Lutheran Confessions

Apology of the Augsburg Confession: Article VII and VIII. The Church

5] But the Church is not only the fellowship of outward objects and rites, as other governments, but it is originally a fellowship of faith and of the Holy Ghost in hearts. [The Christian Church consists not alone in fellowship of outward signs, but it consists especially in **inward communion of eternal blessings in the heart, as of the Holy Ghost, of faith, of the fear and love of God]; which fellowship nevertheless has outward marks so that it can be recognized,** namely, the pure doctrine of the Gospel, and the administration of the Sacraments in accordance with the Gospel of Christ. [Namely, where God's Word is pure, and the Sacraments are administered in conformity with the same, there certainly is the Church, and there are Christians.] And this Church alone is called the body of Christ, which Christ renews [Christ is its Head, and] sanctifies and governs by His Spirit, as Paul testifies, Eph. 1, 22 sq., ….

9] And this article has been presented for a necessary reason. [The article of the Church Catholic or Universal, which is gathered together from every nation under the sun, is very comforting and highly necessary.] **We see the infinite dangers which threaten the destruction of the Church.** In the Church itself, infinite is the multitude of the wicked who oppress it [despise, bitterly hate, and most violently persecute the Word, as, *e.g.*, the Turks, Mohammedans, other tyrants, heretics, etc. For this reason the true teaching and the Church are often so utterly suppressed and disappear, as if there were no Church, which has happened under the papacy; it often seems that the Church has completely perished]. Therefore, in order that we may not despair, but may know that the Church will nevertheless remain [until the end of the world], likewise that we may know that, however great the multitude of the wicked is, yet the Church [which is Christ's bride] exists, and that Christ affords those gifts which He has promised to the Church, to forgive sins, to hear prayer, to give the Holy Ghost, this article in the Creed presents us these consolations….

13] If we will define the Church only as an outward polity of the good and wicked, men will not understand that the kingdom of Christ is righteousness of heart and the gift of the Holy Ghost [that the kingdom of Christ is spiritual, as nevertheless it is; that therein Christ inwardly rules, strengthens, and comforts hearts, and imparts the Holy Ghost and various spiritual gifts], but they will judge that it is only the outward observance of certain forms of worship and rites….

19] Thus John [Matt. 3, 12: *He will throughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff*] speaks **concerning the whole race of the Jews, and says that it will come to pass that the true Church will be separated from that people.** (Bente, F., *Concordia Triglotta*, Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Northwestern Publishing House, 1997).

Put it into Practice

These questions have been put together to help you as you extend and apply tonight's Scripture to your life.

Prayer

Almighty God, we implore You, show Your mercy unto Your humble servants, that we who put no trust in our own merits may not be dealt with after the severity of Your judgment, but according to Your mercy; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **AMEN** *(Collect for 3rd Last Sunday)*

Word of God: Matthew 24:15-28 (on back)

Questions to Ponder in Prayer

1. Where is the holy place? (Hebrews 9:1-5, 1 Kings 8:6-11)
2. Examine Daniel 11:31 and 12:11 to see where Daniel spoke of "the abomination that causes desolation." (This abomination will leave the Temple desolate of worshippers.) The time of which Daniel prophesies is found in 1 Maccabees 1:20-64. In 168 BC, Antiochus Epiphanes erected a pagan altar on top of the great altar of burnt sacrifice before the Sanctuary.
3. Jesus tells that this time will be similar to what Daniel prophesied. Josephus tells how Titus' armies surrounded Jerusalem before her fall and destruction in 70 AD. The Jewish historian Josephus in *War*, book 5-6.
4. When the Christians see this abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, what are they to do? (v. 16-18)
5. Why the concern for the Sabbath, pregnancy and nursing mothers?
6. What are the similarities between the destruction of Jerusalem and the Flood, Sodom and Gemorrah, Babylonian Captivity, etc.?
7. Why does God bring this destruction and upon who? (Jn 12:48)
8. What does the destruction of Jerusalem(in AD 70) mean for believers who are anticipating an end(death or Christ's Second Coming)? (Mt 24:44) Where are we to flee for a refuge?
9. This destruction of Jerusalem will leave these new Jewish believers susceptible to false christs and false prophets. Why? (Rev 22:20)
10. Who are the elect, the chosen? Can the elect be deceived? (v.24)
11. What keeps the elect from being deceived? (v. 25, 1 Peter 1:5)
12. Should we look for signs and miracles? ("counterfeit miracles" 2 Ths 2:9)
13. Concerning Christ's return, what does God's Word teach?
    A. Jesus Christ will return(Lk 21:27). B. On the Last Day (2 Peter 3:10). C. Seen visibly, not secretly(Mt 24:27), D. To Judge the world(Mt 25:31f), not set up an earthly government(Jn 18:36).
14. Why is it inconsistent that we would point to the Christ visibly?
15. Verse 28 is a hard verse to understand. The comparison is between the vulture who gorges himself on a dead rotting carcass. Similarly, the false prophets/Christs will stuff themselves on the carcass of the rotting nation.

6:30 PM "Learn by Heart"

Through simple repetition those present will inwardly digest…

Hymn **"Consumed by Flame, the Weary World"** ASBH insert
Lord's Prayer, 4th Petition and Meaning
1 Thessalonians 4:14

7:00 PM "Catechesis"

+ Opening Verses
"O Lord, open Thou(†) my lips…"
from the Psalter, p. 29-30

Reading
St. Matthew 24:15-28 *(back)*

Hymn
"Consumed by Flame, the Weary World"
(Augustana Service Book & Hymnal, insert)

Catechesis on… *(back)*
St. Matthew 24:15-28
Liturgy
Catechism

+ The Prayers..... p.36
Kyrie ("Lord, have mercy…")
Lord's Prayer
Salutation p.37
Collect for Sunday
--prayer based on reading
Special Prayers
Collect for Peace p.37
+ Benedicamus & Blessing p.38-39

Catechesis on St. Matthew 24:15-28

15“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), 16“then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17“Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. 18“And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. 19“But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! 20“And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. 21“For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22“And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened. 23“Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There!’ do not believe it. 24“For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. 25“See, I have told you beforehand. 26“Therefore if they say to you, ‘Look, He is in the desert!’ do not go out; or ‘Look, He is in the inner rooms!’ do not believe it. 27“For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. 28“For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together. (NKJV)

The Return of Christ

“It is also taught among us that our Lord Jesus Christ will return on the last day for judgment and will raise up all the dead, to give eternal life and everlasting joy to believers and the elect but to condemn ungodly men and the devil to hell and eternal punishment.

4 Rejected, therefore, are the Anabaptists who teach that the devil and condemned men will not suffer eternal pain and torment. 5 Rejected, too, are certain Jewish opinions which are even now making an appearance and which teach that, before the resurrection of the dead, saints and godly men will possess a worldly kingdom and annihilate all the godless. (AC XVII)

Millennialium: Definition of terms:

millennialism (or Chiliasm) = the doctrine that Christ will reign on earth for a thousand years, presumably taken from Revelation 20:1-7. (Note: In Latin, mille=1000; and in Greek chilioi=1000)

dispensationalism = divides the history of man into periods of time, usually seven. The last being the millennial reign of Christ on earth.

rapture = The removing of believers from the earth

There are primarily THREE VIEWS:

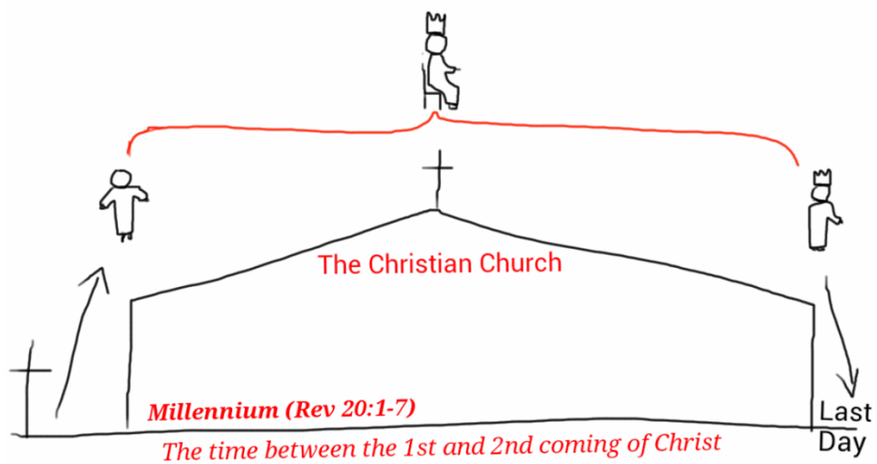
1. **Pre-millennialism** = Christ will come to this earth **before or at the beginning** of the Millennium (1000 year reign). When Christ visibly returns he will remove(rapture) believers from this earth. Dead believers will be resurrected and living believers transfigured and taken to heaven. Many will be saved and world-wide righteousness ensues. Some premillenialists are **dispensational**, dividing the history of man into seven periods of time, the 7th being Christ’s millennial reign on earth.

2. **Post-millennialism** = The Gospel will gradually permeate the world and this condition(the universal acceptance of the Gospel) will remain for 1000 years. At the end there is a falling away, then Christ will return visibly **after** the Millennium.

3. **Amillennialism** = literally means "no millennium." Amillennialism is an unfortunate term since the question is not really whether there is or is not a millennium but what is it and when is it. **Historic Christianity** teaches a millennium based on Rev. 20:1-7, but without the hyperliteralism forced on the passage by pre- and post-millennialists. The millennium is the period of time between the first coming (as a humble man) and second coming of Christ(at the end of the world as king). **We live in the millennium.**

These false teachings have led to confusion and doubt so that rather than believers looking forward to heaven(Ac 14:2, Mt 5:12, Phil 3:20-21), their sights are set on an earthly kingdom. It has also led believers to either spiritual laxity since Christ is no longer imminent or to a feverish preoccupation with the "signs of the times."

CATECHESIS
ON
ST. MATTHEW 24:15-28



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