

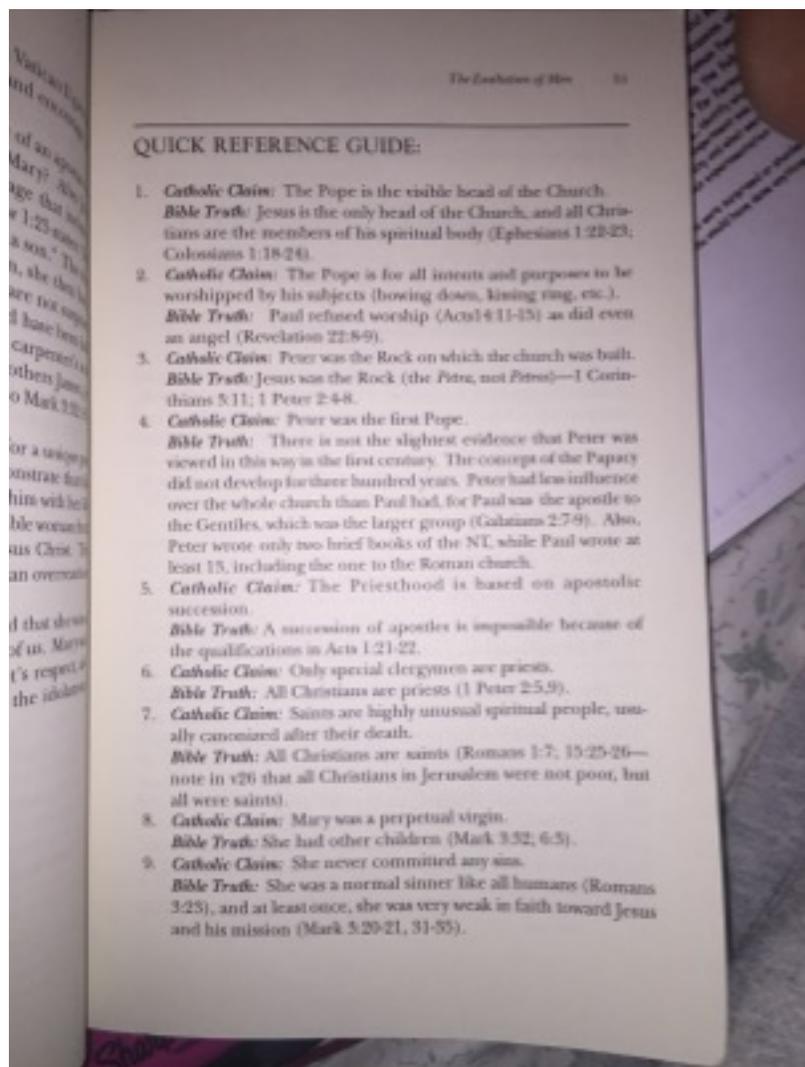
The other day a young woman who has decided to live the life of a Catholic and follow the teachings of the teaching of the Church was accosted by her family who are very anti-Catholic. They have her a list of questions from a standard "Quick Reference Guide" which you can see on this page. She asked for help in responding.

My good friend Gary Michuta ([www.HandsOnApologetics.com](http://www.HandsOnApologetics.com)) took the time to answer the questions in a brief and pithy manner.

**GARY STARTS:** Here are a few quick responses to the "Quick Reference Guide" in your pictures. Some are stock objections while others are so weak (and wrong) that I'm surprised to find it in print.

### "1. Catholic Claim: The Pope is the visible head of the Church

Bible truth: Jesus is the only head of the church, and all Christians are members of his spiritual body (Eph. 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18-24)."



**RESPONSE:** Before I begin, the author's claim of the "Bible truth" really means "What truth HE BELIEVES the Bible teaches." I'm sure that many

of his "Bible truths" contradict, not only what Catholics see as "Bible truth" but also self-identified "Bible Christians."

Of course, Christ is the head of the Church. No problem there. It's equally biblical that Christ appointed Peter to have a primacy among His Apostles making him the "visible" head of His Church (Matthew 16:18-19, Luke 22:28-32, John 21:15-17).

It's also interesting that he speaks of Christ's Church, not as a "body" (which is visible and structured) but a "spiritual body," which Scripture NEVER calls the Church. The only place I found in Scripture that speaks of a "spiritual body" is 1 Cor. 15:44, where Paul is talking about our resurrected or glorified bodies. So his "Bible truth" is incorrect. Christ's Church is a body, not a "spiritual" body - that's unbiblical. He must say this, however, because if Christ's Church is a body then it must be visible, identifiable, and have a set structure and if that is true Christ's Church can only be the Catholic Church. To avoid this uncomfortable conclusion, Protestants turn Christ's body into a spirit, an invisible collection of like-minded people or the elect.

**"2. The Pope is for all intents and purposes to be worshipped by his subjects (bowing down, kissing ring, etc).**

Bible truth: Paul refused worship (Acts 4:11-15) as did even an angel (Revelation 22:8-9)."

**RESPONSE**: Notice that the author couldn't cite any Catholic document that states that the Pope is to be worshipped. That's because it's idolatry and Catholics, of course, do not worship anyone or anything other than God. The best the author can do is insinuate that we do by saying "for all intents and purposes" we worship the Pope and then equate "worship" with certain actions like bowing down and kissing ring.

Let's take one of the author's examples: "bowing down." Bowing down can be a sign of honor: It can also be an act of worship. Scripture forbids "bowing down *in worship*" to anyone but the Lord (Exodus 20:5, 23:24, Deuteronomy 5:9). The key is the qualifier "in worship." But it never condemns bowing as a way of showing honor to a person. Indeed, Scripture has several instances of people bowing down to other people without the slightest suggestion of worship. For example, Joseph's brothers in a dream bow down to him (Genesis 37:6-7).

His brothers interpret this action, not as worshipping him as a god, but as honoring their brother as their king (Genesis 38:8). Isaac blessed his son Jacob with the prophecy: "Let peoples serve you, and nations pay you homage; Be master of your brothers, and may your mother's sons bow down to you" (Genesis 27:29). Surely, Isaac didn't mean that he would be worshipped! The same is true for Jacob's blessing of Judah where the sons of his father "will bow down" to him (Genesis 49:8). Ornan bowed down to King David in 1 Chronicles 21:21, not to worship him but to pay his respects to the King. Obviously, the Bible doesn't do what the "Bible truth" says (i.e., making "bowing down" an act exclusively used for worship).

Since you have a lot of questions, I'll pass over the kissing of a ring. Let's just say the author sees these things and he assumes the worse. No Catholic is ever commanded to worship the Pope (unless you're using worship in a very archaic sense that means honor).

**"3 Catholic Claim: Peter was the Rock on which the church was built.**

Bible truth: Jesus was the Rock (the Petra, not Petros) - 1 Corinthians 3:11; 1 Peter 2:4-8."

**RESPONSE**: It's interesting how this objection is put. First, he labels it a Catholic claim, yet it is nothing more than what Jesus says in Matthew 16:18, "And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build

my church..." Second, he surprisingly doesn't give this reference for the Catholic claim (probably because he wants people to think that this is a Catholic thing rather than a biblical thing. Third, the "Bible truth" doesn't contradict the "Catholic Claim."

The author didn't say, "Jesus was the Rock on which Jesus would Church build his Church." That would contradict the "Catholic Claim." Rather, he just states that Jesus is the Rock. No one doubts that the metaphor of "Rock" was applied to Jesus in different contexts. But nowhere does Scripture say that Jesus is the "Rock" upon which Jesus would build His Church. The phrasing alone sounds redundant. Fourth, the metaphor of "Rock" is not exclusively given to Christ, but it is also applied to Peter both in the context of Christ's words about building His Church and elsewhere (because the name "Peter" (Greek, *Petros*) means "rock."

You may or may not be familiar with this, but the reason why the author notes the Greek words *petra* and *Petros* is because Matthew 16:18 uses two words. Jesus said to Simon, you will be called Peter (*Petros*) and upon this rock (*Petra*) I will build my Church." A classic (and incorrect) Protestant interpretation of these words argues that Jesus was using two words to show that He was going to build His Church upon something other than Peter, although they disagree on exactly what (usually its Jesus Himself or faith in Jesus).

The fact of the matter is that most modern Protestant scholars have abandoned this position as untenable. I can give about ten reasons why this argument is untenable, but here's one. Modern Greek (Protestant) Dictionaries note that there is little difference between the two words, in fact that are sometimes used interchangeably in Greek poetry. What makes them different is that they have different gender endings. To give Simon (a male) a feminine name (*Petra*) would be incorrect, if not insulting.

Therefore, Jesus gave him the masculine form of rock (Petros). Moreover, Jesus spoke Aramaic and Aramaic has only one word for rock (Kepa). Therefore, Jesus could only have said, "You are Kepa and upon this Kepa I will build my Church," making Peter the rock upon which He will build his future Church. We know that Jesus did give him this Aramaic name because John 1:42 recounts Jesus' words as, "You are Simon the son of John; you will be called Kephas" (which is translated Peter)." "Kephas" is the Aramaic name "Kepa" put into Greek letters. Therefore, Simon Peter is the rock upon which Jesus built his Church.

### **"Catholic Claim: Peter was the first Pope.**

Bible Truth: There is not the lightest evidence that Peter was viewed in this way in the first century. The concept of the Papacy did not develop for three hundred years. Peter had less influence over the whole church than Paul had, for Paul was the apostles to the Gentiles, which was the larger group (Galatians 2:7-9). Also Peter wrote only two brief books of the NT, while Paul wrote at least 13, including the one to the Roman church."

**RESPONSE**: Oh boy. Where do I start? There are several assertions here. Let's go through each one.

1) "There is not the lightest evidence that Peter was viewed in this way in the first century." There are dozens of texts that can be cited against this claim. Any standard Catholic apologetics work will give you plenty of examples. I already gave three. Only Peter had his name changed and said to be the foundation of Jesus' future Church (Matthew 16:18). Only Peter received the "keys of the kingdom" (Matthew 16:19) and to personally receive the power to "bind" and "loose" (Matthew 16:19) Only Peter received Christ's personally prayer that his faith would not fail and that he should confirm the rest of the Apostles in faith (Luke 22:23).

Only Peter received the command of our Lord to "feed" and "tend" or "shepherd" Christ's flock (i.e., the Church) (John 21). Only Peter heads the lists of the twelve Apostles (Matthew 10:4; Mark 3:19; Luke 6:19). Peter was the head of the Church. We can also add the testimony of the early Christian writers (known as the Church fathers) who attest to Peter holding a primacy among the Apostles and Peter being the first bishop of Roman (i.e., the first Pope). Here is a short list of quotations (<http://www.catholic.com/tracts/peters-primacy>). I think this suffices to show that his statement about the absence of the "slightest" evidence isn't even slightly right.

2) "The concept of the Papacy did not develop for three hundred years." What does he mean by "concept"? What constitutes "the concept of the Papacy"? The fact of the matter is that from earliest times the bishop of Rome, successor to St. Peter, exercised authority over churches outside of Rome. A great example of that would be Pope St. Clement's Letter to the Corinthians. It was written near the turn of the first century and it shows that the bishop of Rome was already exercising jurisdiction outside of his dioceses.

3) "Peter had less influence over the whole church than Paul had, for Paul was the apostles to the Gentiles, which was the larger group (Galatians 2:7-9)."

First, this is purely an assumption. Who knows what the numbers were. I imagine at the outset there were more Jewish Christians than gentile converts, but eventually that changed. Second, this proves nothing. Someone could make the same claim today. A missionary priest may have more direct influence over more people than the Pope. But that doesn't mean the Pope is not the Pope. Paul and Barnabas (like today's missionary priests) were commissioned and sent out. In Paul's case, it was Peter and John (Galatians 2:9). They may have more direct influence in missionary churches than Peter (or any other Apostle for

that matter), but even here Paul's actions were on behalf of Christ's Church, headed by Peter.

We could also add to this that Paul, after his conversion, spent fifteen days in discussions with Peter (i.e., to confirm what he knew and to learn more about Christ)(Galatians 1:18) and when others contended against Paul's teaching, Peter was the one who settled the doctrinal dispute (Acts 15:7-11). It was this decision, by Peter, that affirmed Paul's mission and message to the gentiles. Peter, not Paul, was head of the Church.

**4) "Also Peter wrote only two brief books of the NT, while Paul wrote at least 13, including the one to the Roman church."**

**RESPONSE:** By that same line of argument, Jesus must not have any authority because He didn't write a single book! This is silly.

**"Catholic claim: The Priesthood is based on apostolic succession.**

Bible Truth: A succession of apostles is impossible because the qualifications in Acts 1:21-22."

**RESPONSE:** This is really confused. The priesthood is based on Christ's priesthood, our "high Priest" (Hebrews 3:1). The priesthood is transmitted through baptism (for the common priesthood) and through the laying on of hands for the ministerial priesthood. The authority to administer this Sacrament comes from bishops who received such authority through apostolic succession.

The objector is confused between what constitutes a bishop and an Apostle. The twelve Apostles were eyewitnesses of the Resurrection and the life and teachings of Christ. The bishops were ordained by the Apostles (or others who were ordained by the Apostles) to continue the Apostle's ministry, not as eyewitnesses to Christ, but to pass on all that

Christ commanded them (Matthew 28:19-20), to confer the Sacraments, and to pastor Christ's flock.

**"6. Catholic Claim: Only special clergymen are priests.**

Bible truth: All Christians are priests (1 Peter 2:6, 9)."

**RESPONSE:** The "Catholic Claim" that "[o]nly special clergymen are priests" is just flat out wrong. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says, CCC **1591** "The whole Church is a priestly people. Through Baptism all the faithful share in the priesthood of Christ. This participation is called the "common priesthood of the faithful." Based on this common priesthood and ordered to its service, there exists another participation in the mission of Christ: the ministry conferred by the sacrament of Holy Orders, where the task is to serve in the name and in the person of Christ the Head in the midst of the community."

This is simply a straw man.

**"Catholic Claim: Saints are highly unusual spiritual people, usually canonized after their death.**

Bible Truth: All Christians are saints (Romans 1:7; 15:25-26 - note in v. 26 that all Christians in Jerusalem were not poor, but all were saints)."

**RESPONSE:** This is another straw man. Everyone who is Baptized has been made holy or sanctified. The word "saint" refers to those who are sanctified. Catholics believe that too. However, not all saints are equal. There are people who are extraordinarily close to God and are given incredible graces (such as the Apostles). Therefore, the Church holds up these peoples as role models and as intercessors for us. Nothing contradictory here.

**"8. Catholic Claim: Mary was a perpetual virgin.**

Bible Truth: She had other children (Mark 3:32; 6:3)."

**RESPONSE**: It's funny how the "Bible Truth" fails to notice that Scripture nowhere states that these "brothers" and "sisters" are Mary's children. They are always referred to as "the brothers of the Lord" or just brothers. It also fails to recognize several pointers in the NT that suggest that Jesus was Mary's only child.

For example, Jesus gave Mary into the care of John (John 19:26-27), however, Jesus should have given her to the care of his nearest kin, his supposed brothers. But he didn't. Why? Because these "brothers" were either "step-brothers" through Joseph or more distant relatives (i.e., cousins, etc.). The words "brothers" and "sisters" had a much wider meaning and use in the culture and time of Jesus than now.

### **"9. Catholic Claim: She never committed any sins.**

Bible Truth: She was a normal sinner like all humans (Romans 3:23), and at least once, she was very weak in faith towards Jesus and his mission (Mark 3:20-21, 31-33)."

**RESPONSE**: OK. The "Bible Truth" doesn't seem to connect all the biblical dots. First, Romans 3:23 does not say "Mary was a normal sinner like all humans." Romans 3:23 says, "all have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God." The "Bible truth" assumes that Romans 3:23 is speaking about Original Sin, but it isn't. It's talking about actual sin (i.e., "have sinned" not "are in sin") But is it true that every single human has committed sin?. What about aborted babies? Did they commit sin? How about stillborn babies? Or children that die in infancy or at a very young age? How can they "*have sinned*" and fallen short of the glory of God?"

What about the mentally impaired or the insane? They may have committed sin, but they're not guilty of it. So Romans 3:23 is stating a general rule, not universally true statement. It admits exceptions for special cases and Mary is a special case. She is the New Eve and the Mother of God. In my book, "Making Sense of Mary" I go into detail and how unique Mary is in God's perfect plan of redemption. The worst this author can say about Our Lord's mother is that she might have been "weak in faith," but even here it is not a slam dunk. First, being weak in faith is necessarily a sin.

Second, the text is a bit ambiguous about Mary being included among the "relatives" in this passage. It's possible, but it seems to me that she appeared after this episode had occurred.

In summary, it seems the "Bible truth" really isn't very biblical. Moreover, he seems to play games with his wording to make it appear that both statements are in contradiction when in fact they are not. I've only given you a few quick responses. There is lot more than can be said on each point. If you'd like me to focus on certain points in more detail, please let me know.

### **"The Apocrypha"**

**RESPONSE:** I assume you'd like comments on the underlined phrases. So here I go:

"The Catholic Church accepts 12 of the 15 books of the Apocrypha."

The "Apocrypha" is a Protestant category. It includes the Deuterocanon (Sirach, Wisdom, Judith, Tobit, Baruch, 1st and 2nd Maccabees, two chapters of Daniel and the Greek portions of Esther). It also included books that were not part of the canon (proto- or duetero-) 1st and 2nd Esdras and others. It's all confusing since they took the two chapters of Daniel and separated them into two books as well as the last chapter of

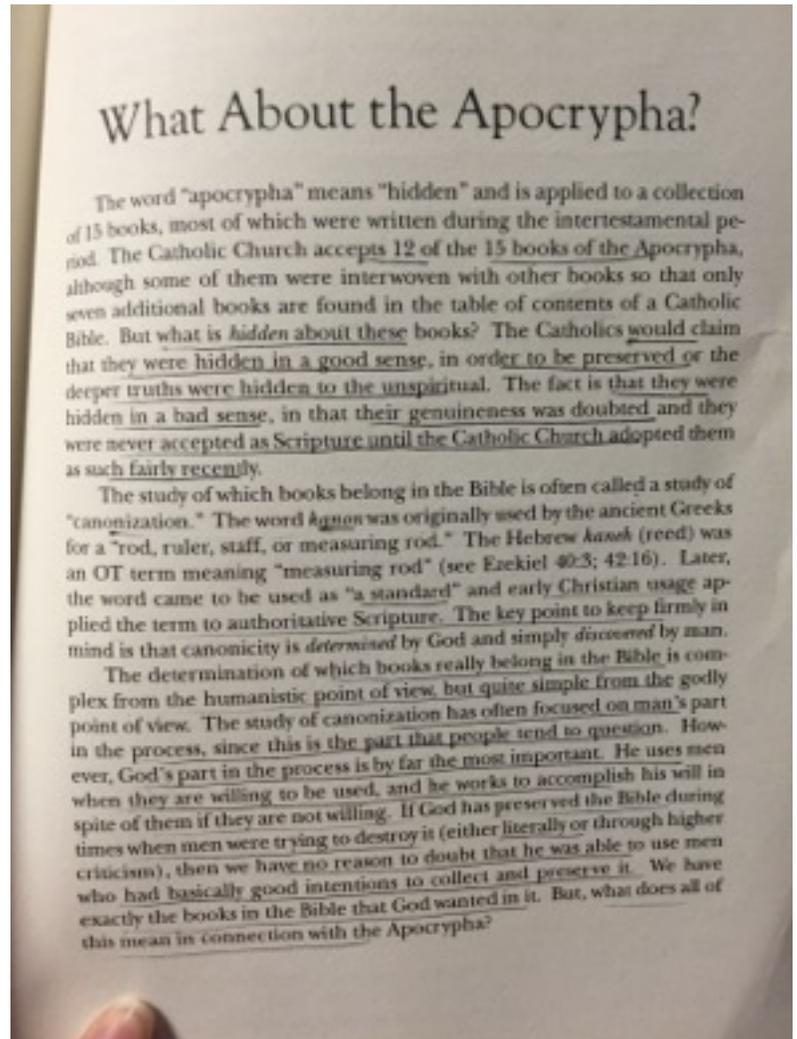
Baruch. The number 15 seems to be taken from the first editions of the King James Bible that included the "Apocrypha" (Deuterocanon + additional books).

"But what is hidden about these books?...their genuineness is doubted."

It's certainly possible that some Catholics, knowing that these books are part of the Scripture may have stretched the word "Apocrypha" like the author says. But it's certainly not correct.

The "apocrypha" is hidden in the sense that they were not Scripture and therefore not permitted to be read in public (i.e., in the Church's liturgy as Scripture). HOWEVER (and this is a big HOWEVER) St. Jerome in the 4th century was the first to call the Deuterocanon "apocrypha." He was corrected by the Pope and councils who affirmed that they are Scripture. The Deuterocanon, before Jerome, was always separated FROM the apocrypha since it was read as sacred Scripture in the Church and used to confirm doctrine.

"...they were never accepted as Scripture until the Catholic Church adopted them as such fairly recently."



In my book, "The Case for the Deuterocanon" I list 235 instances in the early Church (within the first 500 years of the Church) where the Deuterocanon is cited explicitly as sacred Scripture and even more instances where they are used to confirm doctrine. Needless to say, this statement is counter-factual.

I'm a bit puzzled by his characterization of "recently." I'm sure he's referring to the Council of Trent, but that was hundreds of years ago. I can't imagine that the 1500s would be "recent" unless he is thinking in terms of centuries. However, the councils of Carthage and Hippo in the 4th century affirm the Deuterocanon and their decrees were confirmed by Pope Innocent I. I can't imagine that's what he is referring to as "recent," either.

"The key point to keep in mind is that canonicity... and simply discovered by man."

Objectively, this is true. God inspires a certain number of books and those books make up the canon. I'm a little uncomfortable with "discovered" though. If he means that each individual needs to construct a new canon based on what he "discovered" to be inspired, I think that's wrong. The canon is something remembered in the Church, not discovered. This is especially true with the OT canon. The NT canon is a bit different.

"The determination of which books really belong in the Bible..."

You only copied the one page, so I can't really comment on his argument. It seems to me that he's already violating what he said in the second paragraph. We don't need to determine the canon. It has been determined by God. However, I guarantee in the following pages he's going to argue for some sort of criteria by which we can determine which books are canonical. It seems like he is going to by to argue on

the basis of their preservation. Here is how we know the Deuterocanon is Scripture.

Jesus Christ, being God, knew which books were inspired and which ones were not. He must certainly would have shared this knowledge with his Apostles and it would have been their duty to hand on this true canon of Scripture to the Church. Therefore, whatever canon they left is the true canon. It now becomes a matter of history as to what comprised that original deposit of Faith in regards to the canon. In my book, *The Case for the Deuterocanon*, I outline over a dozen lines of argument to show that the Deuterocanon canon was part of that original deposit of the Apostles.

In my other book, *Why Catholic Bibles Are Bigger*, I trace the history of the Deuterocanon AND its use and rejection within Protestantism. The fact of the matter is that the Deuterocanon taught doctrine that was at odds with Protestant theology. Since these books were known to be included in the Bible, they couldn't reject them outright. Instead, they labeled them as "Apocrypha," gathered them together out of the Old Testament and placed them in an Appendix between the Old and New Testament.

As time went on, and Protestants began to forget the Deuterocanon's former place in Scripture, they moved the appendix to the back of the Bible, and then, despite protests, removed it entirely. Modern Protestant Bibles without these books, therefore, are missing books that were in their forbearers' Bible.

All Protestant arguments against the Deuterocanon are made *a posteriori* (that is after the fact) in order to justify their removal. My research has determined that it was doctrine, not preservation or any other criteria, that led to the Protestant Reformers demoting (then eventually removing) the Deuterocanon.