

CATHOLIC

Catholic is much more than the name of a Church in Christendom. The word "Catholic" is as descriptive as it is the name of the Church Christ established at Pentecost in 33 A.D.

The word "catholic" is derived from the Greek term "katholikos" (Example: Acts 9:31) It appears many places in the New Testament, translated "throughout all" or "universal". The word "universal" comes from the Latin word, "universum", meaning 'to be all one in all'. The Hebrew word for universal was (κατά- completely) and (ηολοό-whole) meaning complete or whole. One reference to the term is at Judges 20:14 "All...of Israel", as in the whole of the nation of Israel.

The word "Church" is derived from The Greek word (ἐκκλησία – ekklesia or ecclesia; meaning "called out" or "gathered together") The Church is also referred to by the apostles as "the house of God." It has always been understood that there was "one house", one faith, one hope, one baptism, and yes, one holy "universal" body of Christ, His Holy (universal) "Catholic" Church. So, when Christians spoke of "the Church" before the 16th century (Protestant Revolution) they, including Luther, were referring exclusively to the Catholic Church. Why? There had always ONLY been one Church established by Christ Himself at Pentecost in 33 A.D.

Matthew 16:18, Jesus made it clear that He chose Peter to be His "rock" (Greek word "πέτρα" ~ petra) meaning "stone, rock", His chief corner "stone", of the new Church, as His "Vicar" (Latin for chief representative on earth) to be His representative for His Church after His resurrection and ascension at Pentecost. So, though Jesus continued to be "Sovereign" ruling from heaven, Peter was to be His chief apostle to "feed His sheep" (John 21:15) When St Peter was crucified upside down in Rome in 67 A.D., Linus was the next "Vicar" of Christ in Rome. (mentioned in 2 Tim. 4:21), and after Pope St Linus, the remaining apostles chose St Anacletus to be successor to St Linus, etc. This is how Christ, and His Church would be present until the conclusion of the world. (Matthew 28:20)

The 37th Vicar of Christ, Pope St Damasus in 382 A.D., authorized St Jerome to translate the entire canon scriptures of 73 books from Genesis to Apocalypse (Revelation) into Latin. Why Latin? It was the language of the Roman Empire at the time, the language the Holy Fathers spoke in Rome and the language our Lord authorized to be used in His Mass. The celebration of the Mass goes back even before Christ was crucified. How?

Tradition (2 Thessalonians 2:14) tells us that Adam, Abel, Cain, Seth, Enoch and all Adam's descendants offered up sacrifices "Mass" to God. This tradition continued down to Noah and his three sons and through their descendants. Abel's sacrifice "Mass" was acceptable to God, in fact, 'perfect' or 'whole' or 'complete', according to the Hebrew word (דָּםֶשֶׁ) On the other hand, Cain's sacrifice did not please God and was unacceptable, because Cain's Mass was incomplete or not whole. Not all sacrifices offered in the name of God are acceptable. (Matt.7:21) If we do not obey all God's commands, He considers us, as Cain, unacceptable in His eyes. Abel became the first on earth to offer the first acceptable Mass in God's house, as part of the Holy (universal) household, in a broader view, the Catholic Church. Jesus commanded us "to be perfect" (Matthew 5:48). How? By water baptism, receiving His body and blood in holy communion, and continuing to ask forgiveness by confessing our sins to receive absolution. Christ promised that by doing this, He will render us clean, whole, and perfect before God. For all Catholics, salvation comes by living this sacramental life and continually receiving absolution of our sins, and communion until the conclusion of the world or the end of our lives.

We can then trace the lineage of Abel down to Jesus.

Abram (אֲבְרָם – Hamon meaning "exalted father") was the 10th generation from Noah.

God changed Abram's name to *Abraham*. (meaning "father of many")

Abraham - God promised him a covenant to bless ALL nations.

Abraham's first-born son by Hagar, Sarai's maidservant, was Ismael (יִשְׁמָעֵאל – meaning "outcast") who was the forefather of the Ishmaelites, Islam or Muslims.

Isaac (יִצְחָק – "he laughs") was the second son of Abraham and Sarai.

Jacob (יַעֲקֹב; from word 'heel' meaning, 'supplant' or 'follow') son of Isaac.

God changed Jacob's name to Israel (יִשְׂרָאֵל - "one who struggled with God")

Israel who had 12 sons, the foundation of the Israelites.

Judah (יְהוּדָה, Yəhuda – 'praise') Jacob's 4th son, ruler of the kingdom of Judah; Jews.

Jesus (Hebrew: Yeshua יֵשׁוּעַ; meaning "to deliver; to rescue.") born Dec. 25 according to tradition.

Jesus was therefore a Judean, not a Jew like the Pharisees and Sadducees of His day.

The descendants of Judah (the Jews) met in small gathering places called synagogues בית כנסת ~ meaning assembly, flock or house of prayer. They read from the Mosaic Law and the prophets and followed along with the prayers of the rabbis or priests of the temple, who in turn following the liturgy that Moses received from God. (Ex. 25-27) This liturgy included sacrifices of the best each Israelite family could give or afford, from turtle doves to sheep and other animals. There were five types of sacrificial offerings; burnt offerings, grain offerings, peace offerings, sin offerings and guilt offerings at the temple. But all offerings had to be perfect, complete, and whole, acceptable to God.

Throughout the Old Testament, a new covenant, a new Mass was promised that would be established when the Messiah arrived, the "Mass of Christ". The new covenant would do away with the old covenant along with the old liturgy and temporary offerings at the temple. (Jeremiah 31:31) St Peter announced to the Church after Pentecost that those under the new covenant would be called "a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession". (1 Peter 2:9) No longer was Israel or the descendants of Abraham to be considered as God's chosen people. We read at Acts 15:14, that "Simon hath related how God first visited to take of the Gentiles a people to his name." So, according to scripture, the Jews have not been God's chosen people since 33 A.D.

St John pointed out that this new holy nation would be in line to inherit a heavenly kingdom. (John 18:36) God turned His attention to those who acknowledged Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. Those who refused to accept God's great sacrifice in His Son, are no longer acceptable to God.

"God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6:10) Thus, the "faithful" since Abel, who were "called out" by God, to become part of the universal "Catholic" Church founded by Jesus. Jesus identified Himself as "the Word of God" and the fulfillment of the promised seed of the Abrahamic Covenant. (Galatians 3:16) (Genesis 12:1-3)

Jesus also promised that He would protect His Church from its enemies and heresies that He warned the serpent (Lucifer) would try to destroy and corrupt His Church, God's disciples. (John 14:6)

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father, but by me."

There is no salvation apart from Christ and His Holy Apostolic (universal) Catholic Church since it was established at Pentecost in 33 A.D. by Christ Himself with St Peter as the first Pope.