



SAVED TO SERVE

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IS CONFESSION TO A PRIEST NECESSARY FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN?

1. In this Sabbath School Lesson, we will find out if confession to a human priest is necessary to be forgiven of sin. Catholics believe this to be true and use a scripture to justify their beliefs while Protestants oppose this dogma. Let's find out the truth from the Bible.
2. **Current Event:** Notice the following clip from a discussion about faith between two Protestants and two Catholics. Catholic vs Protestant Women | The Bridge | Dr. Daf Show
[YouTube.com/watch?v=wT39ZVSzHs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wT39ZVSzHs)
3. Read John 20:21-23. This scripture brings out an apparent dilemma which seems to suggest that God gave the apostles the power to forgive sins. Let's study this carefully to understand its meaning. What is the Biblical way of interpreting scripture? Isaiah 28:9-10; 1 Corinthians 2:13

4. Who only has the power to forgive sins? Mark 2:5-7, 10-11

5. **Note:** When a man claims to have power to forgive sins, the Bible calls that blasphemy. This is what the Jews accused Jesus of because they didn't believe He was God, however, Jesus is God and does have the power to forgive sin.
6. With the previous note in mind, what power did Jesus give the disciples in John 20:23? **Answer:** Jesus gave them power, as godly men and leaders, to deal with sin in the church by reproof, instructing, and restoring the sinner, if possible. These godly decisions would then be accepted of God in heaven. Let's read Matthew 18:15-18 to confirm this point.
7. **Note:** As we clearly see in Matthew 18:15-18, if a person sins, he should be given the opportunity to confess and if he does, he should be forgiven by his brother and will also be forgiven by God. But if that person refuses, two or three more people should be brought to meet with him. If that doesn't win him over to repentance, let the church hear the matter, and if he rejects the church, then he should be treated as a heathen - unrepentant. This person would also be viewed by God as unrepentant because he refused to confess his sin and hear the godly counsel of the church. Let's examine some examples of this in scripture in the days of the apostles.
8. Ananias and Sapphira broke their vow to God to give Him the money from the sale of their land and this sin also affected the church. Who did Peter specifically reprove in Acts 5:3-4?

- a) What was the judgment from God which fell upon Ananias? Would you agree that the punishment proves Ananias' sin was not remitted or forgiven? Acts 5:4-5

- b) When Sapphira came to the apostles three hours after, who verbally gave the judgment and prophecy that she would also die and be carried out the door? What effect did this have on the church? Acts 5:9-11

- c) **Note:** Peter was the apostle who told Sapphira that she would die because of her sin against God, and she did die. This shows us that her sins were not remitted but retained (John 20:23), and God in heaven also approved of this judgment. This account proves that God gave the apostles power, under the direction of the Holy Ghost, to establish church order to reprove sin to the effect that others might respect God.
9. Here is another example of the aforementioned points. What did Paul say about Hymenaeus and Alexander because of their sin and lack of repentance? 1 Timothy 1:18-20; 2 Timothy 4:14-15

10. What did the disciples ask Jesus in Luke 11:1? _____

11. To whom did Jesus say we must pray? What must we ask Him for? Luke 11:2, 4

a) Not only do Catholics teach that we must confess to an earthly priest but they also call that man Father. What did Jesus say in Matthew 23:9?

12. In what manner are we to pray to God for forgiveness of sin? Matthew 6:6

a) What is God's promise to us when we pray according to this manner? 1 John 1:9

13. Read James 5:16. What does this passage mean? Matthew 6:14-15

a) **For Homework:** Read Matthew 18:21-35 for more information about forgiveness and confessing our faults to the brother that we sinned against.

14. Catholics claim that Jesus presently uses priests as His bodily symbol on the earth. When Jesus ascended to heaven, who did He say He would send as His representative on the earth? What is His work? John 14:26; John 16:7-8, 13

15. Who is our high priest which ever makes intercession for us? Hebrews 7:22, 25

16. **Note:** Hebrews 7:22-28 is a nail in a sure place which proves Jesus is our high priest and His ministry is better than any earthly priest who themselves are sinners. Furthermore, study and see that when a sinner brought a sacrifice to the temple in the Old Testament, they did not confess their sins to a priest but to God by placing their hand on the head of the lamb. The priest then took the blood and sprinkled over the furniture and the veil in the temple to make an atonement for the sinner (see Leviticus 1:1-5; Leviticus 4:1-6; Leviticus 5:5-6).

17. When we don't know how to express our hearts to God, who helps to interpret our prayer? Romans 8:26

18. We have proven from scripture that confession to a priest or pope is not Biblical. Catholics also claim that scripture is not enough or sufficient for us and thus, they place so-called church history and tradition on par with the Bible and above the authority of the Bible. What did Jesus say about this practice? Matthew 15:3, 8-9

19. Revelation 13:1-10 shows us a beast that wars against God and His saints, both historically and in the last days. Revelation 13:1 says that this beast (which represents a nation - Daniel 7:17, 23) has the names of blasphemy. What is blasphemy? John 10:30-33; Mark 2:5-7

20. This fact that this beast blasphemes God (blasphemy has a religious connotation) and is a nation teaches us that it is both a religious and political power. These evidences point us to no other power but the Papacy, the Vatican, Roman Catholicism. God's message to His sincere believers who are a part of this system is come out! Revelation 18:2, 4.

20. To all who are captive to sin, what is Jesus' invitation? Isaiah 1:18

21. Is repentance something we naturally desire? What did Adam & Eve do once they sinned? Romans 8:7; Genesis 3:8-10

22. What draws us to God as sinners, and what does God give to us when we come to Him? Romans 2:4; Acts 5:31

23. Is it your desire to come to God today in repentance to receive pardon for your sins? Write your response below.
