

# **Bible Study Center Seminar**

**Topic: “Is the modern practice of ‘PRAYING FOR THE DEAD’  
from God or from Men?”**

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This is a 3-part seminar dealing with the topic of ACCOUNTABILITY. While it will focus upon the popular religious teaching of Praying for the Dead, it will more accurately be a study of God’s FAIRNESS in dealing with mankind and what he teaches us about accountability, death, and the Judgment Day! The goal is to examine the Bible’s teaching on these matters and see if it agrees with the popular teaching on the topic.

Each session of the seminar is designed to span 2 hours, from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM and will break down into an initial 10-minute introduction/review, followed by a 40-minute lecture, with a 20 minute snack/visitation break, followed by another 40-50 minute lecture.

The flow of topics covered in the seminar are as follows;

**Session 1A = Introduction: Laying a FOUNDATION**

**Session 1B = Introduction: Defining the matter...**

**Session 2A = Looking closely at Maccabees and how it affects  
the outcome of our study.**

**Session 2B = Looking more closely at the passages used in  
support of the teachings!**

**Session 3A = Accountability and “Judgment”!**

**Session 3B = Summary and “Open Forum”**

**IA. Introduction**

“RELIGION” today is a very confusing situation. While almost everyone around us claims to believe in God and in Christ as the Son of God, the problems of confusion and religious division are so easy to see. Where there should be unity in faith and practice, there are differences and debate! **Because of the slow and steady efforts of religious leaders over the centuries to ADD TO, TAKE AWAY FROM, and/or CHANGE the original teachings of Christianity that were delivered to mankind by Jesus and his first disciples, we live in a world where we must be very careful to make certain that the teachings we accept and follow are the same original ones that came to the people in the time of original Christianity!** This is necessary because even during that time, there were people who tried to alter the original teachings of Christianity and in response, the Christian leaders unanimously condemned such behavior, **ALWAYS** challenging the believers to stay committed to the original teachings they had received at the beginning of their faith. (See: **Galatians 1:6-9, 2 John 1:9-11; Revelation 22:18-19; and 1 John 2:24**)

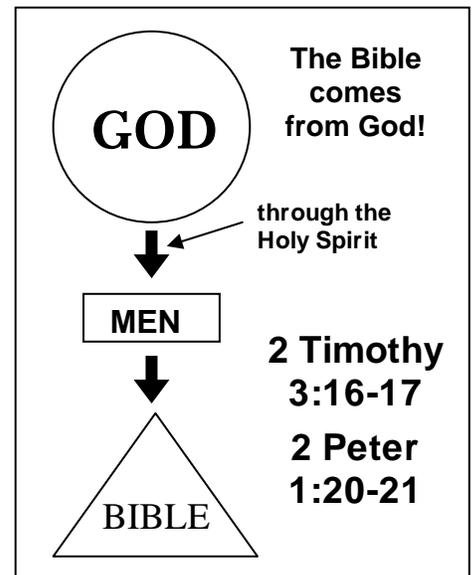
- Christianity is **NOT** a democracy!
- The teachings of Christianity **WILL NOT** change with time.
- Christianity will **NOT** EVOLVE!

All of these are true because Christianity is based upon a message from God that was revealed in its entirety and once it was completed, it was fixed and unchangeable. God is its author, Christ and the Apostles were the messengers, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the result is what WE call the Bible. (**2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21**)

It is an undisputed fact that differences in teachings between religious groups exist in today because people, whether or not they are sincere, use God’s word outside of its

**original intended CONTEXT.** While this is sad and creates much arguing and confusion, the situation is not hopeless. All we really have to do to repair things is to get everyone to stop and apply to religion and the Bible one of the most basic guiding principles that ALL people in ALL nations hold dear, which is the belief that what a person says (a message) belongs to that person and that, out of respect for that person, no one should ever misrepresent that person’s message in any way.

**When someone speaks to us, our main responsibility is NOT necessarily to agree with what that person says, but rather to UNDERSTAND that message, as it was intended by the speaker. Then, if we should decide to tell that message to other people we must do so in a way that preserves the INTENDED meaning of the one who originated that message.** Anything less than that would be disrespectful and unethical! To show how important this is simply consider the following. “How do **YOU** feel when you are the victim of misrepresentation?” It is no different with God and HIS message! (**2 Timothy 2:14-15**) We must study to **UNDERSTAND** God’s message **BECAUSE IT BELONGS TO HIM!**



Why is this important and how does it relate to our topic of “**PRAYING FOR THE DEAD**”? We live in a world that has over 38,000<sup>1</sup> religious groups, each claiming Jesus as their Lord, each claiming to follow the Bible, and each claiming to be the right church, and yet no two of these groups teach the same things! **PRAYING FOR THE DEAD** is a popular and controversial teaching in religion today and many religious leaders teach their followers that **PRAYING FOR THE DEAD** affects a person’s ability to have a relationship with God!

Jesus once spoke to people about “being right” and “being wrong”. In **Matthew 7:21-23**, he told a story about some people who, at first, seemed to be very religious and proud to call Jesus “Lord!” As the story continues, we are amazed to hear Jesus condemn these seemingly “good” and “active” people! His words “I never knew you” and “you who work lawlessness” stood in contrast to their own beliefs and personal convictions! **They BELIEVED in Jesus! They WORKED for Jesus! They GAVE CREDIT to Jesus! How could Jesus disown them?** The key to understanding the whole story is simple. It is NOT enough for a person to do religious things for God and then trust in our feelings to show us what is TRUE and what is FALSE!

The point of Jesus’ story is that each one of us must “do the will of my Father who is in the heavens” in order to be pleasing to the Father! According to what Jesus said in another place, **THAT WILL** is to be found in the teachings that he brought and delivered to mankind. In **John 12:44-50**, he clearly showed everyone that the teachings he gave will be the standard of measurement for the Judgment, because those teachings were not his own, but originated with the Father. Jesus was just one of the many spokespersons that God used throughout time to deliver a message to the people of the world. Because of this, we **ALL** must study those teachings and follow them carefully!

If the “words I have spoken will be the judge on the last day”, then does this not mean that all TRUE TEACHINGS of Christianity must be found within the teachings of Christ? Was this NOT the point of John in **2 John 1:9-11**? The answer must be “YES!” to BOTH questions! This is the reason why each person must learn to study the Bible! How can we place our trust in any other person to study for us? Can we simply trust religious leaders who tell us that “**PRAYING FOR THE DEAD**” is acceptable to GOD? What if they are wrong? You alone must study and decide these matters for yourself, because **YOU and I will each stand alone** before the Lord and give an account for our beliefs! (**2 Corinthians 5:10**)

The focus of this study will be on two areas of concern. First, we will examine the modern teaching of **PRAYING FOR THE DEAD**, which is a popular teaching of “religion” today. We will seek to define it and look into its early history, its evolution, and examine key passages that are said to support it. (Along the way, we will also look at the topics of “**PURGATORY**” and “**WHICH BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?**” as they relate to our topic.)

This journey will eventually lead us to our second area of study, which is going to be what the Bible ACTUALLY teaches about the topic of **JUDGMENT!** All that we ask of you is that you put aside what you **have been told** about these matters, or, **what you think or feel** about the topic, and look carefully at **what the Scripture really says.**

With this in mind, let us begin our journey into this topic!

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<sup>1</sup> This number is up from 20,000 in the late 1980’s!

## **IB. Defining the matter: What IS “Praying for the Dead”?**

### **A. Initial FACTS to consider**

- **The teaching of “praying for the dead” is not SPECIFICALLY found inside the New Testament.**
  - **No single verse in the New Testament describes or commands the practice in the way it is believed or practiced in religion today.**
  - **The ONLY “scripture” that specifically mentions the practice of praying for the dead is found in a book that the Jews, who were responsible for collecting and guarding the Old Testament, do not accept as being an authentic book of the Bible.**
- **No early Christian leader ever wrote SPECIFICALLY about any such practice or mentioned it as a teaching of Christ or of the Apostles in the early church.**
  - **The earliest record of any formal church teaching on this topic is during the time of Augustine 5th century – which is more than 400 years after Jesus taught!**
  - **The teaching was not officially defined until the Council of Florence in 1439 (1,400 years after Jesus taught) and later in the Council of Trent in 1563 (1,530 years after Christ taught).**
  - **The Eastern, or Greek, branch<sup>2</sup> of the Catholic Church does NOT now nor has it ever believed that prayers for the dead help souls go to heaven!**

### **B. Looking at what the Catholic Church says about the matter:<sup>3</sup>**

- **Regarding PRAYING FOR THE DEAD, the Catholic Church says the following.**
  - **“Catholic teaching regarding prayers for the dead is bound up inseparably with the doctrine of purgatory and the more general doctrine of the communion of the saints, which is an article of the Apostle's Creed.”**
  - **The Council of Florence in 1439 said: “If the truly penitent die in the love of God, before they have made satisfaction by worthy fruits of penance for their sins of commission and omission, their souls are purified by**

<sup>2</sup> The Greek Orthodox Church resulted from a split in the Catholic Church in the year 1054 AD, which means that there was NO common universally accepted teaching about praying for the dead to get out of purgatory at that time! Their prayers are “expressions of love”. ( See: [http://www.greekorthodox.org.au/general/livinganorthodoxlife/deathmourningandeternallife/trisagion.](http://www.greekorthodox.org.au/general/livinganorthodoxlife/deathmourningandeternallife/trisagion/))

<sup>3</sup> The main source of information about Catholic Church teaching is the **Catholic Encyclopedia**, Online Edition, at <http://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/>.

***purgatorial pains after death; and that for relief from these pains they are benefitted by the suffrages of the faithful in this life, that is, by Masses, prayers, and almsgiving, and by the other offices of piety usually performed by the faithful for one another according to the practice of the Church."***

- ***The Council of Trent (Session 25 – December 1563), defines "that purgatory exists, and that the souls detained therein are helped by the suffrages of the faithful, but especially by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar."***
- ***Regarding PURGATORY, the Catholic Church says<sup>4</sup> the following.***
  - ***"Purgatory (Latin, "purgare", to make clean, to purify) in accordance with Catholic teaching is a place or condition of temporal punishment for those who, departing this life in God's grace, are, not entirely free from venial faults, or have not fully paid the satisfaction due to their transgressions."***
  - ***"The faith of the Church concerning purgatory is clearly expressed in the Decree of Union drawn up by the Council of Florence in 1493."***
  - ***The Council of Trent (Session 25 – December 1563) defined: "Whereas the Catholic Church, instructed by the Holy Ghost, has from the Sacred Scriptures and the ancient tradition of the Fathers taught in Councils and very recently in this Ecumenical synod (Sess. VI, cap. XXX; Sess. XXII cap.ii, iii) that there is a purgatory, and that the souls therein are helped by the suffrages of the faithful, but principally by the acceptable Sacrifice of the Altar; the Holy Synod enjoins on the Bishops that they diligently endeavor to have the sound doctrine of the Fathers in Councils regarding purgatory everywhere taught and preached, held and believed by the faithful."***
  - ***"The Catholic doctrine of purgatory supposes the fact that some die with smaller faults for which there was no true repentance, and also the fact that the temporal penalty due to sin is at times not wholly paid in this life. The proofs for the Catholic position, both in Scripture and in Tradition, are bound up also with the practice of praying for the dead. For why pray for the dead, if there be no belief in the power of prayer to afford solace to those who as yet are excluded from the sight of God?"***

<sup>4</sup> See also: ***Catechism of the Catholic Church***, located on the Vatican website at <http://www.vatican.va/archive/catechism/>, sections 1030-1032.

- **The Eastern, or Greek, branch<sup>5</sup> of the Catholic Church does not now nor has it EVER believed in or accepted the teaching of PURGATORY!**
- **The idea of PURGATORY is based upon the theory of TWO Judgments!**
  - ✓ **The Catechism of the Catholic Church<sup>6</sup>, teaches that when we die, we undergo what is called the FIRST or “particular judgment”, which happens IMMEDIATELY after death and determines our eternal destination.**
  - ✓ **IF it is determined that we are to go to heaven, but have not yet paid the necessary “penance” for sins we made while alive, we proceed to PURGATORY and stay there until the payment is complete.**
  - ✓ **At the end of time, when Jesus returns, there will come the SECOND or “general judgment” and in this general judgment all our sins will be publicly revealed.**
- **PURGATORY teaches the idea that forgiveness does NOT mean “release” from punishment!**
  - ✓ **Even though a sin might be “forgiven”, the teaching says that a “temporal punishment” is given by God for each sin committed for the purpose of PURIFICATION.**
  - ✓ **The length and severity of this punishment/purification varies with each kind of sin.**
  - ✓ **The Catholic Church teaches that while we may die with our “mortal sins”<sup>7</sup> forgiven, there can still be many impurities in us, specifically “venial sins” and the temporal punishment due to sins already forgiven.**
  - ✓ **This temporal punishment will be carried out in PURGATORY unless the sinner pays for it while still alive through pious acts of penance.**
- **PURGATORY IS NOT a place where all souls go to in order to be “punished temporarily” before going to heaven.**
  - ✓ **Only people whose souls are “saved” go to purgatory! Those who are not saved go to Hell!**
  - ✓ **Saved people who have already paid their debt of “temporal punishment” while they are alive do not suffer in purgatory.**
  - ✓ **People who are judged and going to Hell will not get a “second chance” in purgatory.**

<sup>5</sup> Please remember that the Greek Orthodox Church split from the Catholic Church in the year 1054 AD, which means that there was NO common universally accepted teaching about “purgatory” at that time!

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* Sections 1021 and 1022.

<sup>7</sup> No passage in the Bible teaches that certain sins are “MORTAL” and others “VENIAL”, but rather that ALL sin is the same in the eyes of God!

- **BOTH the teaching of “praying for the dead” and that of “purgatory” have EVOLVED over the centuries!**
  - **2<sup>nd</sup> Century: Things started with the early tomb inscriptions.**
    - ✓ **“Rest in Peace!”**
      - **Does the existence of tomb inscriptions prove the existence of a place they knew as “purgatory”? Is Purgatory ever mentioned?**
      - **Did those people write those things as prayers to “release” their dead from “purgatory”?**
  - **2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> Centuries: Certain early “Christian” writers mentioned references to praying for those who had died.**
    - ✓ **The truthfulness of these writings cannot be verified and there were many forged writings<sup>8</sup> that were made at later times to give “early” support for LATER church teachings.**
    - ✓ **In the writings that DO mention praying for people who died, there is NO SPECIFIC REASON given.**
    - ✓ **No writing that mentions this kind of prayer connects such a prayer to any debt of forgiveness that is owed by the dead person.**
    - ✓ **No writing of that period ever states specifically that there is a place of “temporary punishment” or “purification” after death.**
    - ✓ **It is interesting to note that some of the authors quoted by the Catholic Church in support of purgatory or prayer for the dead also taught things that the Catholic Church cannot accept!<sup>9</sup>**
  - **5th Century: Augustine of Hippo seems to be the first to specifically “define” temporary punishment as a teaching!**
    - ✓ **Famous religious leader who defined many “popular” teachings of Catholicism.<sup>10</sup>**
    - ✓ **On this topic, he said, “temporary punishments are suffered by some in this life only, by others after death, by others both now and then; but all of them before that last and strictest judgment”<sup>11</sup>.**
      - **Tradition states that his mother requested that after her death he pray for her soul.**

<sup>8</sup> See article on False Decretals in **Catholic Encyclopedia**, Online Edition.

<sup>9</sup> Tertullian (ca. 160-220 AD), who is often quoted as believing in prayer for the dead also believed that a widow is bound to her husband for eternity and if she remarries she becomes an adulteress! (See his work entitled “**On Monogamy**”) This is in direct contradiction to **Romans 7:1-3**. POINT: If he gave false teaching regarding marriage, should we trust him regarding what he said about prayer for the dead?

<sup>10</sup> One example of his influence is the teaching of Original Sin, where he said that unbaptized babies who die would go to hell. While his view was initially accepted, it was later rejected in favor of the view of Thomas Aquinas!

<sup>11</sup> **The City of God**, 21:13.

- **11<sup>th</sup> Century: The Great Schism (1054)**
  - ✓ **This divided Eastern and Western Catholic Churches.**
    - **Eastern (Greek) church has never believed in Purgatory**
    - **Western (Roman) church came to believe in Purgatory**
    - **There was NO UNIVERSAL accepted teaching on these topics in the Catholic Church before the split.**
- **15<sup>th</sup> century: The Roman Council of Florence (1439)**
  - ✓ **Gave preliminary definitions for BOTH PURGATORY and PRAYER FOR THE DEAD**
- **16<sup>th</sup> century: The Roman Council of Trent (1563)**
  - ✓ **This gathering took what was started at Florence and more fully defined the modern ideas of purgatory and prayer for the dead that exist today!**

*This is very important!*

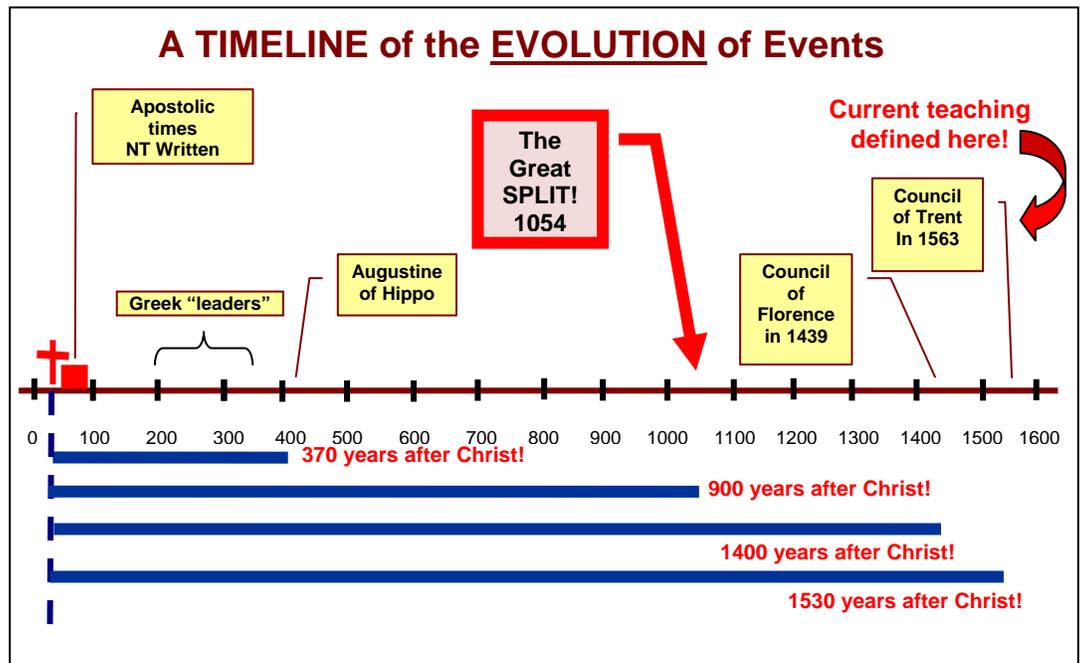


Diagram 2

**Do Bible truths evolve or change with time?**

**Since "original sin" and "purgatory" and "prayer for the dead" involve things that all people since the time of Adam and Eve would suffer from then should we not find these topics defined by God and taught since the beginning of the Old Testament?**

## **IIA. Looking closely at 1 & 2 Maccabees**

### **A. Which books BELONG in the Bible?**

- **The Bible helps us understand what makes a writing become “scripture”!**
  - **“All scripture comes FROM God!”**
    - ✓ **2 Timothy 3:16-17**
    - ✓ **2 Peter 1:20-21**
    - ✓ **There *MUST* be the guidance of the Holy Spirit.**
    - ✓ **The message must be “prophecy” from God.**
    - ✓ **The writer must be working as “an instrument”.**
- **There is a challenge for us TODAY!**
  - **The farther away from the Bible times we live the harder it is for us to determine if a book belongs inside the list of official books.**
    - ✓ **People who lived closer to the Bible times were closer to the events.**
    - ✓ **We live in a time where anyone can present a book and CLAIM it to be authentic, even if it is a fake.**
    - ✓ **Technology can only go so far in helping solve the problem.**
  - **We must accept the work of those early Christians who struggled with this question.**
- **Fortunately, these matters were decided long before we were born.**

### **B. Why are there “Protestant” and “Catholic” Bibles?**

- **My CANON is bigger than yours!**
  - **In religious writings, the books that are found in the Bible are part of a list that is sometimes called a CANON.**
    - ✓ **This word comes from ancient Greek and meant a “ruler” like one used by a carpenter to measure something.**
    - ✓ **It was used in religious discussions to represent the lists of accepted books, and even lists of what were considered to be the basic teachings of faith.**
  - **If a book is determined to be included in the list it is said to be CANONICAL, or, accepted to be included in the CANON!**
  - **A book that is rejected is said to be NON-CANONICAL.**

- **An argument over a SECOND canon?**
  - **If we compare the two KINDS of Bibles (Catholic and Protestant) we find that there is no difference in the CANON for the New Testament.**
    - ✓ **BOTH kinds of Bibles have the same number of books. (27)**
    - ✓ **The words of text found in the New Testament of each KIND of Bible are the same.**
  - **The DIFFERENCES in the two KINDS of Bibles are found in the Old Testament.**
    - ✓ **The PROTESTANT Old Testament has 39 books.**
    - ✓ **The CATHOLIC Old Testament has 46 books.<sup>12</sup>**
      - **That makes for a difference of SEVEN (7) books!**
    - ✓ **These seven are often referred to as DEUTEROCANONICAL BOOKS!**
      - **This word is a combination of two Greek words.**
      - **DEUTERO – means SECOND**
      - **DEUTEROCANONICAL – means SECOND CANON.**
    - ✓ **These DEUTEROCANONICAL BOOKS are also often referred to as THE APOCRYPHA!**
      - **This is a Greek word that means “hidden from”.**
      - **This word is used to indicate the belief that the books were originally HIDDEN from view.**
  - **The Catholics accept the deuterocanonical books as being included in the Bible and the non-Catholics (including the Jews) do not!**
    - ✓ **THIS is the reason why there is a difference between the TWO KINDS of Bibles in the world today! (“Catholic” = 73 and “Protestant” = 66)**
    - ✓ **The official CANON of the Catholic Bible of TODAY was FIXED in the Council of Trent, in Session 4, on April 8, 1546! (1,456 years after the time of the New Testament.)**
    - ✓ **Jerome, who translated the Latin Vulgate, DID NOT accept the books as being part of the CANON!<sup>13</sup>**
- **What do the JEWS have to say about the matter?**
  - **The Old Testament was given by God to the JEWS.**
    - ✓ **It was their message.**
    - ✓ **Their PROPHETS received it and wrote it down.**
    - ✓ **THEY gathered and guarded the CANON for hundreds of years BEFORE even Christ came to the world.**

<sup>12</sup> The names of the “deuterocanonical” books are Judith, Tobit, 1 & 2 Maccabees, Baruch, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus (or Sirach), plus there is some additional material added to several of the other canonical books. **Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent**, Tan Books and Publishers, 1978, p. 18.

<sup>13</sup> See article on “The Canon” in the **Catholic Encyclopedia**, Online Edition.

- **The JEWS do NOT accept the Deuterocanonical books as being part of the CANON of the Old Testament.**
- **The ONLY list the Jews have ever approved is equal to the 39 books of the "Protestant" Bible.**
- **The basic reason why the Jews do not accept these books is that they COULD NOT have come from God because they were written during a time in which there were NO PROPHETS in Israel.**
  - ✓ **During the time of the Old Testament, God spoke through designated people, usually called PROPHETS (spokespersons).**
  - ✓ **Prophets were guided by the Holy Spirit and that is why their messages are so important.**
  - ✓ **The writings of a prophet SHOULD be included in the CANON - of legitimate "scripture" - because they would be additional portions of God's message!**
  - ✓ **Writings that DO NOT have the guidance of the Holy Spirit are simply ordinary writings of ordinary people, and should NOT be included in the CANON!**

#### **C. A CASE IN POINT: The Books of 1 & 2 Maccabees**

- **The Background**
  - **These books were written around 175 BC and during a time between the last prophet of the Old Testament time, Malachi, and the beginning of the New Testament prophets, John the Baptizer.**
- **The books themselves CLEARLY testify that God's special guidance was not present during the time in which they were written.**
  - **It was a time when there were NO prophets in Israel.**
    - ✓ **1 Maccabees 4:44-46**
      - **After defeating Lysias, the Jews reclaimed the temple which had been destroyed. Not knowing what they should do, they chose to lay up the stones "until a prophet should come" to instruct them.**
      - **From this statement we can gather that there were NO PROPHETS in Israel at this time!**
    - ✓ **1 Maccabees 9:24-27**
      - **This passage shows us that there had not been any prophets around for some time!**
      - **If there were no "prophets" then there could be no instruction (inspired instruction) from God.**
      - **The leaders were doing what THEY thought was best for the people.**

- ✓ 1 Maccabees 14:41
  - Shows that people *VOTED* Simon as their priest and leader, "UNTIL a prophet" should come.
- The writer does not claim to be a prophet.
  - The writer believed that he was writing a simple **NARRATIVE** or **HISTORY**.
    - ✓ 2 Maccabees 2:30-32
      - Here the author claims to be merely a historian and not an inspired prophet.
    - ✓ 2 Maccabees 15:37-39
      - He excuses himself referring to his work as a "narration".
      - He then goes on to say that it should be pardoned if **ANY ERRORS** are detected.

**There were NO PROPHETS during the time of MACCABEES, the writer DID NOT CLAIM to be writing for God, **THEREFORE**, these two books are NOT messages from God and SHOULD NOT be included in the **CANON!****

- So, why is this so important to “praying for the dead”?
  - 2 Maccabees 12:38-45
    - ✓ The Jews lost a battle and “idols” were discovered on the bodies of those killed.
    - ✓ **THEIR LEADER**, Judas, offered sacrifices and prayers so that their sin might be forgiven.
    - ✓ It is stated **BY THE WRITER** that it is **GOOD** to pray for the souls of the dead.

**NOTE: These people were not told to do these things by GOD through a prophet, but rather by their leader!**

- This is THE “scripture” used by the Catholic Church to support the teaching about prayers for the dead!
  - ✓ If this book **IS** “scripture” then the teaching is true!
  - ✓ If it **IS NOT** “scripture” then the teaching is false!
- Since 2 **MACCABEES** was not accepted by the Jews as **CANONICAL**, and since the internal evidence of the book itself **DOES NOT** support the idea that it is “scripture” then it cannot **BE** “scripture”.
  - ✓ If 2 Maccabees is not part of the Bible then how can the teaching of “praying for the dead”, which is based almost completely upon the passage taken from this book, be from God?

## **IIB. Looking more closely at the passages Catholics use in support of the teaching<sup>14</sup>**

### **A. OLD Testament passages**

- **2 Maccabees 12:38-45**
  - **By their admission<sup>15</sup>, this is the ONLY specific “clear passage” that specifically refers to the practice!**
  - **We have shown that the books of Maccabees were not messages from God and DO NOT BELONG in the Bible!**
  - **This passage is NOT “scripture” and therefore should not be used to support ANY teaching as coming from God.**

### **B. NEW Testament passages**

- **Matthew 12:31-32**
  - **It is claimed that Jesus speaking about forgiveness “in the age to come” means that there is forgiveness “after death” and if there is forgiveness AFTER DEATH then there must be a purgatory, and, prayers and actions on behalf of our dead relatives will help them!**
  - **The problem is that the Catholic teaching about PURGATORY states very clearly that “forgiveness” for the sin must be RECEIVED BEFORE DEATH!<sup>16</sup>**
    - ✓ **Purgatory is for those who die “in the grace of God”**
    - ✓ **Sins are NOT forgiven in Purgatory.**
    - ✓ **The unpaid debt of “temporal punishment” for sins ALREADY FORGIVEN is what is supposedly paid!**
- **Luke 12:57-59**
  - **It is claimed that Jesus speaking about “not being released from prison until you have paid every copper” means that there is the possibility of being in Purgatory and getting out later, after paying for all that is owed.**
  - **What is the teaching here?**
  - **If Jesus is speaking about Purgatory, why does he not mention it?**
  - **How far can we go in applying it?**
  - **Is there any other place where Jesus speaks PLAINLY and DIRECT about the possibility of a person going to a temporary place of “prison” before being allowed to go into the Kingdom?**

<sup>14</sup> Passages in this section are taken from article on “Prayers for the Dead” in *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Online Edition.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., Section on “Arguments from Scripture”, first sentences of paragraphs 1 and 3.

<sup>16</sup> Review **Section IB** of this material.

- **1 Corinthians 3:14-15**
  - *It is claimed that Paul is speaking about the purifying fires of Purgatory!*
  - *Go back to verse 10 and read the context.*
  - *Is THIS passage speaking about sin and forgiveness in the future, after death?*
  - *THIS passage is speaking about a person's work they DO FOR GOD – helping spread the Kingdom through their life and actions.*
    - ✓ *It is MISSION work!*
    - ✓ *This work is NOT completely dependent upon the character of the worker, but is also dependent upon the character of the people who become Christians.*
    - ✓ *IF THEY do not stay faithful then they will not go to heaven (the work will be burned up) but the one working among them will survive!*
  
- **1 Corinthians 15:29**
  - *It is not clear WHY Catholics use this passage because they admit that “baptizing on behalf of the dead” it is NOT a valid teaching of Christianity.*
  - *However, it is claimed that since Paul speaks about a practice involving a dead person benefiting from an action done by a living one, then that PROVES that praying for the dead is good!*
  - *Looking at the context of 1 Corinthians 15, is Paul speaking here about a person being able to change their status AFTER they die?*
  - *If he is speaking about Purgatory then why does he not mention it?*
  
- **2 Timothy 1:16-18; 4:19**
  - *It is claimed that Onesephorous, the helper of Paul, is DEAD, and that Paul utters a “prayer” for him.*
  - *There is NO evidence that he is in fact dead!*
  - *When Paul makes the statement, he is expressing a wish for mercy for his friend “on the Day”, which is the Day of Judgment.*
  - *Paul is not praying that the soul of his friend might be released from Purgatory!*

**Conclusion:**

- The teachings of “Praying for the Dead” and “Purgatory” are “teachings of men” that evolved over the centuries!
- Neither teaching was taught by any “prophet”, “apostle”, “teacher”, nor by Jesus himself!
- IF there were such a place and teaching, we would read about it CLEARLY in BOTH the Old and New Testaments!
- It is, therefore, useless to pray for the souls of people who are dead because there is no such place as purgatory taught in the Bible.

### **IIIA. Accountability and Judgment!**

- A. The Bible teaches that there is a JUDGMENT! – Hebrews 9:27-28; Romans 14:10-12; 2 Corinthians 5:10**
- B. The Bible tells us that EACH PERSON is accountable for his or her own actions done while the person IS ALIVE!**
- **Matthew 12:36 – every idle word EACH PERSON SAID.**
  - **2 Corinthians 5:10 – THINGS WE DID while alive (in the body).**
  - **1 Peter 1:17-21- according to EACH PERSON'S WORKS.**
  - **1 Peter 4:3-5 – EACH will give an account.**
  - **Revelation 20:12-13 – the dead to be judged ACCORDING TO WHAT THEY HAD DONE and was recorded in books!**
- C. The Bible tells us that God has fixed a certain DAY when the Judgment will happen!**
- **Acts 17:30-31- letting JESUS judge will be FAIR!**
  - **John 5:22 – Jesus and NOT the Father will judge!**
  - **Matthew 25:31-46 – Jesus WILL DIVIDE the group into two!**
  - **2 Thessalonians 1:3-10 – he will punish those who disobey!**
- D. The JUDGE himself told us that he will judge us using the teachings HE (and the Apostles) gave! - John 12:44-50**
- E. The Bible tells us that this DAY will come at any time, and that even Jesus does not know when that time will be!**
- **Matthew 24:36-39 – Only the FATHER knows when!**
  - **Mark 13:32-33 – Only the FATHER knows!**
  - **1 Thessalonians 5:1-3 – It will be like a “thief in the night”.**
  - **2 Peter 3:1-14 – It will be like a “thief”.**
- F. The Bible tells us that on the DAY, there will be a resurrection of the dead and Judgment!**
- **John 5:28-29 – ALL THE DEAD WILL RISE UP, either to life, for those who have done good, or, to punishment, for those who have done bad!**
  - **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 – when Jesus returns he will come down and the DEAD will rise up from the grave.**
  - **1 Corinthians 15:51-57 – the dead will be raised and the living will be “changed”!**
- G. The Bible does NOT tell us specifically what happens BETWEEN THE TIME we die and the time Jesus will come back and the Day of Judgment will happen.**
- **Ecclesiastes 12:6-7 – the BODY decays back to dust and the SOUL returns to God, from where it came!**

- **Luke 16:19-31 – “The Rich Man and Lazarus”**
  - *Is this a real event, or a story?*
  - *How much of this is to be taken literally?*
  - *Is this same idea is taught anywhere else in scripture?*
  - *What is the POINT Jesus is making with this story?*
  - *How does this point SUMMARIZE our seminar topic?*

### **IIIB. SEMINAR SUMMARY:**

#### **A. The Bible is the only source of religious authority and teaching.**

- *The Bible message came from and belongs to God!*
- *We must be careful to study and teach it IN CONTEXT.*
- *It is complete and ALL that is taught and practiced in Christianity MUST be found in the Bible.*
- *The message of God does NOT EVOLVE, and the teachings to be followed today, or at any time in the future, must be the same as the ones found recorded in the time of the Apostles!*
- *No person or group of people (such as church leaders) has the authority to add or take away from God’s message!*

#### **B. The teachings of ‘Purgatory’ and ‘Praying for the Dead’ wrongly suggest that people still have some “penalty” to pay for AFTER receiving forgiveness, and, IF they do not pay all of this penalty while alive then they will have to pay for it in PURGATORY after they die!**

- *NO BIBLE PASSAGE teaches that when a person is forgiven, he or she still has some PENALTY they owe!*
- *NO BIBLE PASSAGE teaches that there is a place where people go after they die to pay this penalty!*
- *The Bible passages they quote are taken out of their original context and forced to mean what they want them to mean!*

#### **C. The teachings of ‘Purgatory’ and ‘Praying for the Dead’ CLAIM that one person can do religious things to help pay the penalty owed by another person in purgatory.**

- *NO BIBLE PASSAGE teaches that relatives and friends can do “religious things” on behalf of a dead person in order to change that person’s eternal destination!*
- *How will we know when we have prayed enough to get our loved ones out of Purgatory?*

#### **D. The teachings of ‘Purgatory’ and ‘Praying for the Dead’ are based upon a passage from the Book of 2 Maccabees, which is NOT from God and CANNOT be included in the CANON!**

- *There were NO PROPHETS alive when the book was written.*
- *The writer DID NOT CLAIM to be writing a message from God.*
- *The people did WHAT THEY THOUGHT WAS RIGHT, when they prayer for the souls of their dead companions.*
- *The book of Maccabees was not officially accepted until the Council of Trent, in 1546!*

**E. The teachings of 'Purgatory' and 'Praying for the Dead' are man-made and EVOLVED over a period of many years!**

- **NEITHER** of these are mentioned in the Bible.
- The earliest mention of either as a defined religious teaching is in the Council; of Florence, in 1439, or 1,400 years after Jesus taught!
- The current versions of these teachings only go back as far as the Council of Trent, in 1563 – or 1,530 years after Jesus!
- There is no evidence that these were official teachings before the "BIG SPLIT" in the Catholic Church, in 1054, because the Greek Catholic church, one of the two that resulted from that split, has NEVER HAD THESE TEACHINGS!
- TRUE BIBLE teachings do NOT evolve!

**F. The Bible teaches that there will be a JUDGMENT DAY when Jesus returns at the end of time and that ALL people, living and dead, will be judged BY Jesus!**

- EACH and EVERY ONE will stand before Christ's judgment seat!
- ALL DEAD PEOPLE will resurrect and be judged!
- Jesus will judge upon the teachings he gave and how each person's life compares to those teachings!
- Those who are judged "GOOD" WILL RECEIVE A REWARD and those who are judged "BAD" WILL RECEIVE PUNISHMENT!
- At some time during or after the resurrection and judgment the universe as we know it will be destroyed!

**G. The Bible teaches that every person is accountable for what they say and do, and, that the Judgment will be based upon how the things each person does match up with the teachings that Jesus and the Apostles gave to us from God!**

- Each and every person will stand before the judgment seat of Christ and receive good or evil based upon WHAT HE OR SHE DID WHILE THEY WERE ALIVE in their body!
- NO PASSAGE teaches that a person can change their eternal destination AFTER THEY DIE!
- If Purgatory and Prayers for the Dead were true teachings we would read about them from the beginning of the Old Testament!

**H. The Bible does not tell us exactly what happens to the souls of people between the time of death and the time when Jesus will return for the Judgment!**

**"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad."  
2 Corinthians 5:10**