

## **As Spiritual Mediator, Francis Moves His Geopolitical Agenda Forward**

By Richard Bennett and Robert Nicholson

As the months go by, the world political situation continues to become more unstable. Russia's Putin has taken the Crimea from the Ukraine. The Middle East remains engulfed in fighting. Clearly, the shifting global balance of power and impotence of the UN has created an opportunity for Pope Francis to expand his own geopolitical agenda. Thus, donning the guise of a peacemaker, Francis was able to use the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of Pope Paul VI's visit to Israel in 1964 to launch his latest offensive for papal dominion in several spheres. It is under this rubric that Pope Francis's trip to Israel and Palestine in May 2014, and the subsequent June 8th prayer meeting in Rome, ought to be viewed.

The basis on which Francis premised his mission was flawed. This became evident when Francis's diplomatic rhetoric did not equate with a number of well-known facts. For example, he stated in his greeting to Shimon Peres, the president of Israel, "Peacemaking demands...respect for the dignity and freedom of every human person..."<sup>1</sup> Next, he said that Jews, Christians, and Muslims all believe each person is created by God and destined to eternal life. Immediately he followed with a calculated untruth when he said, "This shared conviction enables us resolutely to pursue peaceful solutions to every controversy and conflict."<sup>2</sup> Everyone knows that this so-called "shared conviction" does nothing of the sort. Rather with this statement, Francis has tacitly glossed over the fact that Muslims have vowed death to all Jews and the Jewish state. Nor does the Roman Catholic system "resolutely" pursue peaceful solutions to every controversy. Rather the Papal system demands a submission of intellect and will to its claimed infallible Pope. The stipulated demand is given in the following official words: "The Supreme Pontiff, in virtue of his office, possesses infallible teaching authority when, as supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful...he proclaims with a definitive act that a doctrine of faith or morals is to be held as such."<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the system pronounces a punishment for not obeying its dictates: "The Church has an innate and proper right to coerce offending members of the Christian faithful by means of penal sanctions."<sup>4</sup> There is a distinct disparity between Papacy's words of peace and its own modus operandi. Consequently, it becomes plausible that the purpose of the Pontiff's visit to Amman, Bethlehem, and Israel was something other than simply seeking geopolitical peace for the sake of good will.

### **The Plea for Peace**

At the outset, Francis's visit to Israel was a bid for world attention under the guise of a plea for "peace." Catholic media broadcast the events stage by stage; as for example, it was stated,

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.news.va/en/news/meeting-with-the-president-of-the-state-of-israel>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.news.va/en/news/meeting-with-the-president-of-the-state-of-israel>

<sup>3</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Para. 891

<sup>4</sup> *Code of Canon Law*, Latin-English ed. (Canon Law Society of America, 1983) Canon 1311

“Upon arriving in Israel on Sunday, Pope Francis reiterated his call for peace in the Holy Land, asking that Jerusalem might truly become a ‘city of peace,’ as its name means.’ The Holy Father spoke of the urgency of peace, not only for Israel, but for the entire region.”<sup>5</sup>

The Pontiff went on to say, “In union with all men and women of good will, I implore those in positions of responsibility to leave no stone unturned in the search for equitable solutions to complex problems, so that Israelis and Palestinians may live in peace.”<sup>6</sup> Again and again, Francis highlighted the concept of peace, although from his remarks there can be no understanding of how real peace is accomplished - that first of all, true and lasting peace is peace with God through His Son, Jesus Christ. This all-important truth was not any part of Francis’s “Christian” outreach. Alongside Francis, the Jewish rabbi, Rabinowitz, spoke of “the Jerusalem of dreams.” Thus, the rabbi welcomed the Pope with, “The Jerusalem you have arrived to, honored Pope, is not only the earthly Jerusalem. It’s also the Jerusalem of dreams.”<sup>7</sup> Hope for the Jewish people does not consist in the establishment of some inter-faith peace program for Jerusalem but in the acknowledgment that Jesus Christ the Lord is their Savior and King. Christ alone is the one who has made peace with God on the behalf of every believing sinner, Jew and Gentile alike.<sup>8</sup>

### **Francis’s Meeting with Islam’s Grand Mufti to Enhance Mutual Acceptance**

The Vatican’s news service gave the setting and Francis’ words,

“Meeting on Monday morning with the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Muhammed Hussein, Pope Francis pointed to the fraternal dialogue and exchange between Christians and Muslims which, he said ‘offers new strength to confront the common challenges before us.’

“Your Excellency, Dear Muslim Faithful, Dear Friends,

“I am grateful for the opportunity to meet with you in this sacred place. I thank you for the courteous invitation you have extended to me and, in particular, I wish to thank the Grand Mufti and the President of the Supreme Muslim Council....At this moment I think of Abraham, who lived as a pilgrim in these lands. Muslims, Christians and Jews see in him, albeit in different ways, a father in faith and a great example to be imitated...In our earthly pilgrimage we are not alone. We cross paths with other faithful; at times we share with them a stretch of the road and at other times we experience with them a moment of rest which refreshes us. Such is our meeting today. Dear brothers, dear friends, from this holy place I make a heartfelt plea to all people and to all communities who look to Abraham: may we respect and love one another! May we learn to understand the sufferings of others! May no one

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.ewtn.com/vnews/getstory.asp?number=130139>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> [http://jewishvoiceny.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=7522:pope-francis-i-makes-historic-trip-to-israel-stirs-controversy-over-state-of-palestine-remark&catid=107:israel&Itemid=290](http://jewishvoiceny.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=7522:pope-francis-i-makes-historic-trip-to-israel-stirs-controversy-over-state-of-palestine-remark&catid=107:israel&Itemid=290)

<sup>8</sup> Ephesians 2: 11-22 cf. to Romans 11:25-6

abuse the name of God through violence! May we work together for justice and peace! Salaam!”<sup>9</sup>

Thus, Pope Francis attempted to engender a mood of respectful rapprochement between the Papacy and Islam. The Pontiff’s objective was that of embracing Islam and its peoples within an international community of religious life and faith as “brothers and sisters.” Such a rapprochement is not biblically possible. Christians believe in one God, wherein, within the one Godhead, there exist three Persons. Islam rejects this biblical truth. The Qur’an declares,

“Certainly they disbelieve who say: Surely Allah is the third (person) of the three; and there is no god but the one God, and if they desist not from what they say, a painful chastisement shall befall those among them who disbelieve.” (Surah 5:73)<sup>10</sup>

The Bible proclaims Christ’s sacrificial death on the cross in place of the believer, “*In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.*”<sup>11</sup> Islam passionately rejects the crucifixion of Christ Jesus. Thus, the Qur’an declares,

“And their saying: Surely we have killed the Messiah, Isa son of Marium, the apostle of Allah; and they did not kill him nor did they crucify him, but it appeared to them so (like Isa) and most surely those who differ therein are only in a doubt about it; they have no knowledge respecting it, but only follow a conjecture, and they killed him not for sure.” (Surah 4:157)<sup>12</sup>

The Bible proclaims Christ Jesus as divine, being the brightness of the divine glory, and the express image of God. In the Qur’an Christ Jesus is debased to being solely an apostle of Allah. Thus, the Qur’an states,

“O followers of the Book! do not exceed the limits in your religion, and do not speak (lies) against Allah, but (speak) the truth; the Messiah, Isa son of Marium is only an apostle of Allah.” (Surah 4.171)

However, Christ Jesus declared,

“*Before Abraham was, I AM.*”<sup>13</sup> “*I and my Father are one.*”<sup>14</sup> “*I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.*”<sup>15</sup>

A religion that rejects Christ’s divinity is irreconcilably antibiblical and antichristian and leaves its adherents without hope, dead in their sins. It is an absurd blasphemy that Pope Francis, in accepting Muslims as “brothers and sisters,” implied that the sovereign God of the Bible is the same one as the infidel god of Islam. Thus, for Francis to show

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<sup>9</sup> [www.news.va/en/news/pope-francis-to-muslims-we-must-confront-common-ch](http://www.news.va/en/news/pope-francis-to-muslims-we-must-confront-common-ch)

<sup>10</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all quotes from the Koran are from this site:  
<http://www.hti.umich.edu/k/koran/>

<sup>11</sup> Ephesians 1:7

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.ewtn.com/vnews/getstory.asp?number=130139>

<sup>13</sup> John 8:58

<sup>14</sup> John 10:30

<sup>15</sup> John 8:24

respect and deference to Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and Islam before the Lord God is a denial of Christ's person and work, and hence, of the Gospel itself. Nevertheless, the media reported that on June 8, 2014, "Islamic Prayers and readings from the Quran were heard from the Vatican for the first time in history."<sup>16</sup> This was occasioned at Pope Francis's express invitation.

### **Pope Francis's Homily at Mass in the Upper Room Denies Biblical Truth**

The Pontiff presented the Roman Mass as an enactment of Christ's sacrifice at the alleged site of the Last Supper. Francis's performance was impeccable with richly anointed serpentine words as he stated,

"The Upper Room reminds us, through the Eucharist, of sacrifice. In every Eucharistic celebration Jesus offers himself for us to the Father, so that we too can be united with him, offering to God our lives, our work, our joys and our sorrows...offering everything as a spiritual sacrifice."<sup>17</sup>

The one offering of Christ, willed by the Father, was a single, never to be repeated historical event. The divine perfection is seen in the fact that it was the one acceptable sacrifice, once offered.<sup>18</sup> Only on Calvary, in the person and work of the Son of God, do we see that "*Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*"<sup>19</sup> Only for those who trust solely in God's work of redemption is it true that "*the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever.*"<sup>20</sup> To teach that the Roman Mass is a reenactment and repetition of the one offering is to denigrate the very will and purpose of the Father. The majesty, power, and absolute perfection of Christ Jesus the Lord is seen in this one satisfaction, once offered, to divine justice. The truth of the exclusive excellence of Christ's sacrifice is highlighted by the word "once." For example, the Scriptures teach, "*For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.*"<sup>21</sup> And "*so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*"<sup>22</sup> Thus, for the Pope to say, "We too can be united with him, offering to God our lives, our work, our joys and our sorrows...offering everything as a spiritual sacrifice" is arrogance of the highest order. His statement shows that there is no fear of God in his eyes. Christ Jesus alone was qualified to offer Himself. He alone had the absolutely unique qualifications as the Holy Spirit teaches, "*For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.*"<sup>23</sup> Consequently, for Francis to enact a sacrifice in what is called the Mass, in which people were also

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16 <http://www.breitbart.com/Big-Peace/2014/06/08/Islamic-Prayers-Heard-at-Vatican-For-First-Time-as-Pope-Hosts-Israeli-Palestinian-Leaders-For-Interfaith-Prayer>

17 <http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/pope-francis-homily-at-mass-in-the-upper-room>

18 Hebrews 10:12-14

19 Psalm 85:10

20 Isaiah 32:17 cf. to Romans 10:4; I Corinthians 1:30; II Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:9

21 Romans 6:10

22 Hebrews 9-27; 10:15

23 Hebrews 7:26

advised to offer themselves, is utter blasphemy! The death of the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary's cross was a singular, once for all time, redemptive act of the Lord God. Consequently, for Francis to say that "In every Eucharistic celebration Jesus offers himself for us to the Father" not only attempts to degrade the will and purpose of God but also eviscerates the divine standard for absolute holiness and righteousness in Christ as the unique, perfect, spotless Lamb of God.<sup>24</sup> The Lord's insightful words apply now to Francis and his Upper Room theatrics, "*Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.*"<sup>25</sup>

### **Neither Pope Francis nor Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew Believe the Gospel**

Since returning to the Vatican, Francis has spoken of his Roman Church as Christians "along the path to Christian unity." His exact words are,

"Dear Brothers and Sisters: My apostolic journey to the Holy Land in these days was a great grace for me and for the whole Church. It commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the meeting of Pope Paul VI and Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras, which marked a milestone along the path to Christian unity. Patriarch Bartholomaios and I prayed together as brothers before the tomb of the Risen Lord and we renewed our commitment to work for full communion between the Churches."<sup>26</sup>

In Jerusalem, Francis began his address with these words,

"In this Basilica, which all Christians regard with the deepest veneration, my pilgrimage in the company of my beloved brother in Christ, His Holiness Bartholomaios, now reaches its culmination."<sup>27</sup>

Francis's presupposition is that both he himself and the Orthodox Patriarch are Christians. This is an absolute falsehood. It is totally untrue, in both cases. In the case of the Orthodox Church, it plainly teaches a system of salvation radically different from what God's Word teaches. The major area in which Eastern Orthodoxy differs radically from the plain teaching of Holy Scripture is justification. Here are two examples of Orthodox teaching on the subject,

"Justification is not given once and for all, nor is it a guarantee of eternal salvation, but it depends on how much a man will live righteously or sinfully in the future. There exists no such thing judicially that instantly converts a sinful person into a righteous one."<sup>28</sup>

"Therefore, it is no wonder that the Orthodox doctrine of justification plays such a minor role. The most common presentation of the Orthodox teaching on religion by John of Damascus does not mention the concept of justification at all."<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> John 1:29, 36 cf. to I Peter 1:18-20

<sup>25</sup> Matthew 23:28

<sup>26</sup> [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2014/documents/papa-francesco\\_20140528\\_udienza-generale.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2014/documents/papa-francesco_20140528_udienza-generale.html)

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/francis-address-at-prayer-service-with-patriarch-bartholomew>

<sup>28</sup> What Do Orthodox Christians Believe? (Lamp Publishing of the Little Orthodoxy Library: 1996) p. 9

<sup>29</sup> Ernst Benz, *The Spirit and Life of the Eastern Church* (Svetlost Press: Sarajevo, Bosnia, 1991) p. 48

In contrast, numerous passages in Holy Scripture demonstrate that true believers, depending on justification received by faith alone in Christ alone, know they are accepted by God the Father in Christ as the beloved, precisely because of who He is and what He alone accomplished.<sup>30</sup> A couple of examples include: “*Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*”<sup>31</sup> “*And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*”<sup>32</sup> In spite of these clear words that both men ought to know and recognize as absolute truth, Francis lauded the Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew as a brother, which in some ways he may be. But by their words and the positions that they hold, each of them demonstrates that he is not in Christ.

### **Pope Thanked Mary Through Prayer for the Outcome of His Visit.**

A Roman website gave an account of Francis’s prayer to Mary in these words,

Pope Francis made a private visit to the basilica of Saint Mary Majoron Tuesday morning to thank Our Lady for the positive outcome of his apostolic visit to the Holy Land... Vatican Radio reports that Cardinal Abril y Castello, Archpriest of the Basilica, said that Pope Francis arrived at at about 11am with a bouquet of flowers for Our Lady to thank her for the good outcome of his journey and to entrust to Her the fruits of his pilgrimage.<sup>33</sup>

The Scripture teaches that as believers we exalt Jesus Christ in prayer. Thus, Mary, like all the blessed believers who have gone before us, is not to be addressed at all, let alone exalted in prayer. Prayer in its very essence is an act of worship that bows in acknowledgement of transcendent excellence. Again, this exclusive excellence is attributable only to God and claimed as His singular right to be approached in prayer, “*Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.*”<sup>34</sup> As Scripture states, “*thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*”<sup>35</sup> The Lord God in Jesus Christ alone is worthy of exaltation in prayer. Consequently, He alone justly deserves our praise, “*Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*”<sup>36</sup> All is of Him and all must be to Him.<sup>37</sup> Francis did not obey the Lord God in this important matter; rather He exalted Mary in prayer. In Scripture the question is asked, “*Should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*”<sup>38</sup> Thus, the verdict of the Lord according

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<sup>30</sup> Ephesians 1:6-7 cf. Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38

<sup>31</sup> John 5:24

<sup>32</sup> John 10:28

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/pope-visits-rome-basilica-to-thank-our-lady-for-holy-land-pilgrimage>

<sup>34</sup> Isaiah 45:21-22 cf. to Psalm 32:6, 69:13; Micah 7:7; John 3:13

<sup>35</sup> Matthew 4:10

<sup>36</sup> Revelation 4:11

<sup>37</sup> Romans 11:36

<sup>38</sup> Isaiah 8:19-20

to His written Word is true for Francis because, “*there is no light*” in him. Francis’s prayer to “Our Lady to thank her” was from the depths of spiritual darkness within him. After his trip to Israel, the Pontiff chose the falsehood of the Roman tradition of praying to Mary rather than praying to the Lord.

### **Conclusion**

The Pope’s pilgrimage to the Holy Land and its aftermath show again Francis’s astute Jesuistry. He has made it known again and again that he is not attempting to mediate *politically* between his Israeli and Palestinian visitors. Rather, the role he is purportedly attempting to play is that of spiritual mediator. Several issues come to mind. First, the Pope represents both an apostate religious system, the Roman Catholic Church, and a civil state, the Holy See. Its ruling structure is absolutely authoritarian and totalitarian. Secondly, that he invited two heads-of-state, Peres and Abbas, to make a joint visit in his private apartment was clearly a political-diplomatic act. These men are not known for their roles in their respective religions, but both are civil-political functionaries. A two-fold cover was used: first, the Orthodox patriarch Bartholomew was also invited and secondly, this gathering was to be a prayer meeting. Any country’s civil order is based in the dominant religion of its people, of which this Pope is very aware. It must be remembered that the Papacy has for centuries thought of itself as “from above” or spiritual while all others, including all heads of civil states, as “from below” or earthly. Francis fully believes this and is simply putting into practice what he credits as true about the Roman system and himself as its head. Therefore, having gone out to visit these “lesser” heads in their own countries, he has publicly invited them to his home in Rome for a prayer gathering - as would be expected of a Pope, purportedly putting the religious before all else.

This new praxis is really just an application of a global inter-faith extension of principles Rome adopted in their Vatican Council II of 1962-1965. One of the major changes formally drafted at that Council was the initiation of a program of false ecumenism. The resolve was that all other “Christian” institutional denominations and their members are now to be drawn back into full communion under Papal Rome. Before Vatican Council II, Roman Catholicism called Evangelicals heretics. From Vatican Council II onwards, they have been called “separated brethren,” and hence to be wooed, “little by little,”<sup>39</sup> back into the Roman Catholic fold. Moreover, post Vatican Council II, Catholics are being taught to identify themselves not as Catholic, which they had done previously, but rather as “Christian,” a distinct change. Thus, since Vatican Council II, Papal Rome has been working tirelessly to have itself recognized as the Christian Church. All others, especially Evangelicals, remain designated as “separated brethren,” and they may only obtain recognition as authentic Christians by returning to the communion with the Mother Church. Papal Rome is

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<sup>39</sup> Vatican Council II Document No. 32, “Decree on Ecumenism,” Sect. 4, “...little by little, as the obstacles to perfect ecclesiastical communion are overcome, all Christians will be gathered, in a common celebration of the Eucharist, into the unity of the one and only Church...This unity, we believe, subsists in the Catholic Church as something she can never lose...”

working towards the time when she will be accepted as the *ipso facto* Head of Christendom.

This policy of appropriating power by stealth over all of Christendom has a wider reference. Contemporaneously, the Papal system has other fish to land: the Muslims and the Jews. The Vatican wants to sit at the head of a world-encompassing religious-unity. An intensely subtle, but important unwarranted claim of this coveted privilege of headship has been projected to the world both with the May visit of the “peacemaker” Pope to the Middle East and the subsequent visit of Peres and Abbas to Rome on June 8, 2014. It was clever that the home of the Pope was chosen for this meeting of men from four different religions. As such, it could be said that it was a private home in which all were asked to pray for peace, not together, but at least in the same place. Each representative could pray to his own god without being in another’s consecrated space. So this dramatic exhibition of practical inter-faith peace seeking among four major religions - Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Jewish, and Muslim – under the Pope’s sponsorship, set a precedent. The Pontiff had graciously taken the initiative to host and support the spectacle. The use of mock humility, elaborate diplomatic courtesy, specious hospitality, and benign directive encouragement positioned Francis as honorary chairman of the inter-faith effort for peace. The fish indeed fell to the baited lure, hook, line, and sinker. Thus while aping Christ’s divine prerogatives as spiritual mediator over His Church, this Pope is achieving major diplomatic-political gains for the Vatican.

Francis is first and always a Jesuit, his mind having been specifically formed to think within those terms.<sup>40</sup> For nearly five hundred years, the Jesuits have led a movement to restore the Roman Catholic Church to the position it enjoyed before the Reformation of the sixteenth century. As an elite cohort of foot-soldiers absolutely loyal to the Papacy, Jesuits became tutors and teachers to the children of kings, rulers, and important families in each country. Thus, they gained access to those in positions of civil power and influence to the end that the nations that had been part of the Holy Roman Empire would again submit to Roman Catholic teachings and law.<sup>41</sup> Even in modern democracies, the Jesuits have wormed themselves into positions of influence in politics, media, and state agencies. They always act firstly, and only, in the interests of the Roman State Church. If Francis the Jesuit has become the honorary conductor of the world’s peace train, we may be sure that the Vatican will set the price of the tickets.

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<sup>40</sup> See “Key to Pope Francis’s Identity: Master of the Jesuit *Spiritual Exercises*” at: [www.bereanbeacon.org/articles/on-catholicism/master-of-the-jesuit-spiritual-exercises.html](http://www.bereanbeacon.org/articles/on-catholicism/master-of-the-jesuit-spiritual-exercises.html)

<sup>41</sup> In the Holy Roman Empire, if king or prince did not bow to papal demands, the Pope could issue an Interdict, which released the people of that nation from their oaths of allegiance to the ruler. When a country was placed under Interdict, public worship ceased, the churches were closed, the sacraments deemed necessary for salvation were no longer administered. Thus the people would rise up against the civil power, as happened in England with King John II. It is hard to think that the modern papal cabal would willingly lay aside this old but proven tactic.

However, there is only one spiritual peacemaker, Jesus Christ the Lord. The true believer looks to Christ Jesus as the one mediator, *“for there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.”*<sup>42</sup> The splendor of the Gospel is that the believer’s heart is set on Christ, the fountain of life, where he drinks more and more deeply of the rivers of pleasure that are at His right hand. Eternal life is to be found only in Christ Jesus through His perfect life and all sufficient sacrifice. *“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”*<sup>43</sup> This is the true focus, because a believer learns more and more consistently to look always to the Lord Jesus Christ alone for life. How completely different this is from the goal and destiny that Francis and Papal Rome hold out to people. Rome directs her people, and mankind in general, to look to physical sacraments and her ruling hierarchy that upholds her sacraments. The biblical Gospel does not involve looking to physical signs. Rather, believers are to follow the biblical injunction to look *“unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”*<sup>44</sup> He is the author and finisher of their faith, its beginning, and end. *“Looking to Jesus”* is to trustfully keep one’s heart and mind stayed upon Him. In Him is grace. He is the fountain of all grace and supplies all the needs of each believer. The believer’s life is drawn from Christ, and directed to Him. He is its initial principle and the final end of it. True life is that which is lived in personal, intimate communion with Christ, as the Apostle Paul so eloquently stated, *“For to me to live is Christ.”* It means that, as a person justified by the All Holy God alone, he is to walk with the Lord Jesus Christ, taking His yoke upon him and learning of Him, so that he drinks deeply from His Written Word and begins to follow what the Scripture says rather than devising his own ways. Abundance of grace far surpasses the evils of sin. Once a believing sinner accepts Christ Jesus as his only surety before the All Holy God, he finds himself not only freed from his sins, but also made to “reign in life.” *“For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.”*<sup>45</sup> Those who receive the abundant grace given by Christ are not only redeemed from the empire of death, they live and reign with Him as they are sanctified daily through His Word by the Holy Spirit, and by constant fellowship with Him. With Him also they shall forever live and reign, world without end. Through Christ Jesus, grace reigns with sovereign freedom, power, and bounty! *“Blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen.”*<sup>46</sup> ♦

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42 I Timothy 2:5  
43 II Corinthians 3:18  
44 Hebrews 12:2  
45 Romans 5:17  
46 Psalm 72:19

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