

## 26. THE LIE BELIEVED (1)

### VENERATION OF SAINTS AND WORSHIPPING MARY.

"In the world, you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

The Lord Jesus said this to His disciples, and that Word is true. Many of God's people have already suffered severe persecutions and terrible tribulations. The enemies of the gospel have drenched the earth with the blood of hundreds of thousands of martyrs. It was a dark and fearful time when Satan raged, trying to exterminate God's people. Then those believers constantly cast tearful eyes to heaven. But no matter how dark those days were, they were *not* the worst times! In those times of great distress, God's people lived close to the Lord while daily facing death. They depended even more on the Lord in those troubled times. But when the Lord finally heard their many cries and gave them the freedom and peace to serve Him openly as they so urgently desired, they soon forgot their mighty Helper and Deliverer, allowing quarrelling and conflict to tear the congregations apart.

Various false doctrines gradually crept into the church. We have already discussed some of these. Think of Arius and Pelagius. That was serious, but the Lord had always raised godly men who opposed those false teachers. Athanasius became Arius's opponent, and for years, Augustine contended with Pelagius. The truth was constantly victorious in those battles. But it became worse when the people began to believe the *lie* and slowly sank back into superstition! It worsened when the church of Pentecost became a false church, and little was left of the pure doctrine. That did not happen in a couple of years; it took ages. But alas, it *did* happen.

You may ask: "Which errors were they?"

We will discuss some of those errors. Not all by any means, for that would become too complicated. Learned men have written many

books about that. I will try to clarify things with the following example.

#### IT IS GOOD TO REMEMBER THE DEAD...

When the father or mother in a family dies, it is a heavy blow to such a family. Then there is much sorrow, and the family comes together and mourns. After the funeral, everyone returns home, and life returns to 'normal'. In time, the deep wound that death inflicted gradually heals. Yet days come when the old wound may tear open again, times when the family painfully misses their dear dead one. The next time it would have been their birthday, there is often a heightened level of sorrow because it would have been a festive day if mum or dad were still alive. It is also a painful memorial day when the father or mother died exactly one year ago. Then that is discussed at home because dad or mum died the year before. Then memories are brought up, and you think about the one who passed away.

Do you still have your father and mother? If so, be thankful for that.

Is it sinful and wrong to remember our departed loved ones? Is that not allowed? Of course it is! It would be strange if we didn't! That is proof that love exists in such a family.

This example helps us to understand the following. When a respected and beloved minister



Remember the dead...<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/>

serving in a congregation dies, there is sorrow in that congregation. Those people will bury that minister with honour. But time goes on; life must - and does - go on too. Time wears away the deep impression caused by such a death. But there *are* those days of remembrance. That, too, is normal. It testifies to the respect and love we had for the departed one.

That's how it was at the beginning of the Christian churches.

When the Jewish leaders stoned Stephen, his friends buried him with sorrow and respect.

When Polycarp's persecutors burned him at the stake, some Christians from Smyrna carefully gathered and buried the ashes.

When the lions tore Ignatius to pieces in Rome, a few friends collected his scattered bones from the arena and buried them in Antioch.

During those dark days, persecutors cruelly killed thousands of martyrs in many ways. But their remains were almost always buried with respect. Just think of the catacombs in Rome. How many thousands of God's people buried their loved ones there? It is obvious that they also had their special days of remembrance. That is normal.

That's how it should have *stayed*!

### ...BUT WE MAY NOT VENERATE THEM

It was excellent not to forget those martyrs too soon. It was praiseworthy that their memory was honoured. But again, that's how it should have stayed! Sadly, that did not happen. It did *not* remain like that.



Stoning of Stephen. <https://www.movements.net/>

Where those martyrs had died, they began to build shrines, small chapels, or a church. The people came together there to sing psalms.

Sometimes the minister would preach a memorial sermon.

Sometimes Holy Communion was celebrated there. That was not wrong, for don't we read in the Apostles Creed: 'I believe the communion of saints?'

But gradually, they went even further. Those days of remembrance were not only observed in the town where the bishop had lived and preached, but they also began to honour such a bishop in other places and *proclaimed the dead person to be a saint!*

Eventually, this spread across the entire church. They worshipped Mary, the mother of the Lord Jesus. They venerated angels, prophets, apostles, bishops, well-known martyrs, etc. A few centuries later, this worshipping of saints became much too serious. It became idolatry, and that went too far.

About the year 400, the church leaders taught that the deceased saints had become *omnipresent* (everywhere present) and *omniscient* (all-knowing) when they died. They taught that the prayers of God's people on earth were delivered to God by the saints. So the people began to venerate the deceased saints and pray to them. For instance, if someone was seriously ill, they no longer went on their knees before God to pray to the Almighty for help, but it became: "Oh, Saint Peter, help me!" or "Saint Polycarp, pray for me."

That's how those terrible errors slowly crept into God's Church. The people did not need the Lord Jesus anymore. They no longer prayed to the triune God but called on the saints, and those saints had to convey the message to God. How wrong and foolish!

They made up specific saints' days. On those saints' days, they prayed to and fasted for those saints. People came from far and near to pray to that saint at his grave. They held solemn processions. Such a parade (the trip to the tomb



*They made up specific saints'  
days...<https://www.christianity.com/>*

of a saint) was called a *pilgrimage*. Those deplorable errors began to dominate in the church. That was a pity; worse, it was wicked! Because it is *wrong*! We may not pray to dead people! They don't hear us anyway! God had commanded Israel that people who inquired of or prayed to the dead had to die! Deut. 18:11.

In Ecclesiastes 9:5&6 we read: 'For the living know that they will die: but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also, their love, hatred, and envy have now perished; nevermore will they have a share in anything done under the sun.'

One more quote from God's Word: check Isaiah 63:16. There we read:  
'... though Abraham was ignorant of us, and Israel does not acknowledge us ...'

With 'Israel', the Bible here means Jacob. God's Word clearly teaches us that the dead no longer know what occurs here on earth. It is not true that the dead children of God are present everywhere. It is not true that at their death, they become omniscient. Only God is omnipresent and omniscient. When God's people die, their souls go to heaven, and their bodies go to the grave till the last day. Then, in the great day of judgment, they will arise. Then, with body *and* soul, they will praise God forever. Those people who preached those wicked errors told big lies. Alas, the people believed those lies. And they still believe them!

The Roman Catholic Church venerates the saints to this very day. How many holy days doesn't the Roman Catholic Church have? They are all feast days remembering dead saints. This false doctrine

is one of the gross errors that has slowly crept into the Christian Church.

Sure, faithful preachers like Augustine warned against this, but they did not listen. So sad!

## **MARY WORSHIP**

Before I end this chapter, I must call your attention to one more thing. Of all the saints the Roman Catholic Church venerated, Mary, the Lord's mother, is the most prominent. We may safely say that Mary is revered like God. Mary worship has also slowly made its appearance in the Christian Church. They have invented various Mary feasts. I will not mention all the Mary feasts, only a few.

The Roman Catholic Church celebrates Mary's birthday as a yearly feast day. It's called the feast of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary.

They also invented a feast of the Annunciation. That was when the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary to tell her that she would become the mother of the Lord Jesus. Mary worship became worse all the time. They began to teach that Mary was born without sin. What foolishness!

All these things directly oppose God's Word. God's Word clearly states what Mary herself says:

"My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God *my* Saviour."

Mary was not born without sin. She was a sinful person, just like everyone else. She was allowed to see her Saviour, Who would also obtain eternal salvation through faith. That's why she sings: "My Saviour". If Mary had had no sin, she would not have needed a Saviour! The entire Mary worship theology is lies and deceit. Unfortunately, the people believed those lies. And those lies are still believed in the Roman Catholic Church now! They still think Mary is divine and pray to her as if she is God.

On the 1st of November 1950, the Roman Catholic Church added a new lie. That day, the Pope solemnly declared that Mary had ascended to heaven. Every Roman Catholic man and woman, boy and girl, had to believe that because the Pope said so. According to the Roman Catholic Church,



whoever does not believe that he is cursed and will never go to heaven.

Every year, on the 15th of August, the Roman Catholic Church celebrates the so-called ascension of the Virgin Mary. The clergy wickedly deceive these poor people because you cannot find any of these 'doctrines' in the Bible, God's infallible Word! You cannot find anything about Mary ascending to heaven in God's Word.

True, only one woman was the mother of the Lord Jesus, and she is Mary from the house and lineage of David. We may not despise the mother of the Lord but must speak of her with great respect.

I have often heard mocking songs about Mary, the Lord's mother, made by schoolchildren. They sing those songs to ridicule the Roman Catholics, but we are not allowed to mock them. That is wrong and sinful. We may not ridicule Mary either, for she was a child of God, and we may not mock God's people. Instead, bend your knees and ask the Lord if it may please Him to open the eyes of those poor, deceived and misled people.

*And Mary said: "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour. Luke 1:47*

Eventually, Mary's body will also arise from the grave on Judgment Day. With body and soul, she will then praise the Lord Jesus, *her* Saviour, who has also purchased a perfect place for *her* with His precious blood. He also suffered the wrath of God and entered death for *her*.

So, never join in with those abominable mockeries! But to revere and worship her like the Roman Catholics is from the devil!

### QUESTIONS

1. What error did the Church embrace regarding the remembrance of dead saints?
2. How was this error practised? List three ways.
3. What divine attributes were ascribed to these saints? Explain.
4. How did the saints supposedly serve as mediators?
5. How does this error undermine the work of the Lord Jesus?
6. List the errors concerning Mary, the mother of Jesus.
7. What does the Feast of Annunciation celebrate?
8. How do we know that Mary needed Jesus as her Saviour, the same as every other descendant of Adam?
9. How are we to regard Mary?

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. List one text to show that Jesus is the only Mediator for His people.



Veneration of Mary <https://impact.history.ox.ac.uk/>