

The Church in the Reformation Era, 1500-1700

How does the study of Scripture, salvation, and the church relate to each other?

What is the “true” church? What are its markers?

Martin Luther (1483-1546)

On the Papacy (1520) – 3 marks

On the Councils and the Church (1539)

1. “This Christian, holy people is to be known by this, that it has God’s Word, though in quite unequal measure, as St. Paul says, Some have it altogether pure, others not entirely pure. Those who have it pure are called those who build on the foundation, gold, silver, precious stones; those who have it impure are they who build hay, straw, wood on the foundation, yet will be saved through fire. Of these more than enough has been said above.”
This is the main point. It is the high, chief, holy possession from which the Christian people take the name ‘holy,’ for God’s Word is holy and sanctifies everything it touches; nay, it is the very holiness of God...”
2. “God’s people, or the Christian holy people, is known by the holy Sacrament of Baptism, when it is rightly taught and believed and used according to Christ’s ordinance. That, too, is a public sign and precious, holy possession whereby God’s people is made holy, for it is a holy bath of regeneration through the Holy Ghost, in which we bathe and are washed by the Holy Ghost from sin and death, as in the innocent, holy blood of the Lamb of God. Where you see this mark, know that the holy Christian people must be there, even though the pope does not baptize you or even if you know nothing about his holiness and power.”
3. “God’s people, or a Christian, holy Church is known by the holy Sacrament of the Altar, when it is rightly administered according to Christ’s institution and is believed and

received. That, too, is a public mark and precious, holy possession, bequeathed by Christ, whereby His people is made holy. By means of this sacrament it exercises itself in faith, and openly confesses that it is a Christian people, as it does also by means of the Word of God and baptism..."

4. "The people of God, or holy Christians, are known by the keys, which they publicly use. Christ decrees, in Matthew 18:15 that if a Christian sins, he shall be rebuked, and if he does not amend his ways, he shall be bound and cast out; but if he amends, he shall be set free. This is the power of the keys."
5. "The Church is known outwardly by the fact that it consecrates or calls ministers, or has officers which they occupy. For we must have bishops, pastors, or preachers, to give, administer and use, publicly and privately, the four things, or precious possessions, that have been mentioned for the sake of and in the name of the Church, or rather because of their institution by Christ, as St. Paul says, in Ephesians 4:11..."
6. "The holy, Christian people is known by prayer and public thanksgiving and praise to God. Where you see and hear that the Lord's Prayer is prayed and the use of it is taught; where Psalms, or spiritual songs, are sung, in accordance with the Word of God and the right faith; when the Creed, and Ten Commandments, and the Catechism are openly used; - there be sure that a holy Christian people is; for prayer, too, is one of the precious holy possessions, whereby everything is made holy..."
7. "The holy, Christian Church is outwardly known by the holy possession of the Holy Cross. It must endure all hardship and persecution, all kinds of temptation and evil from devil, world, and flesh; it must be inwardly said, timid, terrified; outwardly poor, despised, sick, weak; thus it comes like its head, Christ.
The reason must be only this, - that it holds fast to Christ and God's Word and thus suffers for Christ's sake, according to Matthew 5:10, 'Blessed are they that endure persecution for my sake.'"

Would you agree with these markers of the "true" church? Why or why not?

John Calvin (1509-1564)

"Wherever we see the Word of God purely preached and heard, and the sacraments administered according to Christ's institution, there, it is not to be doubted, a church of God exists."

Could other Christian gatherings such as a Christian conference, chapel at a Christian school, etc. be considered a church? Why or why not?

Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556)

Why is it important to understand the church is a “congregation”? What implications does this have for how we recognize what a local church is today?

Protestant Unity Could Not be found Because of the Lord’s Supper

Martin Luther’s position

Huldrych Zwingli’s (1484-1531) position

John Calvin’s (1509-1564) position

Preparation For Next Week:

Read – <https://jgduesing.com/theology-in-the-modern-era-john-mark-yeats-on-creation-and-humanity/> (Attached to this document.)

Further Resources:

Duesing, Jason and Nathan Finn. *Historical Theology For The Church*. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2021.

Duesing, Jason. *Seven Summits in Church History*. Nashville, TN: Rainer Publishing, 2016.

Woodbridge, John D. and Frank A. James III. *Church History, Volume Two: From Pre-Reformation to the Present Day*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013.

Litfin, Bryan. *Getting to Know The Church Fathers: An Evangelical Introduction*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016.