

WHY PETER IS NOT THE FOUNDATION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, Who do people say the Son of Man is? 14 They replied, Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets. 15 But what about you? he asked. Who do you say I am? 16 Simon Peter answered, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. 17 Jesus replied, Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. 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. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Matthew 16:13-19

Matthew 16:18 says: *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church.*

This is the first time Jesus speaks of His church, and here, as not yet founded.

Three terms are to be noted:

1. "Peter", in the Greek, "Petros", meaning a single stone
2. "Rock", in the Greek, "Petra", which means the solid, immovable bed-rock, a great mass like a cliff.
3. "Church", Greek, "ecclesia", those "called out", the fellowship of Believers, the

organized society of Christ, the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

The Papal church insists that Peter is the rock upon which Christ founded His church. The Catholic position is based upon the fact that Peter means a stone, and the Savior's language might be rendered, *Thou art a stone and upon this rock I will build my church.* John 1:42

The Catholic view is untenable:

1. The Savior does not say, "Thou art a stone, and upon thee I will build", etc., or *Thou art a rock, and upon this rock I will build.* He changes the word in the Greek from "Petros" (Peter, a stone) to "Petra", a rock, or ledge of rock--a solid bed-rock.

2. Every Believer is a stone, 1 Peter 2:5. The Lord declares that Peter is one these living stones, made such by his confession of faith in Matthew 16:16, and ready to be built into the Church, the spiritual temple, formed of living stones, and built upon The Rock. So is every confessor of Christ.

In order to settle what the Savior does mean by the "Rock", we must consider Matthew 16:18-19 together, and keep in mind the entire figure.

This figure portrays:

1. A Builder, Christ
2. A temple to be built, composed of living stones, the church.
3. A foundation for that temple, the Rock.
4. The gates of an unfriendly city or power which shall seek its destruction, Hell, or more correctly, Hades, the unseen abode

of the dead, the grave.

5. A door-keeper of the church, or spiritual temple, with his keys. Peter's place in the figure is not that of the foundation, but that of the first key-holder, or turnkey to the Jews first, Galatians 2:7-8. Peter first preached the powerful Gospel to the Jews on Pentecost, Acts 2:14-42, later to Cornelius, a gentile in Acts 10: 1-48 and throughout his lifetime! We today as members of the Church have this authority to also open the Kingdom of heaven to all men through the proclamation of the Gospel in the Great Commission given to us though Christ Jesus in Matthew 28.

The only difficulty is in settling what the Lord means by the "Rock". Since this Rock is the foundation of the Church, the central principle, the fundamental idea, we are aided to a correct decision by the teachings of the word elsewhere.

We learn (through Paul) *For no other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* This excludes Peter or any human platform. 1 Corinthians 3:11

Christ is often called a stone:

1. "The stone that the builders rejected" Matthew 21:42.
2. "The chief corner stone" Ephesians 2:19-21.
3. "The stone that is the head of the corner" Acts 4:10-12, 1 Peter 2:7 .
4. *The spiritual rock which is Christ* 1 Corinthians 10:4. Isaiah 8:14, 28:16 and Psalms 118:22 are the Old Testament Messianic passages where Christ is called a Rock or Stone. These passages are quoted also in

the New Testament. In I Corinthians 10:4, Paul says the Rock from which the Israelites drank typified Christ.

Faith in Christ held in the heart, and confessed with the lips is the very foundation of spiritual life and of the Church. This constituted the fundamental difference in apostolic days between Christians and unbelievers, the Church and the world. It does still. It is the essence of the teaching of the New Testament that the platform or foundation of the Christian society, the church, is this belief that *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God* Matthew 16:16, John 14:6, I Corinthians 15:1-8

It is then Peter's grand confession in Matthew 16:16 that faith in the Spiritual Rock, the faith that lays hold of Christ, belief that He is the Anointed of God, the Divine Savior, that the Lord pronounces The Rock upon which He will found His church. That this view is correct is shown by a correct understanding of the declaration. The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

"The gates of Hades" (Revised Version). From the gates of the city always marched forth its armies. The powers of Hades are represented by its gates. Hades is not hell (Gehenna), but the unseen abode of the dead that holds the departed (before the cross) within its gates. Just after these words the Lord talks of his death, or entering Hades. Six months later the Sanhedrin sent Him to death for making the same confession Peter had just made, Matthew 26:64-67. They expected to demonstrate that the confession of His divinity which He had

made was false by sending Him to Hades, which they supposed would hold Him and prevail against the confession of The ROCK.

He was sent there from the cross, but the gates of Hades did not prevail, for they could not hold Him, and the living Savior, rising triumphant from the tomb, was the unanswerable argument that His own and Peter's confession was a Rock that could never be moved. His resurrection demonstrated that He is the Rock.

Hades did not prevail nor will it prevail for anyone who believes salvation is by grace through faith and that not of yourself, it is a free gift of God, not by works least any man should boast. Ephesians 2:8-9 Jesus said in Luke 24:45-47 *Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.*

Additionally: Peter never claimed to be the Pope in any of his writings, only an apostle of Jesus Christ and a fellow Elder. Surely if Peter had been Pope "the supreme head of the church" he would have declared that fact in his general epistles for that was the place of all others to have asserted his authority.

Was Peter ever in Rome?

There are many reasons to believe Peter did not reign in Rome. One of the strongest is found in Paul's epistle to the Romans. According to the Roman church tradition, Peter reigned as Pope in Rome for 25 years,

from 42 to 67 A.D. It is generally agreed that Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome was written in the year 58 A.D., at the very height of Peter's alleged reign there. He did not address his letter to Peter, as he should have done if Peter was in Rome and the head of all the churches, but to the Believers in the Church of Rome. How strange for a missionary to write to a church and not mention the Pastor/Bishop? That would be an inexcusable affront!

And again, had Peter been in Rome prior or at the same time when Paul arrived there as a prisoner in 61 A.D., Paul could not have failed to mention him, for in the epistles written from there during his imprisonment—Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon—he gives quite a complete list of his fellow workers in Rome and Peter's name is not among them? He spent two whole years there as a prisoner and received all who came to visit him, Acts 28:30. Nor does he mention Peter in his second epistle to Timothy, which was written from Rome during his second imprisonment in 67 A.D. He says all his friends have forsaken him, only Luke is with him, 2 Timothy 4:6-11. Where was Peter to offer aid?

This is clear proof Peter is not the foundation of the Church nor did he reign in Rome as Pope/Bishop of Christianity?

Jesus said to the Pharisees and Scribes in Mark 7:7 *But in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrine the traditions of men.*



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