



ECCLESIOLOGY

The Nature of the Church

How do you know if a church is a church?

NATURE: *A result of inborn or inherent qualities*



The Nicene Creed

“We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.”



The Nature of the Church

The Nicene Creed

The Four Marks

ONE | **HOLY** | CATHOLIC | APOSTOLIC



The Nature of the Church

Holy

“Pure, perfect, without fault, morally good, having divine quality.”

1 JOHN 1:5

This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all.



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Holy

1 JOHN 1:5

This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all.

Truths

1. Holiness is God's very being
2. Holiness is at the heart of God's self-revelation
3. Holiness is always derived and dependent upon one's proximity or relationship to a Holy God



The Nature of the Church

Holy

The Church

- Holy
- Pure
- Set apart for God's purposes

EXODUS 19:6 | LEVITICUS 19:2

Truths

1. Holiness of Christ is the standard for the Christian
2. Holiness true for the church because of what has happened, not because of what the church has done
3. Holiness is always derived and dependent upon one's proximity or relationship to a Holy God



The Nature of the Church

One

The Church as the body of Christ is not limited to a time, space, race or culture

COLOSSIANS 3:11

¹¹ Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave,^[a] free; but Christ is all, and in all.



The Nature of the Church

One

The Church as the body of Christ is not limited to a time, space, race or culture

ROMANS 3:28-30

²⁸ For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. ²⁹ Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, ³⁰ since God is one—who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.



The Nature of the Church

Catholic

The Church (Universal) includes all those who have been redeemed by Jesus' blood.

REVELATION 1:5

⁵ and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood



The Nature of the Church

Catholic

The Church (Universal) includes all those who have been redeemed by Jesus' blood.

ROMANS 5:6-9

⁶ For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— ⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.



The Nature of the Church

Catholic

The Church (Universal) includes all those who have been redeemed by Jesus' blood.

EPHESIANS 5:23

²³ For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.



The Nature of the Church

Apostolic

It is founded on the teachings of Jesus' apostles.

EPHESIANS 2:20

²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone



The Nature of the Church

Protestant Influence

The Preaching of the Word

The church engages in the **pure preaching** of the gospel

The Administration of the Sacraments

The church makes use of the **pure administration** of the sacraments as Christ instituted them

Church Discipline

The church practices church discipline for **correcting faults**



The Nature of the Church

Other Understandings for Clarity

The Church is both **Visible** and **Invisible**

1 JOHN 2:19-20

¹⁹ They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us. ²⁰ But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you have knowledge.

The church is composed of true and false believers

The doctrine of perseverance – **MATTHEW 7:21-23**



The Nature of the Church

Other Understandings for Clarity

The Church and the **Kingdom**

The Kingdom of God *is* The Reign of God

1. The Church is **not** the Kingdom
2. The Kingdom creates the Church
3. The Church witnesses to the Kingdom
4. The Church is the instrument of the Kingdom
5. The church is **the custodian** of the Kingdom



The Nature of the Church

Other Understandings for Clarity

The Church and **Israel**

Redemptive History – epic promise into epic fulfillment

God's people are no longer defined genealogically, they are defined Christologically.

JOHN 8 | ROMANS 2

So, does the Church replace Israel? [**NO**]

The ultimate expression of Judaism is following Jesus.



The Nature of the Church

Other Understandings for Clarity

How Do I Find a Church? *Join a church:*

1. That preaches the Bible
2. That models the Great Commandment
3. That administers the Sacraments
4. That understands and does Discipleship
5. That practices Biblical Church Discipline
6. That has Biblical Church Leadership



The Nature of the Church

Conclusion

The Goal of Affirming the Marks of the Church

To maintain and preserve the purity of Christ's church and all that He desires her to be.

A Question to Consider

Do you find yourself enhancing this clear picture of the church or making it blurry?



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Conclusion

Biblical Metaphors for the Church

1. Body of Christ, Christ is the Head
2. God's Family: Son's and Daughters
3. The Vine and Branch
4. Pillar and ground of the truth to the world
5. A Building and a Holy Temple
6. A Holy Nation, a Royal Priesthood
7. The Salt and Light of the World





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