Christ - but to men. The Bible cannot be any more clear on this.

Also, on the evening of Jesus' Resurrection, in His first appearance to the Apostles in the upper room, what is the first thing Jesus does? He gives the Apostles the authority to forgive sins. John 20:21-23: "Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, even so I send you.' And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'"

Jesus tells the Apostles that He is sending them as the Father sent Him. How did the Father send Him? With authority on earth to forgive sins (Matthew 9:6-8). So, Jesus is sending out the Apostles (men) with the authority on earth to forgive sins or retain sins. And why would Jesus give the Apostles such authority, unless He was expecting people to confess their sins to them?

The Bible is very clear that just as God gives some men the authority to heal physical sickness, so God gives some men the authority to heal spiritual sickness (sin). It is God's authority, but He exercises this authority through men.

So, that is why Catholics confess their sins to a priest...

◇◇◇◇ "RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT. IF YOU FORGIVE THE SINS OF ANY, THEY ARE FORGIVEN; IF YOU RETAIN THE SINS OF ANY, THEY ARE RETAINED." ◇◇◇◇

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Matthew 9:2-8

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