

Sermon  SNAPSHOTS



THE BOTTOM LINE

Part 2: Catholicism

This is the second in a series of five lessons on “denominationalism.” Our opposition to denominationalism is no secret, yet many do not understand “why.” This series gives some reasons for our opposition. Our first lesson took a look at “Some Problems with Denominationalism and If One Church is as good as another.” This lesson will focus on some early church history.

Where it all began...

The church we find in the New Testament...

- Is built by Christ (Mt.16:18)
- Is purchased by Christ (Ac.20:28)
- Is ruled by Christ (Ep.1:22-23)
- Is the people of Christ (Ac.2:38, 41, 47), no wonder it’s called the church of Christ! (Rm.16:16)



The church as it was established by Christ

- Was a rapidly growing church (Ac.2:41; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7)
- Was a greatly persecuted church (Ac.7:51-60; 8:1-3)
- Was a problem-solving church (Ac.6:1-6; 15:1-2)
- Was a locally organized church (Ac.14:23; Ac. 20:28)

An apostasy (falling away) was prophesied

- Prophesied (Ac.20:28-30; 2Th.2:1-12; 1Tim.4:1-3; 2Tm.4:1-4)
- It would arise from the leadership, culminate in one supreme leader, and lead others astray
- Fulfilled Gal.1:6; 1Jn.2:18-19; Rv.2:4, 14, 20; 3:15-19)
- Many churches were plagued by a variety of false doctrines which threatened their faith

Eventually, there were MAJOR departures

- Changes in church organization
**Elders over local churches -One bishop over elders-
Bishops over area churches- Hierarchy**
- The first human creed (325 AD)
Council of Nicaea was to “decide” if Jesus was eternal or created (one step removed from truth)
- Area Bishops vie for supremacy
The Bishop of Rome became head of the Roman Catholic Church (606 AD, Pope Boniface) – West
The Bishop of Constantinople eventually became head of Greek Orthodox Church (1054 AD) – East



The result: The Catholic Church

CATHOLICISM

Our study of denominationalism continues with an examination of “Catholicism.” The Catholic Church is the *oldest* “Christian” denomination. It evolved from the apostasies of the first century. While we may note other Catholic dogmas in this lesson, *our “bottom-line” approach will focus on “the root of the tree,”* which is “the Papacy” (Very BASIS of Catholicism). If the Papacy is invalid, then Catholicism falls!

First, we note *Catholic claims for their Church*

- They claim that Peter was given “supremacy” in the church – that he was the first “Pope”
- He & *his successors* rule the church as “vicars” (substitutes) of Christ, *a blasphemous claim!*
- They claim Peter is “the rock,” given divine authority to bind/loose for God (Mt.16:18-19)
- *If this is true, we ought to be Catholics! But if not, then this church is built upon a LIE!*

Next, we shall *refute this bold Catholic claim*

- In Matthew 16:18, “Peter” (*Petros*) is masculine, and “this rock” (*Petra*) is feminine
- Further, “Peter” means “a stone” (cf. Jn.1:42); but “this rock” means “a mass of rock”
- Finally, “this rock” was Peter’s confession that Jesus is the Christ (Mt.16:16-18)
- The Bible teaches that the church is built upon JESUS – not Peter! (1Cor.3:11; 10:4)

Some more reasons to reject this Catholic claim

- Every apostle was equal, & Peter claimed NO supremacy (Mt.18:1,18; 20:25-28; 1Pt.5:1)
- Contrast the Pope’s attitude of accepting worship, with Peter’s attitude (cf. Ac.10:25-26)
- Further, “Pope” means “Father” – yet Jesus expressly condemned such titles! (Mt.23:9)
- *The entire concept supplants Christ as THE head of HIS church* (Mt.28:18; Ep.1:22-23)

This apostasy into Catholicism was *prophesied*

- False teachers would arise and many would follow them (2Pt.2:1-3; 1Tm.4:1-5)
- They would arise from the eldership: local -> regional -> universal (Ac.20:28-30)
- It would culminate in a “man of sin,” elevating himself to godhood (2Th.2:1-4)
- While other churches may “fit the bill,” *it is clear that Catholicism fits perfectly!*



While there certainly are many other things we could note about Catholicism, we have shown enough to destroy the very **foundation** of this apostate church. It is built on nothing more than human authority (Mt.21:23). Since this is true, people should take the advice of the apostle Paul: “Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord” (2Cor.6:17-18). Are YOU ready to come out of this false way?

-Lanny Smith

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Sunday Worship: 10 am
Sunday Bible Study: 5 pm
Wednesday Bible Study: 7 pm

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