

“I Believe in the holy catholic church”
What Christians Believe, Part 13
(Matthew 16:13–20)

I. Oneness/Catholicity (“...I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it”)

“The catholic or universal church, which (with respect to the internal work of the Spirit...) may be called invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ, the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.” (Hebrews 12:23; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:10, 22, 23; 5:23, 27, 32)-**1689 Baptist Confession, 26:1**

“The Church that today wants to be called *the* Catholic Church has divided and fragmented its catholicity more than any other. Had it been content to follow the religion and worship taught us in the Scriptures, these divisions would not have happened. But she has never ceased manufacturing these innovations. And to dominate others, she has insisted that everyone be compelled to accept them.” **Peter Martyr Vermigli** (Italian Reformer, 1544 A.D.)

“If there were an ancient Platonic Society still existing at Athens and claiming to be the exclusive trustees of Plato's meaning, I should approach them with great respect. But if I found that their teaching was in many ways curiously unlike his actual text and unlike what ancient interpreters said, and in some cases could not be traced back to within 1,000 years of his time, I should reject their exclusive claims — while ready, of course, to take any particular thing they taught on its merits.

I do the same with Christianity. What is most certain is the vast mass of doctrine which I find agreed on by Scripture, the Fathers, the Middle Ages, modern Roman Catholics, modern Protestants. That is true "catholic" doctrine. Mere "modernism" I reject at once. The Roman Church where it differs from this universal tradition and specially from apostolic Christianity I reject. Thus their theology about the Blessed Virgin Mary I reject because it seems utterly foreign to the New Testament; where indeed the words "Blessed is the womb that bore thee" receive a rejoinder pointing in exactly the opposite direction. Their papalism seems equally foreign to the attitude of St. Paul toward St. Peter in the epistles. The doctrine of Transubstantiation insists on defining in a way which the New Testament seems to me not to countenance. In a word, the whole set-up of modern Romanism seems to me to be as much a provincial or local *variation* from the central, ancient tradition as any particular Protestant sect is. I must therefore reject their claim: though this, of course, does not mean rejecting particular things they say.” **C. S. Lewis**, private letter to H. Lyman Stebbins

“...the true catholic faith grounded upon God’s most infallible word teacheth us that our Savior Christ (as concerning his...bodily presence) is gone up into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of his Father, and there shall he tarry until the world’s end, at [which] time he shall come to judge the quick and the dead, as he saith in many Scriptures...And St. Paul, speaking of the very sacrament, saith, “As often as you shall eat this bread and drink this cup, you show forth the Lord’s death *until he come.*” “*Till he come,*” saith St. Paul, signifying that he is not there corporally present...[For who would say ‘Until he come’ of someone who was already present?] This is the catholic faith, which we learn from our youth in our common Creed, and which Christ taught, and which the Martyrs confirmed with their blood.” **Thomas Cranmer**, *A Defense of the True and Catholic Doctrine of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of our Savior Christ*

- II. Holiness** (“...and I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven...” cf. Matt. 18:15–20; 1 Cor. 3:16–17; 5:1–13; 6:18–19; 2 Cor. 7:1; 1 Pet. 1:13–16)

Suggested Resources:

Articles:

Carl Trueman, “Pay No Attention to That Man Behind the Curtain! Roman Catholic History and the Emerald City Protocol” (online)

Leonardo De Chirico, “Can the Roman Catholic Church Survive Two Popes?” (online)

Chris Castaldo, “How Did the Catholic Church Become Roman?” (in church library)

Gregg Allison, “What Does ‘This Rock’ Refer to in Matthew 16:18?” (online)

Books:

In Search of Ancient Roots: The Christian Past and the Evangelical Identity Crisis- Kenneth Stewart (Justin owns it)

A Reformation Debate, between John Calvin and Cardinal Jacopo Sadoletto (in church library)

Why We Love the Church: In Praise of Institutions and Organized Religion- Kevin DeYoung and Ted Kluck (in church library)