

conviction *not* culture

WEEK 5 | Hebrews 9:24-26

“Marian Dogma”

Immaculate Conception

1. If Mary were sinless, she would not need a savior, which is contrary to her own song and Luke 1:47.
2. We do not need to declare Mary to be sinless in order to affirm her as a model of godliness and courage. We believe if this dogma is obligatory, it should be shown to be an essential component of the gospel, which it is not scripturally speaking.
3. The early church fathers Irenaeus and Tertullian believed she needed redemption. Origen – *“If Mary was not scandalized by Jesus’s passion, then Jesus did not die for her sins.”* But if Romans 3:23 is true, Mary must have been scandalized at this time.
4. John Chrysostom on John 2:4 says of Mary, *“She both desired to do them a favor and render herself more conspicuous, desiring to gain credit from his miracles.”* Matthew 12:46 *“Mary wanted to direct him...”* John C. seems to be saying that Jesus was engaged in spiritual matters when his mother and brothers were selfishly interrupting, hence Jesus’s stern reply.
5. No early attestations or advocates for Immaculate Conception – Thomas Aquinas (Summa Theologia) rejected it in the 13th century. This doctrine is nowhere near the apostles. Nowhere near the early church fathers. Why then are believers given an anathema for a dogma that neither Jesus, the Apostles, nor the early church fathers taught?

Bodily Assumption

“This is an argument from silence.”

TRUE, BUT IT IS SILENCE ON THE SUBJECT PLUS:

1. Early church fathers mention Enoch and Elijah but don’t mention Mary: Tertullian, Irenaeus, Methodius, Origen, John Chrysostom, Cyril of Jerusalem, Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine. All mention Enoch and Elijah, NONE mention Mary.
2. Uncertainty surrounding how Mary died among the church fathers.
3. Diversity of opinion when the subject of her death does come up.
4. Late arrival. Indication of accretion: a buildup over time. *“You protestants are inconsistent. You deny the Assumption for its late acceptance but don’t treat sola scriptura etc. as such.”*
 - *The scriptural attestations for our position are there.*
 - *Our doctrines, such as eternal security and eschatology, are NOT obligatory.*
 - *The Assumption is claimed to be an historical event witnessed by the Apostles.*

5. Sources come from heterodoxy, not scripture! Stephen Shoemaker – *“The origins of this teaching came from Gnostic Christianity, Angel Christology, and in what are known as Palm narratives.”* (Early 2nd C. apocryphal writings.)
6. Walter Burghardt – First 7 or 8 centuries: NO historical evidence.
7. Eamon Duffy – The definition embarrassed many Roman Catholic theologians since it was unsupported in scripture and unknown in the early church. There is clearly no historical evidence whatsoever for it (*unless one counts the negative evidence of post-mortem relics of the Virgin.*)

Resources

- » J.N.D. Kelly, *“Early Christian Doctrines”*
- » Stephen Shoemaker, *“Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary’s Dominion and Assumption”*
- » Walter Burghardt, *“Mary in Patristic Thought”*
- » Eamon Duffy, *“What Catholics Believe About Mary”*
- » *The Marian Dogmas and their definitions can be found using a simple internet search of Catholic resources.*
- » *Ineffabilis Deus - The Immaculate Conception*
- » *Munificentissimus Deus - Defining the Dogma of the Assumption*