

## THE PAPAL SCHISM - HOW DOES THE CHURCH EXPLAIN ALL THE RIVAL POPES AT THE ONE TIME?

The Church says one point about the pope being made the rock the church is built on by Jesus is that it marks out the Church that has the keys to teach with Christ's authority so that you are safe from being hurt by and wasting time with false doctrine.

Please go to the Catholic Encyclopedia which is now online. Antipopes.

At times there have been two and even three popes without people knowing who was the real and who was the phoney. Sometimes the two contending popes didn't know themselves! The worst example of this took place with the Great Western Schism.

Do these fiascos prove that the pope is not infallible? Protestants may say that they do for God would not let the world be confused about which man was infallible. There is more than that at stake. The wrong pope means that the Church he leads can go into error for it is not the true Church. If you can't tell which claimant is the real pope then how can any of them really be leading the true Church?

The Protestants say that if Jesus made the pope the infallible rock he built his Church on, that the Church and the pope would have been inspired to prevent these disasters. This is true for if Jesus will not allow the Church to err in doctrine and morals as the Church teaches then he cannot allow the Church to end up being built on the wrong rock or not knowing which rock is the real rock.

Catholics say there was a real but unrecognised pope. They say they know who he was now which as we will see is not true and scholars continually argue over such matters and the Vatican has times changed its mind about who the pope was. It might be thought that doesn't matter if they do know or not for the Holy Spirit has the power to ensure that the Church does not lose the legacy of the true pope. Jesus said there would be false Christs who would do miracles so why wouldn't he allow false popes or anti-popes? He told us to be careful that the false Christs would not deceive us meaning it is possible to see through them for you cannot resist them unless you have evidence that they are deceivers. When Jesus let the Church be misled by a false rock why would he preserve the legacy of the true rock? He cannot be trusted to do that. We cannot trust the Lord so we cannot trust the papacy.

The whole point of the papacy is preserving the true Church and the faith. Faith includes the doctrine that you are in the true Church marked out by the pope who is its head. For example, to believe in the legitimacy of Pope John Paul II is as much as part of the Catholic faith as is the divinity of Jesus Christ or the existence of God. It has to be even though they will say it is not. If you are attached to the wrong visible head of the Church you are not in the true visible Church of Christ because the true visible head is the rightful leader.

The fact of the matter is if you have more than one person making a plausible claim to be the pope you don't know who the preserver of the faith is and which one has the true Church? The true pope could not be really a true pope then because then he is not the rock? He would have to be able to be rock in practice to be the real rock. He would not even be a marker for the true Church never mind a rock!