



# Synchronizing the Principles of Protestantism and Catholicism

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## Abstract:

*Christianity is found to be preferred way of living more than a religion, the entire context of Christian principles gives a brief ideas for humanity to look after his own life. Bible is a collection of books conveys the relationship between the creator and his creations. God Almighty who is addressed in many names like Yawae, Jehovah, Allah, etc. has been in consistent touch with the humanity throughout the beginning of the creation, according to the scripture and the sources the only expectation of the God from the humanity is to live well without disturbing others. Others is the sense mentions his entire creation, for this cause his instructions and suggestions to humanity continued in different formats, right from the Old Testament which was started up with Leader, Judges, Prophets, Kings, his begotten son Christ, Apostles, missionaries later, the end of the Bible leaves its followers only a Phrase its “Come and Seek & Go and proclaim which acts as a main principle of Christians in the world nowadays. Even though the Christians are split in many denominations they still show some unity in their act of conveyance. There are many major denominations in Christianity, but I preferred to choose Catholics and Protestants to describe their act of delivering the Gospel. My article eludes in synchronizing the principles of Protestants and Catholics.*

**Keywords:** Catholics, Protestants, Christians, Churches

## Introduction

Both the denominations Protestant and Catholics are believed to be originated from the early churches, they are still different in opinions but common in many, a little history is required to know about their equality in general.

## History of Catholicism

Catholic is a term derived from Greek work / Katholikos / means Universal, during the 2nd century there are some churches in the east naming them as catholic churches means universal church.

As we see generally from the scripture after the death of Jesus; Peter and Paul started their mission in finding churches from East to West, therein after the death of Peter who died and buried in Rome – Italy, he had been considered as the first Head (Pope) of Christian churches, later on the followers of his preaching continued their contribution in spreading the gospel and starting churches which were called as Early Churches in 2nd century, during that period many reprimand had occurred and the churches started dividing into many groups. It is believed that St Ignatius of Antioch was the first to mention the word Catholic means universe to refer churches approximately in A.D 110, later in the 5th century the first council was formed to create an order of service and church regulations. When Rome was bifurcated as East and West in the 4th century, the churches too were split by that time, but continued to work as a common body, but in the 11th century the reprimand struck again and divided into two kinds (1) called as Catholics the Churches loyal to the Bishop of Rome (Pope), (2) called as Ecumenical Patriarch the Churches loyal the Bishop of Constantinople

However In late 15th century twenty two (22) autonomous Churches from the east and one Church from the west had clubbed up together in cordial understanding under the Codes of Canon Law formally created in understanding. At the end of 16th century during the reign of Queen Elizabeth in England the Roman Catholic Churches started spreading over in many parts, thus at first the word Roman Catholic came into English language.

### **Principles & Practices in Catholicism**

Many rituals have come into practice of catholic churches in different centuries, especially idol worship and worshipping the prominent characters of the bible, which was acquired into practice during late 14th century. Feminism in bible is left out in many scenarios even the importance wasn't given much to it, since it's been written and edited by masculine contribution, The early churches have somehow discovered a path to project feminism involvement to prove the future world; that Christianity is common in religion vice for both men and women and doesn't support discrimination. In the act of projecting feminism, initially there been many misperceptions in who to project with high priority, whether it should be Mother Mary or Mary Magdalene, eventually Mother Mary has won the race. It is all the people who designed the protocol of Catholicism. Religion has always got its own value and merits & demerits, Many says the demerits in religion is been created by the people belong to it, so as the merits. Many practices from the catholic churches were modified according to people's life style and redefined to its own module. No Gods in the world have created the rules of living which was regulated in the churches, maybe they would've conveyed their ideas to humanity for the betterment living. The ideas what was conveyed had been set as rules by religion extremist, which actually laid path for the formation of Protestants and others.

The sacramental practices in Catholicism is good in some cases at least it makes the humanity to seek the spirituality out of the box. (i) The act of repentance, (ii) Practices of Eucharist, (iii) Prominence of fellowship are always considered to be goodwill acts, since it keeps the humanity moving towards the line of hope in their unknown future.

### **History of Protestantism**

Protestantism is a religious movement got their own set of beliefs in contradict to Catholicism, the extreme dissatisfied members of Catholic denomination whom still wanted to acquire the centre principle have formed their own movement which was led by Martin Luther during the Reformation in 16th century are known as Protestants. The name was derived to them since they left Catholicism by protesting some of their key beliefs. The origin of this movement was after the publication of The Ninety Five Theses in 1517 which were nailed at the church doors in the town of Wittenberg, by Luther himself. It rejects some of the key beliefs that found in the practices of Catholics. The rejection includes (i) Universal authority of Pope, (ii) Indulgences, (iii) Transubstantiation, and emphasizes with addition principles like (i) Universal Priesthood for believers, (ii) Justification by faith alone, (iii) Scripture alone (from Five Solae).

### **Universal authority of Pope (Papal Supremacy)**

According to the bible, after the ascension of Jesus, Peter and Paul started their mission by building churches in and around Rome, hence in general presumption, the first churches are believed to be origin at Rome, this is one of the prime reason the Catholic Churches acquired the name Rome before Catholics. No evidence was cited clearly that early churches assigned the supremacy of pope, according to the believed history, St Irenaeus from (Lyon – now as France) part of Roman Empire who lived in 2<sup>nd</sup> century 202 A.D had believed that Linus had been appointed to take care of the churches in Rome by Peter and Paul, and considered him as a Bishop of Churches next to Peter and Paul, which was accepted by many and thus resulted to accept St Irenaeus as a Bishop. The word Pope is derived from a Greek word called Pappa means Father later referred to Bishop of Rome. During the 6<sup>th</sup> century Constantinople

was the capital of Rome reigned by Byzantine emperors who had acquired the name Pope for the head of Churches, which caused the beginning of papal supremacy with full fledge and continued till date. This doctrine is rejected abruptly by Martin Luther in his Theses 5, and 6.

5. The pope neither desires nor is able to remit any penalties except those imposed by his own authority or that of the canons.
6. The pope cannot remit any guilt, except by declaring and showing that it has been remitted by God; or, to be sure, by remitting guilt in cases reserved to his judgment. If his right to grant remission in these cases were disregarded, the guilt would certainly remain unforgiving.

The above mentioned lines clearly suggest that Luther is reluctant to accept the papal supremacy which was supported by many of his followers late led to split among Catholics.

### Rejection of Indulgences

There been many doctrines in the practices of Catholic churches one among them is Indulgence means confession to the priest in the churches for one's sin, which was declined by Luther in his Theses 21, 22, 45, 46, 47, 48.

21. Thus those indulgence preachers are in error who says that a man is absolved from every penalty and saved by papal indulgences.
22. As a matter of fact, the pope remits to souls in purgatory no penalty which, according to canon law, they should have paid in this life.

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45. Christians are to be taught that he who sees a needy man and passes him by, yet gives his money for indulgences, does not buy papal indulgences but God's wrath.

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46. Christians are to be taught that, unless they have more than they need, they must reserve enough for their family needs and by no means squander it on indulgences.
47. Christians are to be taught that they buying of indulgences is a matter of free choice, not commanded.
48. Christians are to be taught that the pope, in granting indulgences, needs and thus desires their devout prayer more than their money.

According to the Catholics the Indulgences implied in their practice is for many reasons, it is said, the Indulgences lays path for repentance, and if one confesses their sins to the priest in God's presence will certainly create a guilt within them which may lead them to the act of modesty and humbleness. Thou it is not a permanent forgiveness of mortal sins many Catholics followed it blindly in the sense of religious ritual, Luther claimed it as meaningless to proceed Indulgences, especially when everyone was given their rights to communicate to God without the help of a mediator.

### Protest against Transubstantiation

According to Catholics Transubstantiation means Christ presence in Eucharist (Holy Communion) is one of their prime beliefs followed since the origin of early churches, with reference to bible Christ has urged his disciples and his followers to regulate the practice of Supper till his second coming (Luke 22:7-38) in his last supper, it doctrines the bread and wine used in the sacramental of Eucharist is been changed into his body and blood, incense of blessing and praying for it. This act was heavily criticized during the protestant reformation, and the early Protestants have refused to accept this dogma of transubstantiation, but Luther claims, the Holy Communion and the doctrine of Transubstantiation must be considered as Christ presence in Eucharist and not as a conversion of bread and wine into body and blood, he further states it can be considered as sacramental union rather presuming as transubstantiation.

### **The Doctrine of Universal Priesthood**

Universal Priesthood is the primary principle of Protestants; it means priesthood of all believers in Christianity, according to Luther that every believer does acquire the priesthood by default the moment they get baptized and through acceptance of God, nor they need to undergo any process of ordination or any confirmation through the process of anointment. In Catholicism the doctrine of priesthood is considered to be extreme rigid and draconian, those who have set into it, preserved themselves indifferent to the society, treaty of respect should be given to them in different in comparing to normal believers, this was the main clause for Luther to emphasize universal priesthood. In through to the scripture reference of I Peter 2: 9 "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light". Luther has claimed priesthood for all believers.

### **The Principle of Bible alone (Sola Scriptura)**

The word Sola Scriptura represents Scripture alone, one of the major pillars of protestant reformation, which describes the Bible alone contains all the knowledge that is necessary for salvation and holiness. The books from New Testament which was written on and after the life of Jesus is believed to be written before 110 A.D. John's book of revelations is presumed to be the last book written in 100 A.D. which compiled in the bible. Pope Damasus I in 382 A.D is the first to start compiling the canon of bible. He commissioned St Jerome to start a council in 382 called council of Rome to translate the handwritten books about the religion and the histories to a single book in Latin called as Latin vulgate bible which was accepted and followed in Catholic Churches since then. St Peter one of the disciples of Jesus is considered as the first fisherman and crowned as supreme papacy (Pope I), after his death his successors has taken up the role to maintain the leadership for Early Churches which existed now in the name of Catholic churches, St Peter the first Pope had written couple of books which was compiled in the Bible, and the writing continues from his successor to the early churches even after Peter's death and its continuing till now by the papal community. Catholic churches have even followed the writings of the successors of St Peter and considered those writings as a part of scripture, which was terribly criticized and reluctant by the early Protestants community initiated by Martin Luther in his Ninety five theses called Sola Scriptura (Scripture alone) which describes only the writings of the contemporaries of Jesus can be accepted as Holy Scripture none of the writings which was written apart from the contemporaries of Jesus can be accepted as Scripture. But for as the Catholics are concerned even they give the same prominence to the Scripture which was compiled after 382 A.D and but still the sequels are also considered as Holy reference which was objectionable by the Protestants.

### **The Principle of Justification by faith alone (Sola fide)**

The doctrine of Justification by faith alone (sola fide) is the main element that distinguishes the Protestants from the Catholics. Ever since the beginning of humanity, the two processes (i) Salvation and (ii) Justification seems to be continuous act of God which he grants on regular interval to his people, justification is an act that comes only from God what he declares the sinners as innocent for their sins. To acquire this different theories are present in the Holy Bible some sample constraints are (i) on fulfilling God's law, (ii) by obeying God's command, (iii) by regretting and confessing one's sins, (iv) by doing good deeds in the sight of God. These elements seems to be the major source of justification according to the followers of Christ, which among that, the Protestant concept is slightly different with those, they do accept all the principles but modified it with little sequences, that meant as Sola fide (Faith alone). Justification is a process that happens to humanity through their faith what they have on their Almighty. In James 2:14 it says "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?" This word clearly express that Faith alone is not enough if he doesn't have good works with him,. In another view of Christianity that Justification is a gift or God to his people that he had given by shedding the blood of his own son. With reference to the below biblical verses, Rom 5:9, Rom 3:24, Titus 3:7, Rom 3:28, 5:1, Isaiah 53:12, 1 Peter 2:24, Eph 2:8-9 the bible states that justification is not by works, but we are saved by his grace alone by our faith alone and by

Christ alone. But the Roman Catholic doctrine denies that justification is not done through faith alone. According to the council of Trent in the view of canons of Justification the following principles were embarked and followed, which was terribly protested by Martin Luther and his followers. The canons are:

- "If any one saith, that by faith alone the impious is justified; in such wise as to mean, that nothing else is required to co-operate in order to the obtaining the grace of Justification, and that it is not in any way necessary, that he be prepared and disposed by the movement of his own will; let him be anathema" (Council of Trent, Canons on Justification, Canon 9).
- "If any one saith, that man is truly absolved from his sins and justified, because he assuredly believed himself absolved and justified; or, that no one is truly justified but he who believes himself justified; and that, by this faith alone, absolution and justification are effected; let him be anathema." (Canon 14).

Anathema, according to Catholic theology means excommunication, "the exclusion of a sinner from the society of the faithful." The Greek word anathema is also translated as "accursed", which was in the culture of Catholic churches after the council of Trent, which is the actual source for the term sola fide (faith alone)

### **The Principle of Grace alone (sola gratia)**

The protestant principle sometimes seems to be heavy for the Catholics to accept with, thou we declare that the beliefs of Catholics alone are being protested by the Protestants, the principles which were set by Lutheran are objectionable by Catholic churches. Sola gratia which was the Latin translation for Grace Alone thus says "Man is governed and saved by the grace of God alone not by his goodness or one's holiness. In a very short span of life man was in required of many things, apart from the basic necessities like food, water and cloth man demands for more during his life cycle. The nature of every mankind is wicked and become sinners by default, thou he does anything or stays doing nothing; wickedness gets into the life of man. At the end of his life span it is a mukthi for the mankind to reach the eternal life, it doesn't matter how good we live or how bad we live, we still look for betterment even at the end, which means after one's death man looks to take up the eternal life which promises honey and happiness. The term sola fide states that man is been justified or saved only by grace of God alone – Ephesians 2:8-9 says that the grace of God comes to one by their faith not by their goodness. In this scenario a question might rise in one's mind then what about the people those who hold their goodness from the beginning till the end, they may get annoyance, if any kind of thing was done by those it means they've deliberately failed to hold their goodness, since goodness was born out of love, which will make them to bear and understand God's love. The love loving people will always seek for God's grace upon everyone, they will never remain egotistic. In the letter of Paul to the Romans, he had written a lot about God's grace upon people to which the Protestants tend to follow and they complain that the Roman Catholic Churches believe more in the Canons then the Bible which they have designed for themselves according to their style and interest. It's not the Catholics completely deny the grace of God to his people, still they tend to accept it, but to the binding principle of Grace alone they can abide with.

### **The 3<sup>rd</sup> canon states**

"CANON III.-If any one saith, that without the convenient inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and without his help, man can believe, hope, love, or be penitent as he ought, so as that the grace of Justification may be bestowed upon him; let him be anathema. "  
(Anathema meaning "outside the Church")

The 3<sup>rd</sup> canon states that along with God's grace the inspiration of Holy spirit is required to ensure that one is been graced by god, without the influential of Holy spirit grace alone (sola gratia) is invalid and God's concern will not merely fall on them.

**Conclusion**

The Bible is common for the Catholics and the Protestants, but the understanding of the scripture remains different from each other, in my study I found 80% of neither Catholics and 80% of nor Protestants really completely aware of their basis principles, even they don't realize why and in what way they are differentiated, but all they firmly believe in Jesus and they are the followers of Christ, opinion differs from person to person so as one's faith. This article concludes that faith is a gift of God, hence only God alone (sola Goode) can confirm about which faith is right.

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