

# Biblical Topics

## Holy Christian Church (Communion of Saints)

The holy Christian Church is the communion of saints, that is, the whole number of believers in Christ. Only believers are members of this Church.

- Ephesians 2:19-22: <sup>19</sup> Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, <sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. <sup>21</sup> In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup> And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.
- Romans 12:4-5: <sup>4</sup> Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, <sup>5</sup> so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.
- Romans 8:9: You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.

The Church is invisible since no man can look into another's heart and see whether he believes. However, all the members of this Church are known to God.

- Luke 17:20-21: <sup>20</sup> Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, <sup>21</sup> nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you."
- 2 Timothy 2:19: Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness."

Kingdoms and empires have passed away and will pass away, but the Church of Christ will continue to the end of time. Peter is not himself the rock upon which the Church is built, but Christ is the foundation of His Church.

- Matthew 16:18: And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.
- 1 Corinthians 3:11: For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

As all true believers the world over constitute the Invisible Church, it follows that there can be but one such Church. Therefor Christ speaks of "one flock" (John 10:16). There are many individual Christians, but as they all have the same faith in the one Lord and God and the same hope of eternal life, they are therefore by the Spirit of God united into one spiritual body. Christ is its only head.

- Ephesians 4:3-6: <sup>3</sup> Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup> There is one body and one Spirit— just as you were called to

one hope when you were called—<sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism; <sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

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- Colossians 1:18: And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

The Church is called holy because it is made holy by faith in Christ. By faith in Christ they have forgiveness of all their sins, and are clothed with the garment of Christ's righteousness. Therefore, in the sight of God they are cleansed from sin, are holy, and are without blemish.

- Ephesians 5:25-27: <sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her <sup>26</sup> to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, <sup>27</sup> and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.
- 1 Peter 2:5: you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

The above information is taken from: "Luther's Small Catechism" annotated by Edward W. A. Koehler.