

CATHOLIC CHURCH IS NOT THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. An article in the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, Wed., July 11, 2007, reported that “Pope Benedict XVI, on Tuesday reasserted church doctrine that *the Catholic Church is the chosen church of Christ*, indicating that the Second Vatican Council that changed the wording in this regard didn’t change the meaning.”
2. What the present Pope of Rome boldly reasserted as truth – that “the Catholic church is the chosen church of Christ” – or the church belonging to Jesus Christ, we emphatically deny; we brand it as a false statement, a false claim.
3. Our purpose in this lesson is to offer Biblical reasons why it is a false statement, a false claim.
4. A simple comparison between the Catholic church and the church of Christ revealed in the N.T. will show the fallacy of the Pope’s claim by showing too many differences between the Catholic church and the church of Christ for the Catholic church to be the chosen church of Christ.
5. We will consider a few differences (there are many more).
6. The Catholic church is not the church of Christ, or the church belonging to Christ, because:

II. DISCUSSION

A. THE TWO HAD DIFFERENT BEGINNINGS, AT DIFFERENT PLACES, UNDER DIFFERENT HEADS.

1. The church of Christ, the church belonging to Christ, had its beginning in the city of Jerusalem around AD 33, as prophesied in O.T. prophecy and revealed by inspiration as fulfilled in the N.T. on the first Pentecost after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ to heaven, Isa.2:1-3; Dan.2:44; Joel 2:28-32; Lk. 24:44-49; Ac.1:1-12; Ac.2:1-36; Ac.11:15.
2. The Catholic church was unheard of, didn’t officially exist, until several centuries later.
 - a. That which is known as the Catholic church didn’t officially exist before 606 AD when Boniface III became

- the first Pope to ever exist when he assumed the title of “universal bishop” at Rome, not Jerusalem.
- b. Gal.2 forever destroys the Catholic claim that Peter was the first Pope.
 - c. So does the proper interpretation of Mt.16:18.
 - d. O.C. Lambert used to answer when asked, “When did the Catholic church begin?” “It depends on what part of it you are talking about. Part of it began in 606 AD, another part later on. They keep adding to it. It keeps changing!”
3. Thus the Catholic church is not, and cannot be, the church of Christ, because it had a different beginning time and place and under a different head.

B. THE TWO HAD DIFFERENT BUILDERS.

1. The church of Christ, the church belonging to Christ, has a divine builder – Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Mt.16:13-18.
2. The builder and founder of the Catholic church is mere man, not Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Cf. Psa.127:1.

C. THE TWO HAVE DIFFERENT HEADQUARTERS.

1. The headquarters of the church of Christ are where the Head of the church is – in heaven.
 - a. Since Jesus is “head over all things to the church” (Eph. 1:22,23), and is “passed into,” or “entered into,” “the heavens,” (Heb.4:14), “on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb.1:3; 6:20); the headquarters of the church belonging to him, of which he is the head, are in heaven.
 - b. There are no earthly headquarters for the church of Christ, only heavenly headquarters; no earthly organization for the church universal or the saved in the aggregate.
2. The headquarters for the Catholic church are in Rome and are under the control of the Pope and the College of Cardinals; thus the Catholic church (unlike the church of Christ) has an earthly headquarters, with an earthly head!
3. The Catholic church can’t be the chosen church of Christ because it has an earthly headquarters under an earthly head which the church of Christ does not have.

D. THE TWO HAVE DIFFERENT NAMES, ONLY ONE OF WHICH WEARS THE NAME THAT HONORS CHRIST.

1. The church belonging to Christ, the church of Christ, the church you can read about in the N.T., is called or scripturally designated by names that honor and identify it with Christ, its builder, founder, head and Savior.
 - a. Jesus Christ called it:
 - (1) “My church,” Mt.16:18.
 - (2) “My kingdom,” Lk.22:30; Jno.18:36.
 - (3) “The kingdom of heaven,” Mt.16:19.
 - (4) “The kingdom of God,” Jno.3:5; Lk.22:16.
 - b. The inspired Apostles of Christ, as the Ambassadors of Christ, called it:
 - (1) “The church,” Col.1:18; Eph.1:22; 3:10; 5:23-32.
 - (2) “The body, the church,” Col.1:24.
 - (3) “The church of the Lord,” Ac.20:28.
 - (4) “The church of God,” 1Cor.1:2; Gal.1:13.
 - (5) “Church of Christ,” (Singular –“church of Christ”), Rom.16:16.
 - (6) “The house of God,” 1Tim.3:15.
 - (7) “The household of God,” Eph.2:19.
 - (8) “The household of faith,” Gal.6:10.
 - (9) “The kingdom of God,” Ac.28:23,31.
 - (10) “The kingdom of God’s dear Son,” Col.1:13.
 - (11) “A kingdom which cannot be shaken,” Heb.12:28.

E. THE TWO CHURCHES HAVE DIFFERENT STANDARDS OF AUTHORITY.

1. The church belonging to Christ, the N.T. church, respects and accepts the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice, as God’s final, complete, all-sufficient revelation to man, i.e., as its sole standard of authority, Deut.4:2; Mt.28:18-20; 1Cor.4:6; Gal.1:6-9; 2Tim.3:16,17; Heb.1:1-3; 1Pet.4:11; Jude 3; Rev.22:18,19.
2. The Catholic church emphatically denies the Bible as its standard of authority in religion. (The following references as proof of this from O.C. Lambert’s book “Catholic Against

Itself” are all from Catholic books issued with the approval of their book censor and the **Imprimatur** of her men of authority.)

- a. “The very nature of the Bible ought to prove to any thinking man the impossibility of its being the one safe method to find out what the Savior taught.” (Question Box, 67, 1913 edition)
- b. “The Bible does not pretend to be a formulary of belief, as is a creed or a catechism. There is nowhere in the N.T. a clear methodical statement of the teaching of Christ.” (Question Box, 66)
- c. “Again, it has ever been practically impossible for men, generally, to find out Christ from the Bible only.” (Question Box, 70).
- d. “The Bible was not intended to be a textbook of the Christian religion.” (Catholic Facts, 50).
- e. “In other spiritual books the truths of the Bible are presented more fully, and in a more modern and familiar style, so that we can hardly wonder that they are, as a rule preferred; and that though Catholic families generally have a Bible, it is more venerated than read” (Plain Facts, 154).
- f. “They (Apostles) consigned to unwritten tradition many revealed truths and thus made the Church from the beginning independent of their writings” (History of the Church of God, B. J. Spalding, 25).
- g. “The Scripture indeed is a divine book but it is a dead letter...” (Our Priesthood, 155).
- h. “A dead and speechless book” (Question Box, 67).
- i. The Pope, not the Bible, is the authority in the Catholic church: “The Pope’s letter is the most weighty authority in the church” (Cardinal Gibbons, in Faith of Our Fathers, 116).
- j. “Is it not strange that if Christianity were to be learned from the Bible only, that Christ himself never wrote a line or ever commanded his apostles to write; for their divine commission was not to write but to preach the gospel...Again, it has ever been practically impossible for men, generally, to find out Christ from the Bible only” (Question Box, 70, 1913 edition).

- k. “The sacred writers may have been unaware of the fact of their inspiration” (Question Box, 80).
- l. “On the contrary we do not in any way presuppose that the books of the N.T. are inspired...” (Question Box, 80).
- m. Need only a Clergyman! If you obey priests blindly you cannot possibly sin! If what he commands is wrong, you are not to blame! (Liguorie’s Spouse of Christ, 93, 351,352).

F. THE TWO CHURCHES HAVE DIFFERENT DESTINIES.

1. The church of Christ has Jesus Christ as its head and Savior, Eph.1:22,23; 5:23-27.
 - a. As a result, it has a glorious destiny. It will be “delivered up” to the Father by the Lord at his 2nd Coming, 1Cor.15:20-26.
 - b. What the Lord did not build or plant or of which he is not the head and Savior will not be presented to himself, but will be “rooted up” at his 2nd Coming, Mt.15:13,14.
2. Since the Catholic church had a different beginning time at a different place under a different head, a different builder and founder, with a different headquarters, doesn’t even wear the name of Christ, a name that honors Christ, and has a different standard of authority in religion, it can’t possibly be the chosen church of Christ.
 - a. It, therefore, must have a different destiny – that of being “rooted up”.

III. CONCLUSION

1. Jesus said: Jno.12:48-50; Mt.7:21-23; Lk.6:46.
2. The Apostles of Christ said: Eph.4:4-6; 1:22,23; Col.1:18,24; Gal.1:6-9; 2Jno.9,10; Heb.5:8,9; 2Th.1:6-10.
3. We plead with one and all to leave all errors of all false religions and simply be a member of the church belonging to Christ, the church of Christ, the church you can read about in the N.T.!