
CHAPTER 25: OF THE CHURCH

1. *THE catholic or universal church, which is 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.*¹

1. Eph. 1:10, 22-23; Eph. 5:23, 27, 32; Col. 1:18.

Notes:

- Summary: Definition of the Invisible Church
 - o Only the elect

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2. *The visible church, which is also catholic or universal under the gospel (not confined to one nation, as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion,² together with their children;³ and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ,⁴ the house and family of God,⁵ out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.*⁶

2. I Cor. 1:2; I Cor. 12:12-13; Ps. 2:8; Rev. 7:9; Rom. 15:9-12.

3. I Cor. 7:14; Acts 2:39; Ezek. 16:20-21; Rom. 11:16; Gen. 3:15; Gen. 17:7.

4. Matt. 13:47; Isa. 9:7.

5. Eph. 2:19; Eph. 3:15.

6. Acts 2:47.

Notes:

- Summary: Definition of the Visible Church
 - o Professing Christians
 - o Children of professing Christians

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3. *Unto this catholic visible church Christ hath given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints in this life, to the end of the world; and doth by his own presence and Spirit, according to his promise, make them effectual thereunto.*⁷

7. I Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11-13; Matt. 28:19-20; Isa. 59:21.

Notes:

- Summary: Function of the Visible Church
 - o For Word and Sacrament
 - o For Edification
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4. *This catholic church hath been sometimes more, sometimes less visible.⁸ And particular churches, which are members thereof, are more or less pure, according as the doctrine of the gospel is taught and embraced, ordinances administered, and public worship performed more or less purely in them.⁹*

8. Rom. 11:3-4; Rev. 12:6, 14.

9. Rev. 2:1-29; Rev. 3:1-22; I Cor. 5:6-7.

Notes:

- Summary: Variation in the Invisible Church
 - o Varying visibility
 - o Varying purity

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5. *The purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error;¹⁰ and some have so degenerated as to become no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan.¹¹ Nevertheless, there shall be always a church on earth to worship God according to his will.¹²*

10. I Cor. 13:12; Rev. 2:1-29; Rev. 3:1-22; Matt. 13:24-30, 47.

11. Rev. 18:2; Rom. 11:18-22.

12. Matt. 16:18; Ps. 72:17; Ps. 102:28; Matt. 28:19-20.

Notes:

- Summary: Reality of Church on Earth
 - o Subject to Error
 - o Always a Church following His will

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6. *The Lord Jesus Christ is the only head of the Church,¹³ and the claim of any man to be the vicar of Christ and the head of the Church, is unscriptural, without warrant in fact, and is a usurpation dishonouring to the Lord Jesus Christ.^{vi}*

13. Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22.

Notes:

- Summary: Christ and the Church
 - o Christ is head of the Church
 - o No vicars of Christ on earth
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