

# The Scale

## THE GOSPEL REVEALED • PART 7

Galatians 1:11-14 | Arvin Assembly of God | Pastor Brian Overturf | October 4, 2026

### INTRODUCTION

Last week: two parties in one room. The Pharisees added to the Word... they built fences around the law until the fence became the law. The Sadducees took from it... they took the scissors to anything too supernatural. Jesus answered both with the Word of God.

This morning isn't about people. It's about a system. Their own documents first... then the Bible. You decide.

#### **THE SCALE... HOW IT WORKS**

**The Word of God is the standard. Everything else gets weighed.**

- Every tradition... every teaching... every prophecy... every sermon goes on the other side of the scale, held up to the Bible
- Jesus never weighed the Bible by their traditions. He weighed their traditions by the Bible.
- The moment a tradition sits on the same side as the Word... as an equal weight... the scale is broken.

### MY NOTES

### When tradition and God's Word disagree, which one wins?

#### 1. The Mirror (Our own traditions first.)

Before we look at anybody else... we look in the mirror.

Paul describes his life before Christ... and he names what drove him.

#### **Galatians 1:14**

**<sup>14</sup> And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.**

**"My fathers."** These were his. His family's. His people's. That's why he was blind to it for so long... and every one of us has fathers in this sense.

**Douglas Moo**, one of the finest scholars on Galatians, stops at this verse and points out that Paul's generation couldn't separate the Scriptures from the way their tradition explained them... and that we do the same thing today.

*"...just as today, passionate advocates of a certain theological position will decline to distinguish between Scripture and its (for that person) definitive elaboration in a system of belief."*

**Douglas J. Moo, Galatians**

In other words... Moo is saying people can take the Bible, build a system around it, and then can't tell the difference between the two anymore. That's not a Catholic problem. It's a human problem. It's a Pentecostal problem too.

**Our own fences.** Examples from the past: No pants, no makeup, no wedding ring, no movies. Sincere fences... godly people trying to stay out of the world. But when the fence became the test of whether you were really saved, we did exactly what the Pharisees

did.

Jesus called it out, quoting Isaiah.

### **Mark 7:7**

**’ And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’**

A preference became a doctrine. A rule became a commandment of God.

**Our own house.** Then there’s how we handle the moving of the Holy Spirit. Our own Assemblies of God Systematic Theology sums up a well-known British preacher, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, who saw Catholics and Pentecostals at opposite ends... yet making the same mistake about authority. And it doesn’t argue with him.

*“Catholicism emphasizes the authority of the Church, while some Pentecostals seem to emphasize the authority of the Spirit above that of the Word.”*

**Stanley M. Horton, ed., Systematic Theology (summarizing Martyn Lloyd-Jones)**

**“The Lord told me.”** I don’t care what anyone says... I have a word... I felt it in my spirit. When experience, emotion and sensationalism set the agenda instead of the Bible, it becomes a tradition... we just call it church culture or core values.

**The fireplace.** Fire in the fireplace warms the whole house. Fire out of the fireplace burns it down. The Holy Spirit is the source of the fire... and He built the fireplace, because He wrote the Bible.

Our Systematic Theology says it as plain as it can be said... the Spirit who wrote the Bible isn’t going to contradict the Bible.

*“The Holy Spirit is the one who inspired the Word and who makes it authoritative. He will not say anything contrary to or beyond what the inspired Word declares.”*

**Stanley M. Horton, ed., Systematic Theology**

That’s the fireplace... the Word of God. We’re not anything-goes Pentecostals. We wear seatbelts. That’s why our very first Fundamental Truth... before tongues, before healing... is this.

*“The Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, are verbally inspired of God and are the revelation of God to man, the infallible, authoritative rule of faith and conduct.”*

**Assemblies of God, Statement of Fundamental Truths #1**

Our Systematic Theology goes one step further. Even the great creeds and confessions and every doctrine of the church... as good as they are... have to line up with God’s Word.

*“To allow them to rival scriptural authority destroys their own normative value and debases the Word of God they desire to honor.”*

**Stanley M. Horton, ed., Systematic Theology**

That’s our own theology talking. The minute our best writings compete with the Bible, they lose their value... and they drag the Word down with them.

**The infallible rule.** Not the pastor. Not the board. Not the way Arvin Assembly has always done it. The Bible.

**We look in the mirror first. Every time.**

## 2. The Personal Scale (Rome's system in its own words.)

There's a difference between a church that has traditions... and a church that has made tradition an authority equal to the Bible.

Remember what Jesus said to the Pharisees in Mark 7.

### Mark 7:13

<sup>13</sup> **making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do.**

Jesus didn't say they had no Scripture. They had Moses and the prophets. Something else had been handed down right beside it... and it won.

**The Catechism of the Catholic Church** is the official summary of Catholic teaching today. Here's how it describes Scripture and Tradition.

*As a result the Church, to whom the transmission and interpretation of Revelation is entrusted, "does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the holy Scriptures alone. Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence."*

**Catechism of the Catholic Church, §82**

**Equal.** Not Scripture alone... Scripture and Tradition, honored with equal devotion and reverence.

**The Second Vatican Council** (1962-1965) went one step further in its document on divine revelation, *Dei Verbum*.

*Sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture form one sacred deposit of the word of God, committed to the Church.*

**Second Vatican Council, *Dei Verbum* §10 (1965)**

**One sacred deposit.** Not "Scripture is the Word of God." Scripture and Tradition together form the Word of God.

Then the question we have to ask... who gets to say what it means? The Catechism answers.

*"The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition, has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the Church alone..." This means that the task of interpretation has been entrusted to the bishops in communion with the successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome.*

**Catechism of the Catholic Church, §85**

**Who sets and brings the scale?** The Magisterium... the teaching office... the bishops in communion with the pope. They alone interpret it. Nothing outside of it can ever correct it.

**Bring your own scale.** A big rig pulls into the truck scales on the Grapevine: "Don't worry, officer, I brought my own scale. And my scale says I'm fine." He's not being weighed. He's weighing himself.

# Do you see the parallels?

|                       | FIRST-CENTURY JUDAISM                                | ROME TODAY                                     |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <b>The authority</b>  | The written Word plus the traditions of the fathers  | Scripture plus Tradition of the Church Fathers |
| <b>Who interprets</b> | A council of teachers... the Sanhedrin & High Priest | The Magisterium... the bishops with the pope   |
| <b>The seat</b>       | Moses' seat (Matthew 23:2)                           | Ex cathedra... "from the chair"                |
| <b>Leadership</b>     | A high priest by succession                          | "The successor of Peter"                       |

Paul lived under the same structure: the written Word with the tradition of the fathers standing beside it, and a council of teachers who alone could say what it meant. Here's how Jesus described those teachers.

## Matthew 23:2

<sup>2</sup> ...**"The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat."**

**Moses' seat.** Nobody gave them that chair. They sat in it. Rome uses the phrase ex cathedra... "from the chair"... for when the pope speaks with full infallible authority.

If you see the parallels, you aren't the only one. James McCarthy, in The Gospel According to Rome, puts it in one sentence.

*"Significant parallels can be drawn between the authority structure of Roman Catholicism today and that of first-century Judaism."*

**James G. McCarthy, The Gospel According to Rome**

**One authority.** God has ordained structure in His body... pastors and teachers, elders and deacons. But there's only one authority we're held accountable to... one authority to consult, train, rebuke and exhort. God's Word.

In the Old Testament, when important matters had to be settled and false teaching and practice was spreading, God pointed His people back to what He had written.

## Isaiah 8:20

<sup>20</sup> **To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.**

Not to your opinion. Not to the council. Not to the traditions. Go to what God wrote down.

In the New Testament, Paul charges Timothy with the same thing... preach the Word.

## 2 Timothy 4:1-2

<sup>1</sup> **I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: <sup>2</sup> Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.**

And in the chapter before, he tells Timothy why.

## 2 Timothy 3:16

<sup>16</sup> **All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,**

### 3. The Dogma (How a tradition becomes binding.)

November 1, 1950. Saint Peter's Square in Rome. More than 700,000 people in the crowd.

**Dogma.** Not an opinion. Not a good idea you're free to take or leave. A doctrine every Catholic must believe.

#### How a tradition became binding:

| STEP                      | WHAT HAPPENED                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1946</b>               | Pius XII asks every bishop in the world: Can Mary's bodily Assumption be defined as dogma? Do your clergy and people want it? |
| <b>The response</b>       | "Almost unanimous"... 32,000 priests and brothers, 50,000 nuns, 8,000,000 laypeople                                           |
| <b>The Scriptures</b>     | Silent on Mary's death, burial or Assumption                                                                                  |
| <b>The Church Fathers</b> | Support in only 2 of the 88... both from the seventh century, six hundred years after Jesus                                   |
| <b>1950</b>               | Defined anyway... "by our own authority"                                                                                      |
| <b>The warning</b>        | Deny it or doubt it... "fallen away completely from the divine and Catholic Faith"                                            |

**Munificentissimus Deus** is the document Pope Pius XII read that day, defining Mary's Assumption as dogma. In it he describes how the bishops answered his 1946 letter.

*But those whom 'the Holy Spirit has placed as bishops to rule the Church of God' gave an almost unanimous affirmative response to both these questions.*

**Pius XII, Munificentissimus Deus §12 (1950)**

McCarthy records the numbers behind that answer.

*"By 1950, totaled with previous petitions, the Vatican had received responses from 32,000 priests and brothers, 50,000 nuns, and 8,000,000 laypeople!"*

**James G. McCarthy, The Gospel According to Rome**

**The Approval Trap again.** Truth isn't decided by the crowd. Not eight people. Not eight million.

**The problem.** In Catholic teaching, a doctrine has to be contained in the deposit of faith... Scripture and Tradition. So they looked at the Scriptures first. McCarthy writes it in one line.

*"The Bible said nothing about Mary's death, burial, or Assumption."*

**James G. McCarthy, The Gospel According to Rome**

Then they looked at the early Church Fathers. Rome recognizes 88 of them. The bishops found support in the writings of only two... both from the seventh century. So how do you define a doctrine that isn't in the Bible and isn't in the early Church? Here's how, in the pope's own words.

*...by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and by our own authority, we pronounce, declare, and define it to be a divinely revealed dogma: that the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory.*

**Pius XII, Munificentissimus Deus §44 (1950)**

**By our own authority.** And the very next paragraph tells every Catholic what happens to anyone who doubts it.

*Hence if anyone, which God forbid, should dare willfully to deny or to call into doubt that which we have defined, let him know that he has fallen away completely from the divine and Catholic Faith.*

**Pius XII, Munificentissimus Deus §45 (1950)**

Two paragraphs later, he goes one step further.

*It is forbidden to any man to change this, our declaration, pronouncement, and definition or, by rash attempt, to oppose and counter it. If any man should presume to make such an attempt, let him know that he will incur the wrath of Almighty God and of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul.*

**Pius XII, Munificentissimus Deus §47 (1950)**

## **A teaching the Bible never gave... that the first six hundred years of Christians never wrote down... was made binding on every Catholic on earth.**

Now remember what Paul wrote just a few verses earlier.

### **Galatians 1:8**

**<sup>8</sup> But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.**

Then he says it again in verse 9... and changes one word.

### **Galatians 1:9**

**<sup>9</sup> As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.**

**Received.** The gospel was received... once... from the apostles. The church doesn't keep adding on to it.

Jude says it like this.

### **Jude 3**

**<sup>3</sup> Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.**

The line is drawn at what the apostles delivered... not at what the Church decided nineteen hundred years later.

And Moses said it like this.

### **Deuteronomy 4:2**

**<sup>2</sup> You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.**

NEVER ADD! Not even with good intentions. Not even out of love for Mary.

## What about Mary?

We honor her. The Bible does.

### Luke 1:48

<sup>48</sup> **For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.**

So do we. She is blessed. Chosen by God. A woman of faith. The mother of our Lord.

And what does the Mary of the Bible say to people? Listen to her at the wedding in Cana.

### John 2:5

<sup>5</sup> **His mother said to the servants, “Whatever He says to you, do it.”**

The Mary of the Bible points away from herself... to Jesus and to what He says. If you want to honor Mary... do what she said.

And listen to what she said about herself.

### Luke 1:46-47

<sup>46</sup> **And Mary said: “My soul magnifies the Lord, <sup>47</sup> And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.**

**God my Savior.** In 1854 Rome defined Mary as preserved free from all stain of original sin. But Mary herself called God her Savior. You only need a Savior if you need saving.

Jesus promised His disciples a Helper... and it wasn't Mary.

### John 14:26

<sup>26</sup> **But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.**

The word Helper is also translated Advocate or Comforter. Jesus commanded His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for this very promise... and look who was in the upper room.

### Acts 1:14

<sup>14</sup> **These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.**

Mary waited in obedience and received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost... the Helper Jesus promised.

Now compare what the Catechism teaches about Mary in heaven. Benefactress means a woman who gives good things. Mediatrix is the feminine form of mediator... someone who stands in the middle, between God and people.

*Taken up to heaven she did not lay aside this saving office but by her manifold intercession continues to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation.... Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked in the Church under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix.*

**Catechism of the Catholic Church, §969**

Where does the Bible give Mary those roles? It doesn't. It gives them to the Holy Spirit... and to one Person alone.

**Romans 8:26**

<sup>26</sup> Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

**1 Timothy 2:5**

<sup>5</sup> For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,

| THE CATECHISM GIVES MARY...                | THE BIBLE GIVES IT TO...                                   |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Advocate, Helper</b>                    | The Holy Spirit... the Helper (John 14:26)                 |
| <b>Intercession from heaven</b>            | The Spirit Himself makes intercession for us (Romans 8:26) |
| <b>Mediatix</b>                            | One Mediator... the Man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5)       |
| <b>Free from all stain of original sin</b> | Mary rejoiced in "God my Savior" (Luke 1:47)               |

**The Mary of the Bible never takes that title. She is a saved woman. A Spirit-filled woman. Pointing everybody she can to her Son.**

**CONCLUSION**

The Word of God is the standard. Our own traditions go on the scale first. Rome's system puts Tradition on the same side as Scripture and lets one office alone read the scale. And 1950 shows what happens when tradition gets equal standing... it doesn't stay equal. It wins.

**When tradition and God's Word disagree, the Word wins.  
Every time.**

**REMINDER**

This is not about people... it's about a system. We did not have time to cover purgatory, praying to the saints, infant baptism etc... For those of you with loved ones who are steeped in Catholicism, share the gospel, share the Word! Specifically, that it is Christ and Christ alone that saves. Pray for them and remember, Jesus had compassion of the people, His ministry on this earth was to teach and preach this gospel.