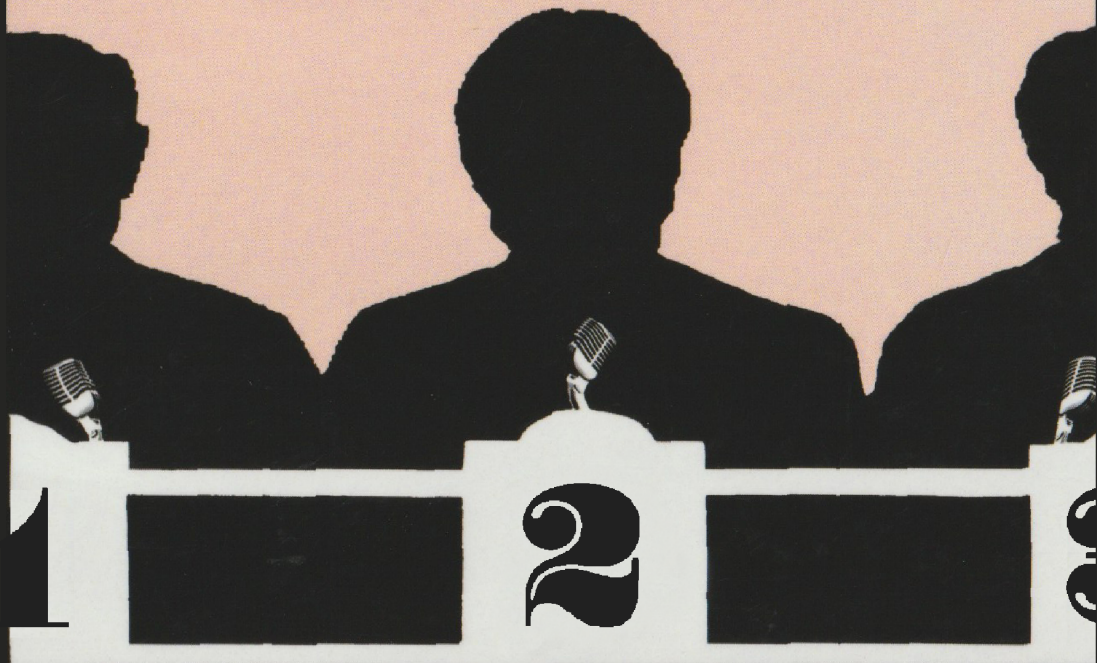


# WILL THE REAL PETER



## PLEASE STAND!

Countering Roman Catholic Claims  
To Peter's Primacy

**TOM CRAGGS, JR.**



**WILL THE REAL**  
**PETER**  
**PLEASE STAND!**

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A 2021 Missionary Outreach To Catholics Publication

All Scripture quotations are from the  
Authorized King James Version of the Bible  
Unless otherwise identified.

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## **What Is Apologetics?**

Apologetics is the defense of biblical faith "*once delivered unto the saints*" (Jude 3). The word apologetics is derived from the Greek, "apologia" which means a reasoned defense. As such, it involves providing an answer not an apology. Like a good attorney who defends their clients in a court of law by presenting sound reason, evidence and a thorough knowledge of the law. Likewise, Christians are called to be apologists to defend biblical Christianity through reason, evidence and a thorough knowledge of the Word of God.

### **Why Is Apologetics Important To Christians?**

The Bible informs us that apologetics is not just a nicety; it is a necessity for every Bible-believing Christian. Writing in a world steeped in mystery cults, the Apostle Peter admonished Christians to "*be ready always to give an answer (apologia) to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear*" (First Peter 3:15). Further, the Apostle Paul vigorously defended the biblical Gospel (Galatians 1:6-9; Acts 17:15-34; 18:4) and charged young Timothy and Titus to do the same (Second Timothy 2:23-26; 4:2-5; Titus 1 :9-14).

Furthermore, apologetics is pre-evangelism. As such, apologetics is "*the hand-maiden*" to evangelism. It is using our well-reasoned biblical answers as springboards or opportunities to share the Good News of the biblical Gospel.

Finally, apologetics is post-evangelism. In the massive sea of religions and belief systems, all of which are vying for unsuspecting Christians affections, it is crucial to be familiar with the foundational and essential teachings of the Bible upon which our faith is established. Namely, that God created the universe, that Jesus Christ demonstrated He is God through the immutable fact of His one-time never to be repeated Work of redemption on the cross and His resurrection; and that the Bible is divinely inspired rather than human in origin (Second Timothy 3:16-17; Second Peter 1:21).



## Preface -

During July 2002, I traveled with a missionary team from Carr Township Baptist Church in Borden, Indiana, to Toronto, Canada for the World Youth Day celebration with Catholic teenagers from around the world. John Paul II, the former Pope, also was in attendance among the nearly half-million young people.

Our journey there was for the express purpose of sharing the biblical Gospel with our Catholic friends. Most of our evangelism took place on the street corners of downtown Toronto. We witnessed to teenagers, priests, monks, nuns and those aspiring to be Catholic clergy.

The prevailing issue, which surfaced numerous times in our conversations, was the Catholic teaching regarding the Primacy of Peter. This was the central teaching they attempted to explain in order to justify their Hierarchical system. The doctrine is derived from Matthew 16:18. Catholics believe Christ was referring to Peter in a singular way and designated him as the supreme ruler over the other Apostles and entire Church. Further, according to Rome, Peter's authority was transferred to his successors as the bishops of Rome.

Sadly, virtually every Catholic we spoke with could not move beyond the Matthew 16 passage of Scripture to justify this foundational teaching of Catholicism. It is perplexing because the Roman Catholic Church stands or falls on this crucial doctrine. They base their entire belief system on this premise about Peter.

In this book, "Will The Real Peter Please Stand," we want to communicate the biblical teachings that refute the Catholic claims of Petrine Primacy and supremacy, which we shared with our Catholic friends during World Youth Day.

Tom Craggs, Jr.

Missionary Outreach To Catholics



## **Introduction -**

Bible-believing Christians through the ages have embraced and relied upon the truths of Scripture to enlighten them to God's plan of Salvation (Second Timothy 3:15); understand essential doctrines and to teach how to faithfully live the Christian life (Galatians 2:20). Moreover, those whom have trusted Scripture alone realize every aspect of Christian life is addressed clearly and is understandable. They know believers do not have to go outside the Bible for anything relative to living the Christian life (Second Timothy 3: 16-17).

They too, realize the Lord expects them to diligently study the Word of God daily to show themselves approved of God (Second Timothy 2:15). Likewise, they know He expects His children to be ready to communicate biblical truths with those outside of Christ when God-ordained opportunities occur (First Peter 3: 15). Further, they understand how vitally important it is to be a part of a vibrant Church that believes the Bible is inspired, inerrant, authoritative and all sufficient! Bible-believing Christians want those in their circle of influence to possess what they have; Salvation and a personal relationship with the Saviour. Because God's Word is near and dear to their heart, they want to encourage their Catholic friends to read the Bible. Discerning Christians realize Catholics are entrapped in a sacramental system of Salvation, which is contrary to what sacred Scripture teaches.

What if you were confronted with the following scenario involving your Catholic loved-one? One day your Catholic friend, while reading through the Gospel of Matthew comes to chapter 16:18 and recalls their parish Priest shared that this was the passage of Scripture, which taught Peter was the first Pope with unique authority. They approach you with a very important question, which demands a biblical response. The question. "Why do Bible believing Christians reject the Primacy of Peter?" They go on to say, because it states in Matthew 16:18 that Christ made Peter the first Pope and conferred on him unique authority over the other Apostles and entire Church. Keep in mind, your Catholic friend has been taught the Primacy of Peter is the most important teaching upon which the Catholic Church claims uniqueness as the one true Church of Jesus Christ. This is what they have been taught from childhood.

How would you respond to this question? Would you be able to address this important question from a biblical perspective? Hopefully, this book will equip you with an array of biblical answers to lovingly share with your Catholic loved-ones and friends.

## **Chapter One**

### **Upon This Slippery Rock -**

In Roman Catholicism the two foundational teachings are the Primacy of Peter and the Sacrifice of the Mass. The entire belief system rests upon these two doctrines. In this book we shall focus on the Primacy of Peter often referred to as the Petrine supremacy doctrine. This work evaluates from a biblical perspective this Roman Catholic distinctive. That is the teaching Peter was given unique authority over the other Apostles by Christ and that he was the first Bishop of Rome and that he exercised total authority over the entire Church. According to this teaching, Christ also appointed Peter as the first Pope, who in turn went to Rome in 42 A.D. and served in this capacity for twenty-five years. Beginning with Peter, the Catholic Church claims a succession of Popes, which continues to this day. Further, every central doctrine relating to the Pope (Apostolic Succession, Vicar of Christ, Infallibility and Catholic Priesthood) all results from the teaching of the Primacy of Peter.

Rome's Councils and Catechism state in unequivocal terms that it is necessary for Salvation that individuals (Catholics and non-Catholics) embrace its teaching on the Primacy doctrine and that they submit themselves to the authority of the Roman Pontiff in all areas of faith, morals and discipline. These Catholic sources of authority state that if anyone disagrees with these teachings and does not submit to them he cannot be saved and is anathematized. From the First Vatican Council:

*If anyone, therefore, shall say that blessed Peter the Apostle was not appointed the Prince of all the Apostles and the visible Head of the whole Church militant; or that the same directly and immediately received from the same our Lord Jesus Christ a Primacy of honor only, and not of true and proper jurisdiction: let him be anathema.*

*If, then, any should deny that it is by institution of Christ the Lord, or by divine right, that blessed Peter should have a perpetual line of successors in the Primacy over the universal Church, or that the Roman Pontiff is the successor of blessed Peter in this Primacy: let him be anathema.*

*If, then, any shall say that the Roman Pontiff has the office merely of inspection or direction, and not full and supreme power of jurisdiction over the universal Church, not only in things which belong to faith and morals, but also in those which relate to the discipline and government of the Church spread throughout the world; or assert that he possesses merely the principal part, and not all the fulness of this supreme power; or that power which he enjoys is not ordinary and immediate, both over*



*each and all the churches, and over each and all the pastors and the faithful: let him be anathema.*

*This is the teaching of Catholic truth, from which no one can deviate without loss of faith and Salvation.*

*Further, all those things are to be believed with divine and Catholic faith which are contained in the Word of God, written or handed down, and which the Church, either by a solemn judgment, or by her ordinary and universal magisterium, proposes for belief as having been divinely revealed. <sup>1</sup>*

This is one of many dogmatic statements from their official documents that proclaim the Church of Rome has authoritatively declared that its doctrines and claims for the Primacy of Peter are essential elements of saving faith. They must be believed in order to obtain Salvation.

It has decreed a Gospel message, which it says, is binding upon all who would be saved. And part of that message is the need to embrace its teaching on the Primacy of Peter and its Papacy. Many sincere individuals within the Catholic Church implicitly accept the claims of Rome without any explicit biblical proof-texts to support their beliefs about Peter, as we shall see.



This Book is not for the timid, fainthearted, or those unable to handle truth that can move them out of their complacency.

However, their presupposition is this: that the supposed promises made to Peter are as relevant today as they were when Christ first made them to Peter. Consequently, these individuals accept whatever teaching Rome promulgates about Peter and its Papacy without question, believing that the Roman Catholic Church cannot err because it is founded upon the rock of Peter. <sup>2</sup> But can this presupposition by Catholics be substantiated by inspired (God breathed) Scripture? This is the central issue addressed in this book.

### **Inspired Scripture Teaches Peter Was A Leader And Greatly Used By God During The First Century Church -**

We can say without hesitation, the Apostle Peter is the most misrepresented person in Scripture, apart from the Lord Jesus Christ. More misinformation has been taught about Peter than the other Apostles. There is no question God used Peter in a significant way. In Matthew chapter fourteen, we see Peter and the other Apostles in the boat on the Sea of Galilee and it is Peter taking the initiative to walk on water to the Lord. Peter demonstrated leadership by taking the initiative.

In Acts 2 at Pentecost, we see Peter's first use of the keys and the Gospel presented to the Jews. In Acts 3, we see also the first apostolic miracle where the lame man was

healed. Peter took the initiative to minister to this man. Also in Acts 10, we see Peter's second use of the keys and the Gospel given to the Gentiles. To be sure, God used Peter in a great and mighty way. But was he chosen by God to be supreme, the infallible primate over the other Apostles and entire Church? Did he become the first Bishop of Rome with unique authority? And was this unique authority conferred upon all those that succeeded Peter as Bishop of Rome? These are just a few of the many questions that will be addressed in this book. As we begin our in-depth inquiry of Peter and this alleged authority he supposedly possessed, keep in mind there is a vast difference between leadership and Primacy.

What proof-texts does Rome rely on to justify the teaching of Peter's Primacy? There are essentially three passages of Scripture Rome uses to defend this important Catholic teaching found in Matthew 16, Luke 22 and John 21. However, their chief passage used to justify this defining doctrine is Matthew 16. Perhaps no other Scripture has generated more discussion and debate among Catholics and Bible-believing Christians as Matthew 16:13-19, with Verse 18 providing the essence of the argument. Let us read this entire passage in context.

*When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*

This is the critical passage of Scripture for the establishment of the authority claims of the Roman Catholic Church. It is upon the interpretation of the words, “Peter,” “rock,” “keys” and “binding and loosing” that the entire structure and Hierarchy of the Church of Rome rests.

We turn to Dr. Murray of Maynooth Seminary in Ireland, a well known Catholic theologian, to provide the Catholic interpretation of Matthew 16:13-19.

*“By saying these words, Jesus appointed Peter supreme head of the Church, and gave him full authority to legislate for it; to teach, to inspect and judge; to reject and denounce all false doctrines, and to declare what is the true faith; to appoint all its clergy and teachers and to arrange their work; in*

*short, the whole church, its officers, its constitution, its work, were entrusted to Peter.”*

Does Matthew 16:18 teach that Christ ordained one man to be above all others in His Church as Dr. Murray states? As astounding as this Catholic interpretation is, it is precisely what the Roman Catholic Church believes regarding Peter's Primacy. Moreover, the Catholic Councils along with the 1994 Catechism teach this foundational doctrine of Rome. From this brief passage of Scripture the Roman Catholic Church has established virtually its entire authority claims for the Papacy. To be sure, this is perhaps the most misunderstood and misinterpreted Verse of Scripture in the New Testament.

In order to understand this Verse one must determine from the Scriptures, whom Christ really established His Church upon. Was Christ referring to Himself as the Rock



Nowhere in Scripture do we find Christ explicitly establishing a Roman Priesthood. Rather, in this dispensation of grace, all born-again believers make up a "royal priesthood" (First Peter 2:9).

of the Church and upon which the Church would be built or was Christ referring to Peter in a singular way as the Rock in Matthew 16:18, upon which Christ promised to build His Church and designating Peter as the supreme earthly ruler over the entire Church? To be sure, the proper understanding that unlocks the controversy over this passage of Scripture rests primarily upon what is meant by the words, "Peter" and "Rock. "

Because this Verse appears to have more than one meaning, depending upon the reader, then it is a Verse of Scripture which requires interpretation. How do we accomplish this? First, read and interpret Scripture literally when possible; if the Scripture appears to be figurative, then look for the literal truth it intends to convey. Second, Scripture must be interpreted within its contextual setting. Third, when confronted with any Verse of Scripture that can be interpreted with more than one meaning, then the Verse in question must be considered in the light of all other Scriptures throughout the Bible pertaining directly to the subject in question. Fourth, sometimes difficult passages need to be interpreted in light of what the Hebrew and Greek reveal. This particular Verse must be interpreted with this method in mind. Now let us begin our search for the true meaning of this passage of Scripture as we determine what the Lord meant to reveal in His dialogue with the Apostles.

As we examine the context of this passage of Scripture, several things emerge. First and foremost, this passage is about the Lord Jesus Christ, not Peter. Moreover, the primary issue of discussion is the Lord's identity. He asked the disciples who the people were saying that He



Nowhere in inspired Scripture do we find Christ explicitly establishing a Roman Papacy to rule over the universal Church and all its members (Luke 22:24-27).



was (V.13). Some said He was John the Baptist, some Elijah; others thought He was Jeremiah or one of the prophets (V.14). Then Jesus asked: "*But whom say ye that I am?*" (V.15). To this, Peter replied: "*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*" (V.16). We learn here the light of Christ's deity did not come from human wisdom. Rather it was the heavenly Father's divinely revealed truth. Peter was the first disciple to see the revelation and confess faith in Christ (VV.16-17). Because of Peter's bold testimony, the Lord Jesus responded by stating in Verse 18, "*thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church.*" Then in Verse twenty; to prevent a premature disclosure of His identity, Jesus warned them not to tell anyone that He was the Christ. Throughout this entire dialogue Christ is the theme, not Peter.

Now we come to the Verse that is the essence of the debate between Catholics and Bible believing Christians - Verse 18. In Matthew 16:18, written under divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit, it states in the original Greek text the word for Peter is Petros, meaning a small stone. The word for Rock here is Petra, meaning a foundation stone or massive Rock.



"He (God) is the Rock, His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He" (Deuteronomy 32:4).

In the original text this distinction is made: "*Thou art Petros (a stone) and upon this Petra (Rock) I will build my Church.*" Therefore, this Verse then can be paraphrased this way, "*Thou are Peter, a small stone, and upon Me, the foundation Rock, I will build My Church.*" If Christ had meant that Peter was to be the foundation upon which the Church was to be built, the structure of His statement would have been framed differently. The Lord would have said, "*Thou art Peter, and on thee I will build My Church;*" but He does not say this because Peter was not to be the Rock on which the Church was to be built. Instead, Christ uses the phrase "*upon this Rock*" and the word "*this*" pointing to Himself whom Peter had confessed when he said, "*Thou art the Christ.*" Christ did not promise to build His Church upon Peter, but upon Himself, as Peter himself is careful to tell us: "*Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a "chief corner stone," elect, precious: and he that believeth on Him (Christ) shall not be confounded (confused). Unto you therefore which believe He is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed (rejected), the same is made the head of the corner, And a "stone of stumbling" and a "rock of offence," even to them which stumble at the Word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed*" (First Peter 2:6-8). The Lord Jesus Himself even quotes the Old Testament prophecy from Psalm 118:22-23 which reveals Him as the One that would be the head of the corner or the chief corner stone of the Church: "*Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders*

*rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes" (Matthew 21:42)?*

The prophet Isaiah, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote of the coming Saviour over 700 years prior to Christ first advent; describing Him as a “*foundation stone a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation*” (Isaiah 28:16).

Also according to Second Samuel 22:32, there is no other Rock except God, "*For Who is God, save (except) the Lord? and Who is a Rock, save (except) our God?*" In both the Old and New Testament it is God Himself Who is the believer's Rock, their foundation, security and protection. Indeed, over thirty times in the Old Testament God is called a Rock. Four times in the New Testament Christ is called a Rock (Matthew 16:18; Romans 9:33; First Corinthians 10:4 and First Peter 2:8). Beloved, only Christ Himself could be the Church's Rock and foundation; and this is precisely what the Lord was promising in Matthew 16.

The Apostle Paul enlightens us as well as to whom the chief corner stone of the Church is and upon the foundation which believers are established. This passage of Scripture explicitly teaches the Church is built on the foundation of the Prophets, Apostles and Jesus Christ in Ephesians 2:20 which states; “*And (believers) are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone.*” Certainly, once a foundation is established, no further foundation is needed. And because no further foundation is needed, there is no need for a perpetual, Papal Primacy. The Word of God clearly teaches that the Apostles and Prophets were foundational gifts and there is not any biblical proof that there were to be one individual (i.e., the Pope) with unique authority to rule the entire Church. Instead, Ephesians 2:20 teaches emphatically that all the Apostles, not just Peter, are the foundation of the Church with Christ. Secondly, the only One Who was given a place of preeminence was Christ. Remember, Peter himself referred to Christ as the "chief corner stone" of the Church (First Peter 2:6), and the rest of believers as “living stones” (First Peter 2:5), in the structure of the Church. Peter is one "stone" along with the other Apostles as revealed in this passage of Scripture. So we see in Ephesians 2:20 that the Church was built on the foundation of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prophets, and Apostles (plural) and not on Peter alone (singular).<sup>3</sup>



"The Lord is my Rock and my fortress and my deliver; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my Salvation, and my high tower" (Psalm 18:2).



"For Who is God save (except) the LORD? or who is a Rock save (except) our God? (Psalm 18:31).

Moreover, Colossians 1:17-18 and Ephesians 5:23 confirm that Christ, and Christ alone, is the head of the Church: "*And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the Church: Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence*" (superior to

all others). Also, the book of Ephesians was written approximately thirty years after Pentecost and Christ was still proclaimed by the Apostle Paul in the inspired Word as the head of the Church at that time. Since Christ is referred to in the New Testament as the "*chief corner stone*" (foundation) of the Church (First Peter 2:6; First Corinthians 3: 11) and head of the Church (Ephesians 1:19-23; Colossians 1:17-18), this uniquely places the Lord Jesus Christ alone as having the preeminent position in the Church, not the Apostle Peter.

When Catholic theologians interpret Matthew 16 as a proof-text for establishing the doctrine of Peter's Primacy and other major claims about the Papacy, they are guilty of the err of eisegesis (reading a meaning into the text of Scripture) rather than practicing proper exegesis (drawing the meaning from the text of Scripture). This is why Rome can make outrageous claims from one passage of Scripture mean virtually anything they desire. The practice of eisegesis is never an appropriate or proper way to read and study the Bible. And to conclude from Matthew 16 all that Rome purports to be true, is to read something into the text that simply is not there.

### **The Catholic Church Responds With Their Interpretation Of Matthew 16:18 With The Aramaic Argument-**



The Gospel written by Mark, who is described in early Christian literature as Peter's close companion and under-study, does not even record the remark about the "Rock" in reporting Christ's statement to Peter at Caesarea Philippi (Mark 8:27-30). No, Christ did not build His Church upon a weak, sinful man. Rather the Church would be built upon Christ, the foundation and head of the Church (First Corinthians 3:11; Colossians 1:18).

Like other aberrant and heretical belief systems, the Roman Catholic Church is no different in terms of when confronted with a biblical truth that is diametrically opposed to their teaching, they are exceedingly quick to move the discussion off the pages of Holy Writ and onto the field of speculation and conjecture. Catholic apologists, conscious of the fact that Matthew's use of the word "*Petra*" in the phrase "*upon this Rock*" does not support their interpretation, counter by rejecting the Greek words for "*Peter*" and "*Rock*" because they argue that Christ would have spoken this passage of Scripture to the Apostles in the Aramaic language. Unlike the Greek, where two different words are used - *Petros* for Peter and *Petra*

for Rock; the Aramaic expression would have used one word form and that the same Aramaic word (*Kepha*) was used for both Peter and Rock. They claim that when the Lord Jesus spoke the words recorded in Matthew 16:18, He did not change His words but repeated Peter's Aramaic name *Kepha*. What Christ said, they claim, was: "*You are Kepha, and upon this Kepha I will build my Church.*" And so, they say, it is clear that Peter was to be the foundation upon which the Church would be built.

Since the Pope and his Magisterium claim to be the infallible interpreters of Scripture and that God has given the New Testament Scriptures to humankind through the



Church of Rome, and since they insist that Matthew's Gospel was written in Aramaic where there is only one word for stone or Rock, that being Cephas, we could then ask them who translated the Gospel into Greek. They would have to admit this as the work of a Roman Catholic scholar. Why, then, would that scholar have used two different Greek words, one for Peter and another for Rock? Or we could just go to John 1:42 where we see this Aramaic word (Kepha) is actually used in our English text, being transliterated as Cephas. It is in John 1 :42 where we see the Lord Jesus, upon meeting Peter, says, "*thou shalt be called Cephas*" (an Aramaic word that Catholic apologists insist can mean Rock or stone). But the Holy Spirit, Who inspired this writing, knew that some would say "Kepha" meant a large Rock. Therefore He gave the meaning of the word when He said, "*which is by interpretation, a stone.*"



As a matter of proper interpretation, do you think it is wiser to base doctrine on the original Greek manuscripts of the New Testament or on speculation as to what Christ might have said in Aramaic?

Just as there is a difference in meaning, there is also a difference in the gender of these words. Peter (Petros) is a masculine singular term and Rock (Petra) is a feminine singular term. It appears they do not seem to be referring to the same thing. Christ did not - say to Peter, "*you are Petros, and upon this Petros I will build my Church.*"



Since Scripture is inspired by God, as Scripture itself teaches (Second Timothy 3:16-17), then do you think the Holy Spirit made a mistake in His word choice in Matthew 16:18?

Also, whenever Peter is referred to in Matthew 16, it is in the second person "You" but "*this Rock*" is in the third person. With these significant differences between the two words, they are not meant to be equivalent.

James White, a biblical apologist, addresses this issue in his book, *Answers to Catholic Claims*, where he states, "*Note that when Christ speaks to Peter He does so in the second person, that is, direct address. However, 'the term 'this Rock' is third person making the differentiation between 'Peter' and 'this Rock' complete ... He is speaking to Peter about the 'Rock.' Hence, the text differentiates between Peter and the Rock in two ways: the form of the word, and the person of address.*"

White's argument is that Christ is shifting in His terminology by referring to something other than Peter. His use of second or third person is defined by "*direct address*" and "*indirect address.*"

In the final analysis, when Bible-believing Christians evaluate the Catholic Aramaic argument, they must remember there is not a scintilla of biblical or credible historical evidence that Jesus Christ proclaimed Peter to be Pope, or that any of the Apostles considered Peter to be Pope. The statement of the Lord Jesus to Peter, "*Thou art Peter and upon this Rock I will build my Church*" (Matthew 16:18) is the only statement in



Every figurative use of the word Rock in the Old Testament is a reference to deity. See, for example, Deuteronomy 32:4, 15, 28; First Samuel 2:2; Second Samuel 22:32; Psalm 18:31; Isaiah 44:8. Christ's Jewish Apostles would have had that imagery in their minds as they interpreted His words.

Scripture that could be twisted enough by Rome to substantiate the Papacy, and that took centuries.

Had the Lord intended to build His Church on Peter, He certainly could have and would have made it clear. As we have seen, there is much debate about the Greek word for Peter (Petros), meaning a stone. Again, some say that Christ was speaking in Aramaic and that there is no distinction between Rock and stone in Aramaic. But Christ also spoke Greek (the common language of that day). He no doubt made

that statement as we have it in Greek, but even if He spoke in Aramaic that day, we can believe that the translation into Greek would have retained the correct and proper meaning of what He said - remember, the Scriptures are inspired, infallible and inerrant. There is a clear distinction between Petros and Petra and when the two words appear in the same sentence one must be careful to observe the distinction.

The author has personally been to Caesarea Philippi and observed the huge rock formations there. I believe it is significant that the setting for the Lord Jesus' statement in Matthew 16:18, was near these huge ruins of Baalbec. It is also significant throughout Scripture, as we have seen, God is the Rock. It is of further significance that Christ did not say, "*Thou art Peter and upon you I will build my Church.*" Remember Jesus Christ is God, His Church is built upon that fact. He is also alive and able to oversee His followers, His Church. He has given an infallible guide book for us to follow and a perfect line of communication through prayer. He is that Good Shepherd and He knows and cares for every one of His sheep (those who trust only in Him). He is exalted by all born-again believers because He is the Rock. Were we to look to a mere man as our Rock, Christ would not have the preeminence (Colossians 1:18). Is it any wonder that in Romanism He is not preeminent? Is it not clear that Bible-believing Christians should never compromise irreconcilable differences regarding Jesus Christ's rightful place in the Church as the very foundation and head of the body of Christ, the Church, which would rob Him of His preeminence?

### **Rome Concludes Her Understanding Of This Passage In Mathew Sixteen With Their Teaching Regarding The Keys And Binding And Loosing From Verse Nineteen -**

In addition to basing its reasoning on Peter being the first Pope, the Catholic Church also builds heavily on Matthew 16:19 in its claim that Christ gave the authority of the keys to Peter, but not to the other Apostles. This Verse records Christ's statement: "*And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven.*"



The New Testament makes several reference to Christ as the Rock and as the foundation of the Church, See Romans 9:33; First Corinthians 3:11; 10:4; Ephesians 2:20; First Peter 2:6-8.

Matthew 16:18 is followed by the promise to give (future) the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven to Peter. Matthew 18:15-18 gives us the fulfillment of the promise, and we should note, when these keys are given, they are given not solely or only to Peter, but are given to all of the Apostles. There is no mention of unique authority given to Peter in Matthew 18:18, he receives the keys as an equal with the other Apostles. The only reason Peter is told personally that he would receive the keys in Matthew 16 is because he was the one who professed his faith in Christ. Surely his words were representative of the faith of all of the Apostles, but he voiced his convictions first, as was his way. In just a few Verses his inclination would earn him the direct rebuke of the Lord Jesus, saying, "*Get thee behind Me, Satan, thou art an offence unto Me, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men*" (Matthew 16:23). Simply because the Apostle Peter speaks first hardly means he had some "*Primacy*" among the Apostles; rather, it simply shows that Peter spoke his mind quickly and freely. It also shows that Peter can say things from God (Matthew 16: 16) but that he is not infallible (Matthew 16:21-23).

These were common rabbinic phrases used of "*forbidding*" and "*allowing*." The tenses of the Greek terms are significant as well, for what the Apostles would bind on earth, would already be bound in Heaven, and what they would loose on earth, would already be loosed in Heaven. The actions of the Apostles, then, would not bring about a new situation as if there was some "*power*" associated with the keys, but would mirror and reflect the divine decrees of God in Heaven.




There is no biblical record of Peter serving as the head of the Apostles, the head of the Church, or the Bishop of Rome.

The keys were a symbol of authority; a declaratory authority. The power or authority to announce the terms on which God would grant Salvation, not an absolute power to admit or exclude from the Kingdom of Heaven. Only God can do that and He never delegates that activity to men as He so clearly states in Revelation 1:18 and 3:7: "*I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.*" And again in chapter 3 :7, "*and to the angel of the Church in Philadelphia write; These things saith He that is Holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth.*" The authority to remit and retain sins was given by God to the Lord Jesus Christ exclusively and this authority was prophesied in Isaiah 22:22. "*And the key of the house of David will I lay upon His (Christ) shoulder; so He shall open, and none shall shut; and He shall shut, and none shall open.*"



## What Was The Significance Of Christ's Action?

A key is used to unlock access to something, in this case, the Kingdom of Heaven. Did the Apostle Peter open the Kingdom of Heaven to anyone? Yes, he was the first to preach the way of Salvation - to the Jews on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) and to the Gentiles when he preached to Cornelius and his family (Acts 10). Today, you and I are saved when we respond to Jesus Christ through the same truths that Peter first preached:




If Peter was granted unique authority, why did he write far fewer New Testament books than did the Apostle Paul?

*"Whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21). "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man (Peter) stand here before you whole." "Neither is there Salvation in any other: for there is none other Name under*

*Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:10, 12). And Acts 10:43 states, "To Him give all the Prophets witness, that through His Name whosoever believeth in Him (Christ) shall receive remission (forgiveness) of sins."*

### A Concluding Word Regarding The Keys -

Once the Gospel of Jesus Christ was presented to both Jews and Gentiles, we hear no more of the keys. In fact, Peter, having fulfilled the use of the keys, is not so much as heard of again after the meeting in Jerusalem to resolve issues that surfaced in the infant Church (Acts 15:7-11 ). Peter, in his two Epistles, says nothing about the keys. The keys were used twice to open the door of Salvation to all the world. There is no future use for the keys now that all have access to the knowledge of the way to the Kingdom of Heaven. To be sure, Peter played an important role in opening access to the Kingdom of Heaven for both Jews and Gentiles, but it was strictly an inaugural work. That work, important as it was, was finished. What Christ spoke to Peter He spoke to the Church as a whole and what was given to Peter was given to all the Apostles and through them to the entire Church. The keys are a declarative authority to teach truth, preach the Gospel and exercise discipline in the Church.



If Peter was granted unique authority above the other Apostles, why did he refer to himself as a "fellow Elder" (First Peter 5:1)?

### The Gospel Message Regarding God's Plan Of Salvation Was Not Given To Peter Exclusively But To The Other Disciples As Found In John 20:23 -

After the Lord Jesus' resurrection, He spoke to all the disciples, saying, *"Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained"* (John 20:23). As we have discovered, the key to the Kingdom is the Gospel (First Corinthians 15:3-4), which is the power of God to Salvation to those who believe in the

Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul said, “For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto Salvation to every one that believeth” (Romans 1:16).

As we have seen, Peter used the keys of the Gospel to open the door of Salvation to the Jews and Gentiles. However, the same authority Christ entrusted to Peter (Matthew 16:19) is also given to all the Apostles (Matthew 18:18; John 20:23). This proves that Peter was not given unique authority over the other Apostles and Churches as Rome claims. From these three brief Verses of Scripture, the Catholic Church has not only established virtually its entire authority claim for Peter's Primacy, but also has established a Roman Priesthood with the authority to hear confessions and grant absolution (forgiveness) of sins without any biblical support whatsoever. Catholicism teaches Catholic Priests have the power to grant forgiveness of sins based on John 20:23. They say Christ authorized the hearing and forgiveness of sins in the sacrament of penance (confessing sins to a Priest).



If Peter was granted unique authority, why did James deliver the verdict regarding Salvation, at the Council of Jerusalem instead of Peter? (Acts 15:1-21).

If this were so, then the Holy Spirit was not faithful in teaching the Apostles what Jesus said and meant (John 14:26), because not once in the Book of Acts did they hear confessions. The confession box was not invented until the 16th century. This is a matter of historical record.

The context of John 20:23 is the sending forth, of commissioning, of the disciples. Parallel passages are found in Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24 and Acts chapter one. The force of the commissions recorded is always the same - go and preach the Gospel. That is what they were told to do. That is what they did.

An ambassador for Christ in this world has absolute power in giving the true message of the Gospel. They can say, without fear of divine contradiction, if the message is believed, sins are remitted (forgiven). If the message is rejected, sins are retained (unforgiven). The power is one of proclamation, and it is an awesome one. What a responsibility to be entrusted with this message, and what a joy to know that the message is not a weak, nebulous, hope-so Salvation but rather a positive word, spoken with the authority He has given, that "*whosoever believeth in Him (Christ) will not perish, but have everlasting life.*"



You might ask your Catholic friend: Does the fact that God gave the same authority to the other Apostles as He gave to Peter in terms of “binding” and “loosing” (Matthew 18:18) help you see that ever was not exalted above the others?

The only loosing of sins recorded as an activity of the early Church was the preaching of the Gospel and because Christ had promised that the Holy Spirit would bring all of His instructions to their minds (John 14:26), we can only conclude that Christ did not

have confession boxes, ruling Bishops and Popes in mind in Matthew 16:19; 18:18 and John 20:23. The loosing of sins was an absolute declarative act. The disciples then (and believers now) could preach the Gospel and say with authority, *“If you believe this you will be saved; if you disbelieve this, you are lost.”*



In the Book of Acts, can you find a single example of an Apostle forgiving someone of his or her sins?

If the Lord Jesus conferred upon the disciples the power to forgive sins, and if that power was to be handed down to others, why do we not find this explicitly taught in the Epistles? There is not one word in Acts, the Gospels, in any of the Epistles, or in the Book of Revelation pertaining to any mortal remitting or retaining sins. Again, there is no mention in the Church Epistles (Romans through Thessalonians) nor in the Pastoral Epistles (Timothy through Philemon) of a Priest-class (or persons) to whom power or authority had been handed down to remit or retain sins. As stated earlier, the New Testament does not even mention a Roman Priesthood in the Church.

The truth of the matter is: we have a great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, who sits at the right hand of the Father and in Him all believers are kings and Priests in the spiritual sense: *“ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him Who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light”* (First Peter 2:9).

### **The Second Core Passage Of Scripture Rome Uses To Justify Peter's Primacy And Infallibility Is Luke 22:31-34 -**

The Catholic Church teaches this passage of Scripture, particularly Verse 32, ensures the Primacy and Infallibility of Peter and his successors in safeguarding the faith. Let's read this Verse in its contextual setting:

*"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. And he said unto Him, Lord, I am ready to go with Thee, both into prison, and to death. And He said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest Me" (Luke 22:31-34).*

As you can see, this passage of Scripture has nothing to do with Peter's alleged unique authority over the other Apostles or his Infallibility. Rather, Christ's Words relate only to the issue of Peter's denial of Christ (Verse 34). There is nothing in the Verse to even remotely suggest that the Lord Jesus was making some veiled promise relating to Peter's supremacy and Infallibility. The only thing we can conclude here is the Lord praying for Peter's restoration after his impending fall. The Lord prayed an intercessory prayer that Peter's faith would not fail following his dismal failure as a disciple. Christ's

prayer for Peter was in keeping with His general intercessory ministry for all believers (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25 and John 17:15).

### "Strengthen Thy Brethren" Examined -

The Church of Rome relies heavily on the above phrase (Luke 22:32) to support its claims for Peter's Primacy and Infallibility; but they totally ignore the context surrounding Verse 32. When one reads this Verse in context, it becomes very apparent that Peter became arrogant and boastful and that the Lord forewarned him of his fall and repeated denials of Him.



If Peter was the first Pope as Rome claims, why don't we find Scripture confirming this during the period of the early Church recorded in the Acts of the Apostles?

Knowing Peter's instability and overconfidence, the Lord's Words penetrated Peter's heart, as one who had fallen and been restored; the obligation to encourage and strengthen others who might be prone to waver or go astray as he had. But to assist them in times of similar weakness is in no way akin to exercising authority over them. The other disciples momentarily forsook the Lord, but did not openly deny the Lord. Peter, having professed supreme loyalty, succumbed to a lower depth than any of the rest (three times publicly denying the Lord with oaths or cursing) therefore when he was restored, he was to be brought back to a level with the others, not placed above them.

The word for strengthen in the phrase, "*strengthen thy brethren*" is a term employed in the New Testament by various ones laboring among believers, not an exclusive function committed to Peter. In fact, it occurs far more often in reference to the work of others than in relation to Peter. For example, Paul is said to have "*strengthened the Churches*" (Acts 15:41) and was "*strengthening all the disciples*" (Acts 18:23), things not specifically said of Peter. Did this make Paul a Pope? Moreover, Paul, in writing to the Church at Rome, said he wanted to come to them "*to strengthen*" them (same word). This is rather amazing as Rome was supposed to be Peter's geographic area of ministry. It is noteworthy that Paul anticipated that this important work in the Church at Rome would be his privilege and not Peter's. Why? Because the Lord personally shared with Paul that he would minister to those in Rome (Acts 23:11). However, the Lord never communicated this to Peter.



According to inspired Scripture, there were no reigning Popes in Acts. There was no ruling Bishops in Acts. And there were no confession boxes for which penitent sinners could go to be "loosed" from their sins in Acts.

The incident of Peter's boasting, his fall and restoration indicates that he was far from being infallible or even a reliable leader. And this was when he previously had been declared (supposedly) to be the Rock. What a poor foundation would such a person be?

If Jesus' prayer for Peter (Verse 32) did not prevent him from falling into grievous error, how can it be imagined, in citing this passage, that it would guarantee that his alleged successors, those for whom the prayer was not even offered would not likewise fall into error?

### **The Third Core Passage Of Scripture Rome Uses To Justify Peter's Primacy And Infallibility Is John 21:15-19 -**

The third and final text which is supposed to support the assertion of Peter being that upon which the Church was to be built, is found in this passage of Scripture. This follows quite fittingly the passage in Luke, as it relates to the same matter of Peter's restoration after his denials of the Lord. Let's read this entire passage of Scripture in question.

*“So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these? He saith unto Him, yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto Him, Feed My lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me? He saith unto Him, yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed My sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me? Peter was grieved because He said unto him the third time, Lovest thou Me? And he said unto Him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed My sheep.”*



There are numerous passages of Scripture in the New Testament that strongly indicate that Peter was not in a position of unique authority.

Catholic apologists argue that Christ's instruction to Peter to "*Feed My Lambs*" and "*Feed My Sheep*" proves that Christ was placing Peter in a position of unique authority over the other Apostles and entire Church.



Scripture teaches that the other Apostles too were called to feed and watch out for the "sheep" of the Church (Acts 20:28). This proves that Peter was not given some unique calling over and against the other Apostles.

When one reads through these Verses they will not find one scintilla of evidence in this passage that supports the claim that the Lord was elevating Peter to a position of supremacy. Rather, what we find is the Lord Jesus confronting Peter with a threefold confession of love from Peter to make up for his threefold denial of Christ. The Lord is simply restoring a fallen Apostle. The only reason Peter was singled

out here is that he is the only Apostle that denied Christ. The Lord was not exalting Peter above the other Apostles here, but bringing him up to their level.<sup>4</sup>



Drawing out from Peter three times his declaration of loyalty would have seemed to be unnecessary, but his previous professions of allegiance had so shortly before proven to be completely hollow when put to the test, that this appeared to be necessary. The words to Peter by Christ, also assured him that he had not, by his denials, forfeited forever his position as a servant of the Lord.

Another important point to observe from this passage of Scripture is found in Verse 17, whereby we find that Peter "was grieved" because the Lord had to draw out an answer from him three times. If Christ's dialogue with Peter really led to an exalted position for Peter, it is hard to believe that he would be grieved over such a promotion.

### More Light Revealed Regarding Peter In This Chapter -

The record in John 21 continues. Peter, who had just been restored by the Lord, turns and, seeing John, asks a question in respect to what lies ahead for the Apostle John (Verses 20-21). If, as has been claimed, Peter was now assigned a position of oversight above the other disciples, seemingly it was an appropriate question and fully within his purview. But, quite to the contrary, the Lord Jesus responded by saying, "*what is that to thee? Follow Thou Me.*" In other words, "*That is none of your business; your business is to follow Me*" (Verse 22). These are hardly the words to be spoken to one whose business it would be to oversee the others. John here was actually shown to be entirely independent of Peter and not accountable to him or anyone else except the Lord. 5



Is it not clear that the only reason Peter was singled out here is that he is the only Apostle that denied Christ?

The Lord's Words "*Feed My Lambs*" have generally been taken to refer to training or teaching children or young Christians and the "*Feed My Sheep*" to properly instructing and leading adult believers. The latter phrase could hardly refer to unique authority over the Pastors of the Church, for in First Peter 5:1-2, Peter himself addressed the Elders not being above them, for he speaks to them pointedly as, "*I exhort, who am also an Elder*" (Verse 1 ). Elders, himself included, are to "*Feed the flock of God*" (Verse 2). Therefore, to feed or tend the flock is no special authority of Peter. All the Lord's servants are to fulfill the same function. Paul, in the same way that Peter did, exhorted all Pastors or Elders to "*Feed the Flock.*" Notice Paul's exhortation in Acts 20:28: "*Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you "overseers," to feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood.*"



If Peter were in a position of unique authority, wouldn't he have said something in his Second Epistle to the effect that his readers should be sure to follow his successor in Rome?

Therefore, receiving a command to feed the flock does not make the one to whom it is extended a supreme ruler or place him in a position of unique authority over the whole Church. Peter was no exception to this.

### **The Myth Of Catholic Apostolic Succession -**

In Rome's attempt to establish her origin back to Peter and her historic existence to the future, she has put forth the Catholic doctrine of Apostolic Succession which is the Catholic belief that the Apostles ordained Bishops as their successors, creating an unbroken line of continuous Popes, starting with the Apostle Peter and continuing through the centuries to the current Pope. They claim an unbroken line of over 265 Pontiffs.

In Matthew 16:18 we read of the Church, "the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it." Catholic apologists reason that in order for this Verse to be true, it would be necessary to have a continuation of a line of authority on earth, which means the Apostles would have to pass on their authority to Bishops as successors. Without this unbroken succession of Bishops, they say, the Church would be in danger of failing.



In the Book of Acts we find a detailed history of the early Church and there is no mention or even a hint of Petrine supremacy.

The Vatican has an official list of the Popes, arbitrarily beginning with the Apostle Peter and continuing to the present. There have been several such lists, which were apparently considered accurate one time but subsequently had to be revised - and now conflict with each other. The earliest lists come from Liber Pontificalis (Book of Popes), presumably first composed under Pope Hormisdas (514-23), yet even the Catholic Encyclopedia casts doubt upon its authenticity and most scholars today agree that it mixed fact with fiction. Who the actual Bishops of Rome were cannot be known with any certainty at this late date. Even the New Catholic Encyclopedia, published by the Catholic University of America, acknowledges this fact: *"But it must be frankly admitted that bias or deficiencies in the sources make it impossible to determine in certain cases whether the claimants were Popes or antipopes."*

To be sure, there is no such thing as a continual succession of Popes. The Roman Catholic Church knows that the list of Popes is not genuine, since it was changed and it will be changed many times. The dispatch printed verbatim below came from Vatican City, January 18, 1947. It raises questions Bible-believing Christians are interested in having answered.

*"Vatican City - As the result of years of investigation into the 1,900 year line of succession of the Popes of the Roman Catholic Church, the Vatican's new official directory has dropped six Popes from its old list. It placed two others in doubt, as possible antipopes and listed as a true Pope one who had not been included until now."*

*“Moreover, information was changed on 74 Popes. The changes ranged from corrections in the dates of their pontificate to the assertion that one of them, Pope Dono II, who was listed as pontiff for three months in the year A.D. 973, never really existed.”*

The changes meant that Pope Pius XII, the head of the Roman Catholic Church, at the time, was anywhere from the 256th to the 260th successor of the Apostle Peter, but was not 262nd as he was listed previously.

While Catholics seek to show that the Bishop of Rome was recognized as the head of the Church, there is no credible proof of this claim prior to Constantine. It was he, in fact, who decreed that the Bishop of Rome should be the head of the Church. Constantine created the office of Pope for his own purposes and the Popes themselves for hundreds of years thereafter acknowledged this fact.

Even Catholic historians admit that during the Middle Ages the Popes and Hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church circulated a fraudulent document to justify their position and power. It made no attempt to trace Papal authority to Peter by Apostolic Succession, nor did it attempt to justify that office from the Bible. Instead, the document, known as *“The Donation of Constantine,”* justified the office of Pope and the authority that the Popes were exercising as having been granted to them by imperial decree. Purportedly written by Constantine, the forged document declared:

*“And we (the Roman Emperors) command and decree that he (the Bishop of Rome) should have primacy over the four principal Sees of Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople and Jerusalem, as well as over all the Churches of God throughout the whole world; and the Pontiff who occupies at any given moment the See of that same most holy Roman Church shall rank as the highest and chief among all the priests of the whole world and by his decision all things are to be arranged concerning the worship of God or the security of the faith of Christians.”*

The fact that the Popes relied upon this fraud proves two things: First, the dishonesty of the Popes in claiming their office. Second, that even in the Middle Ages the Popes, rather than laying claim to an authority that was received by Apostolic Succession from Peter, acknowledged that their office had been created by Constantine, thus admitting that there had been no Pope prior to that time.

Clearly, if the Tradition had already been established in the Middle Ages that Peter was the first Pope and that those occupying this office had received their position and power by Apostolic Succession traceable back to him, then there would have been no



Do you think that Christ, as second Person of the Trinity, is capable of protecting the Church without the assistance of the finite human beings (apostolic successors)?

need for forging such a document as *“The Donation of Constantine.”* The fact that the Popes found this necessary proves a further fraud: the claim of the Roman Catholic Church today that the Popes can trace their authority back to Peter.

The simple truth is that the Roman Church itself, with all of its archives, cannot verify an accurate and complete list of the Popes, because none exist. The alleged *“unbroken line of succession back to Peter”* is therefore a mere fiction. Anyone who takes the time to seriously attempt a verification of its accuracy will conclude that the Catholic Church has fabricated an official list of Popes in order to justify the Papacy and its pretensions.

Bible-believing Christians reject absolutely the mechanical conception of Apostolic Succession through the long line of wicked Popes of the Middle Ages. In the Old Testament, they followed, rather, the succession of the Hebrew Prophets. When God wanted a messenger in the Old Testament He didn't request the high Priest for one, but simply called the man: *“Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?”* He asked Isaiah. He responded, *“Here am I, send me,”* (Isaiah 6:8). These were Spirit chosen men, endowed and ordained by the Holy Spirit.

Elijah was sitting by his sheep in Gilead when *“the Word of the Lord came unto him”* (First Kings 17:2). Amos was a shepherd when God took him (Amos 7:14-15). Jeremiah was called before his birth (Jeremiah 1:5).

Of all the Prophets of the Hebrew succession we can think of none who was consecrated by the high Priest of his time, or even by the Prophet who went before him. Each man was chosen directly by God. That is the Spirit-governed succession versus the mechanical *“Apostolic Succession”* of Roman Catholicism.

Likewise, the basis for biblical ordination in the New Testament was also by *Divine Selection*. Acts 13:2 enlightens us to this truth. *“As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabus and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.”* Apostolic Succession was not instituted in Scripture and is a false foundation for Roman Catholic claims of Divine Sanction for a Hierarchical system condemned by the Lord Jesus Christ (Mark 10:42-43).

### **The Fallibility Of Papal Infallibility -**

One of the monumental and irreconcilable differences between Roman Catholics and Bible-believing Christians lies in its basis of authority. The Roman Catholic Church maintains that the basis for authority lies in the Church. Biblical Christianity maintains that sole authority rests in the Scriptures, the inspired Word of God. Although the 21st century Church of Rome communicates in their literature the Bible to be authoritative, it does not believe the authority of the Bible is final; rather, the final word of authority is left to the Pope and to the Tradition of the Catholic Church.

According to Roman Catholic doctrine, the teaching Magisterium is infallible when officially defining faith and morals for believers. The Church of Rome teaches that God supernaturally protects the Magisterium from teaching false doctrine. The Bishops do not err and cannot err when teaching doctrine related to faith and morals. They are said to possess the gift of Infallibility, according to Catholicism.

The Bishops are believed to be infallible in their teaching not as individuals but collectively. In other words, those beliefs that they hold in common with each other and in harmony with the Pope represent the authentic and inerrant Catholic faith.

One manifestation of this doctrine extends beyond the teaching Magisterium to the teaching of the Bishop of Rome in a unique way. It is popularly known as the "infallibility of the Pope, " which was pronounced a dogma in A.D. 1870 at the First Vatican Council.

*... We teach and define as a divinely revealed dogma that when the Roman pontiff speaks ex cathedra, that is, when, in the exercise of his office as shepherd and teacher of all Christians, in virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine concerning faith or morals to be held by the whole church, he possesses, by the divine assistance promised to him in blessed Peter, that infallibility which the divine Redeemer willed his Church to enjoy in defining doctrine concerning faith or morals (First Vatican Council, 1869-1870).*

This means that when the Pope speaks ex cathedra from the chair of authority regarding faith and morals as the supreme teacher of the Church, the Church of Rome holds that he does not and cannot teach false doctrine. For this reason the dogmatic teaching of the Pope cannot be challenged or be called into question:

*The Roman Pontiff, head of the college of bishops, enjoys this infallibility in virtue of his office, when, as supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful ... he proclaims in an absolute decision a doctrine pertaining to faith or morals. For that reason his definitions are rightly said to be irreformable by their very nature and not by reason of the assent of the Church, in as much as they were made with the assistance of the Holy Spirit promised to him in the person of blessed Peter himself; and as a consequence they are in no way in need of the approval of others, and do not admit of appeal to any other tribunal. (Second Vatican Council, 1962-1965).*

Moreover, even when the Pope is not making a dogmatic and thereby infallible pronouncement, Catholics are still expected to



Scripture, not the Magisterium, is the Christian's infallible guide to the interpretation of Scripture.



obey him without question:

*"This loyal submission of the will and intellect must be given, in a special way, to the authentic teaching authority of the Roman Pontiff, even when he does not speak ex cathedra in such wise, indeed, that his supreme teaching authority be acknowledged with respect, and that one sincerely adhere to decisions made by him."*

Then follows the traditional condemnation on any who reject Papal Infallibility: "But if anyone presumes to contradict this definition of ours, which may God forbid: let him be anathema" ( excommunicated).

### **A Biblical Response To Rome's Claim For Papal Infallibility -**

There are several texts Catholicism uses to defend the Infallibility of the Bishop of Rome. We will focus here on the three most important of these. If these passages of Scripture sound familiar it is because they are basically the same proof-texts Rome uses to justify the doctrine of Papal Primacy studied earlier in this chapter.

Roman Catholics use the statement of the Lord Jesus to Peter in Matthew 16:18 that, *"upon this Rock I will build My Church"* to support Papal Infallibility. They argue that the truth of the Church could only be secure if the one on whom it rested (Peter) was infallible. Properly understood, however, there are several reasons this passage falls far short of support for the dogma of Papal Infallibility.



The Catholic Papal system demands a submission of intellect and will to its claimed infallible Pope.

First, many Bible-believing Christians (including the author as stated earlier in this chapter) insist that Christ was not referring to Peter when he spoke of *"this Rock"* being the foundation of the Church. They believe that whenever Peter is referred to in this passage it is in the second person (*"you"*), but *"this Rock"* is in the third person. "Peter" (Petros) is a masculine singular term and "Rock" (Petra) is feminine singular. So they do not have the same referent. Moreover, as we have seen earlier, the same authority the Lord Jesus gave to Peter (Matthew 16:18) is given to all the Apostles (Matthew 18:18). Even some Catholic authorities can be cited in agreement with this interpretation, including John Chrysostom and Augustine. The latter wrote: *"On this Rock, therefore, He said, which thou hast confessed. I will build my Church. For the Rock (Petra) is Christ; and on this foundation was Peter himself built."*

Second, the Lord Jesus gave all the Apostles the same authority (*"keys"*) to *"bind"* and *"loose"* that He gave to Peter (Matthew 18: 18). Again, as stated earlier in this chapter, these were common rabbinic phrases used of *"forbidding"* and *"allowing."* These *"keys"* were not some mysterious power given to Peter alone but the power granted by Christ

to His Church by which, when they proclaim the Gospel, they can proclaim God's forgiveness of sin to all who believe in Christ.



The Holy Spirit, not the Magisterium, is the Christian's infallible and authoritative teacher (First Corinthians 2:9-14).

Further, Scripture affirms that the Church is “*built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone*” (Ephesians 2:20). Two things are clear from this: first, all the Apostles, not just Peter, are the foundation of the Church; second, the only One Who was given a place of uniqueness or prominence was Christ the chief corner stone. Indeed, Peter himself, along ‘with Paul, also referred to Christ as the “*chief corner stone*” of the Church (First Peter 2:6) and the rest of believers as “*living stones*” (V.4) in the structure of the Church. There is no indication that Peter was given a special place of prominence in the foundation of the Church above the rest of the Apostles and below Christ. He is one “*stone*” along with the other eleven Apostles (Ephesians 2:20).

Third, Peter's role in the New Testament falls far short of the Catholic claim that he was given unique authority among the Apostles for numerous reasons. While Peter did preach the initial sermon on the day of Pentecost, his role in the rest of Acts is scarcely that of the chief Apostle but at best was considered one of the pillars of the Church (Galatians 2:9).

No one reading Galatians carefully can come away with the impression that any Apostle, including Peter, is superior to the Apostle Paul. For he claimed to get his revelation independent of the other Apostles (Galatians 1: 12; 2:2) and to be on the same level as Peter (2:8), and he even used his revelation to rebuke Peter (2:11-14).

Indeed, if Peter was the God-ordained superior Apostle, it is strange that more attention is given to the ministry of the Apostle Paul than to that of Peter in the Book of Acts. Peter is the central figure among many in chapters 1-12, but Paul is the dominant focus of chapters 13-28.

Furthermore, though Peter addressed the Assembly in Jerusalem (Acts 15), he exercised no Primacy over the other Apostles. Significantly, the decision came from “*the Apostles and Elders, in agreement with the whole church*” (15:22-23). Most scholars believe that James, not Peter, exercised leadership over the Assembly, since he brought the final words and spoke decisively concerning what action should be taken (VV.13-21). To be sure, there was no unique authority exercised by Peter during this meeting. In fact, by Peter's own admission he claimed only to be a “*fellow Elder*” (First Peter 5: 1-2). And while he did claim to be “*an Apostle*” (First Peter 1:1) he nowhere claimed to be “*the Apostle*” or the “*chief of Apostles*.” He certainly was a leading Apostle, but even then he was only one of the “*pillars*” (plural) of the Church along with James and John, not “*the pillar*” (Galatians 2:9).

This is not to deny that Peter had a significant role in the early Church; he did. He even seems to have been the initial leader of the disciples. For it was he that preached the great sermon at Pentecost when the gift of the Holy Spirit was given, welcoming many Jews into the Christian fold. As we have already seen, it was Peter also who spoke when the Spirit of God fell on the Gentiles in Acts 10. From this point on, however, Peter fades into the background and Paul is the dominant Apostle, carrying the Gospel to the ends of the earth (Acts 13-28), writing some one-half of the New Testament (as compared to Peter's two Epistles), and even rebuking Peter for hypocrisy (Galatians 2: 11-14). In short, there is no evidence in Matthew 16 or any other text for the Roman Catholic dogma of the superiority, to say nothing of the Infallibility, of Peter. He did, of course, write two infallible books (First and Second Peter), as did other Apostles.



The Bible is very clear. No Catholic or non-Catholic, neither laity or clergy, can claim Infallibility! The "politically correct" commitment many Evangelicals have taken is not to point to the differences or to the history of the Catholic Church. This commitment leads to compromise, not truth or true evangelism.

In view of the New Testament terminology used to describe Peter, it is quite clear that he would never have accepted the titles used to describe the Roman Catholic Pope today: "*Holy Father*," "*Supreme Pontiff*" and "*Vicar of Christ*," to name just a few.

### **The Identity Of The Vicar Of Christ -**

Let's look at these terms attributed to the Pope of the Catholic Church to see what the importance of each one is. First, we have the term "*Vicar of Christ*." The word "*Vicar*" means deputy, one who has been sent to take another's place; a representative. The Lord Jesus Christ, knowing the need for an infallible Vicar for His Church, speaks of the coming of the Holy Spirit and His office as Vicar of Christ.

We read of this Vicar in John 14:26: "*But the Comforter, Which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My Name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*" And in John 15:26, "*But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me.*" And regarding when this Vicar would be sent, the Lord Jesus said in John 16:7:



The Lord Jesus recognized the need for an Infallible Teacher for His Church and authorized the Holy Spirit as the One Who would lead into all truth (John 16:13). His ability to convey truth to Christians is taught in First John 2:27.

"*Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.*" And in John 16:13-14, the Lord shares with us the Vicar of Christ will guide us into all spiritual truth: "*Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth ..... He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.*"

## Further Identification Of The Vicar Of Christ -

If someone were to approach you on the street and say, "I am the President of the United States" you might believe him. Of course, if you personally knew the President, or if you had documented evidence that he were someone else, you would deny the claim of the imposter.

The Pope claims to be the Vicar of Christ; those who know the Holy Spirit immediately reject his claim and others can see the documented evidence that proves this man to be an imposter.

## Does The Church Need A Visible Head?

"We walk by faith, not by sight" (Second Corinthians 5:7). Do you trust the judgment of a human imposter or the ability of God Himself to guide you into all truth? Of the two candidates for the office of the Vicar of Christ, which one of them:

- Is infinite
- Will never die
- Spoke not a handful of "*infallible*" statements, but resided over the writing of an infallible Book (the Bible)
- Can personally indwell every believer

## The Perfection Of The Vicar Of Christ -

The Lord Jesus Christ, Himself the infinite Son of God, knew that the Church would need an infallible Vicar to keep it from errors that would assail her. Rather than designate a fallen man, He appointed the Holy Spirit, Himself not only infallible, but infinitely perfect. His ability to convey truth to Christians is taught in First John 2:27. "*But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him.*"

There is a sharp contrast between the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit and that of the Pope of Rome, who claims to be the Vicar of Christ. Papal Infallibility is an empty doctrine when compared to the infinite Holy Spirit. The Latin writing on the fish-shaped hat worn by the Pope says, "*Vicarirs Feleii Dei*" and means "*substitute for the Son of God*"! The Apostle Peter no doubt would have cringed in horror at the very thought of donning such a title. <sup>6</sup>



Remember, it was the Holy Spirit Who inspired what Luke wrote in Acts (Second Timothy 3:16) and if Peter had Infallibility conferred upon him, then surely Acts would have made this clear by stressing Peter's unique possession. But he does not!

## The Catholic Church Also Has Given The Pope The Title Of Supreme Pontiff -

Many years ago, the Pope wore a single Bishop's mitre. Around the 9th century, a crown was added to it; later, a second crown and around A.D 1365, a third. Many Catholics take the triple crown to signify the Pope's supreme authority over every phase of life. This title, "*Supreme Pontiff*" speaks to the Catholic belief that the Pope of Rome has unique and unlimited jurisdiction and authority over the entire world.

Pope Leo XIII, in his encyclical, *The Reunion of Christendom* (A.D. 1885), declared that the Pope holds "*upon this earth the place of God Almighty*." So the Roman Church holds that the Pope, as the Vicar of Christ on earth, is the ruler of the world, supreme not only over the Roman Church itself but also over all kings, presidents and civil rulers, indeed over all peoples and nations. The fact is that on numerous occasions the Popes have exercised that authority in countries where the Catholic Church was strong. They have excommunicated and deposed kings and governors, and, as in the cases of Queen Elizabeth I of England and Emperor Henry IV of Germany, they have attempted to arouse rebellions by releasing subjects from any allegiance to their rulers.



The Roman Catholic paper *Twin Circle*, on July 1, 1979, stated: "It is customary for the Pope to speak using the plural form 'We' which means the Holy Spirit and I!"

The New York Catechism states: "*The Pope takes the place of Jesus Christ on earth.*" It goes on to say, "*By divine right the Pope has supreme and full power in faith and morals over each and every pastor and his flock. He is the true Vicar of Christ, the head of the entire Church, the father and teacher of all Christians. He is the infallible ruler, the founder of dogmas, the author of and the judge of councils; the universal ruler of truth, the arbiter of the world, the supreme judge of heaven and earth, the judge of all, being judged by no one, God himself on earth.*"

The triple crown the Pope wears symbolizes his authority in Heaven, on earth and the underworld - as king of Heaven, king of earth and king of Hell - in that through his absolutions (pardons) souls are admitted to Heaven. On the earth he attempts to exercise political as well as spiritual power and through his special jurisdiction over the souls in Purgatory and his exercise of "*the power of the keys*" he can release whatever souls he pleases from further suffering and those whom he refuses to release are continued in their suffering, the decisions he makes on earth being ratified in Heaven.



Scripture never promised that there would be successors to Peter who would be divinely protected from error when speaking ex cathedra (speaking officially on faith and morals). That is a manmade doctrine.

As we have seen, the Pope demands a submission from his people, which is due only to God. Indeed, he demands this submission from all people insofar as he is able to make



it effective. Sometimes that submission takes a particularly servile form, with even the Cardinals, the next highest ranking officials in the Roman Church, prostrating themselves before him and kissing his feet! The Popes have gone so far in assuming the place of God that they even insist on being called by His names, e.g., “*the Holy Father,*” “*His Holiness,*” etc. Such titles applied to a mere man are, of course, blasphemous and unchristian. We cannot but wonder what goes through the mind of a Pope when people reverence him, carrying him on their shoulders, kissing his hands and feet, hailing him as the “*Holy Father,*” and performing acts of worship before him. By such means this so-called “*Vicar of Christ*” accepts the position of ruler of the World which the devil offered to Christ, but which Christ spurned with the command, “*Get thee hence, (from Me) Satan!*”

### **The Third Major Title Given To The Pope Is Holy Father -**

Roman Catholics refer to their parish Priests as "Father" and to their Pope as "Holy Father. " They claim that Jesus' command in Matthew 23:9 doesn't apply to the use of that term for their Priests, but that it is merely a title that shows respect and that the Priests are regarded as spiritual fathers.

This reasoning by Catholics begs the question, why then did the Lord Jesus Christ give a direct command not to call any man your father on earth? Matthew 23:9 must be understood within its larger contextual setting beginning with Verse one and continuing through Verse twelve of Mathew chapter 23. This subject needs to be fully developed in order to have an understanding of just how important this subject is. Attributing titles to men, which belong exclusively to the Lord Jesus Christ, is a serious sin, in need of repentance by both Catholics and non-Catholics.

In the opening Verses of this chapter, the Lord Jesus warns the crowds and His disciples regarding the scribes and the Pharisees being false teachers. The multitudes had heard what Christ had said to the scribes and the Pharisees in answer to their carefully designed questions and now they should hear what He would say about those same hypocritical religious leaders. First, He stated the scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. It was to Moses that God gave the law for the nation Israel; therefore it was the duty of Moses to expound and interpret the Law of God to the people. The scribes and Pharisees were custodians of God's Law - but they did not possess the leadership of God's Spirit as Moses did. The Spirit that guided Moses did not dwell in the hearts of the scribes and Pharisees. True, they spoke from the seat of Moses, but they did not speak as the Holy Spirit directed.

In Verse three, Christ stated: “*Whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do.*” The Lord Jesus could not have intended that the people should heed the false teaching, foolish traditions, damnable heresies and doctrines of men taught by those who sat in

Moses' seat. He had already made it clear that through some of their teachings they had transgressed the commandments of God. Therefore, by reason as well as by the Verses that follow, we know that the Lord's instruction to "*observe and do*" applied only insofar as those observances were true to the Law of Moses. The Lord was not opposing the Law of Moses as such. He was opposing the additions to and deflections from that Law as given to Moses at the hand of Almighty God.



A study of Matthew 23:1-12 reveals that the Lord Jesus was talking about being called Father as a title of religious superiority, precisely as the Priests are called. This religious superiority is the basis for the Catholic Hierarchy. By actual word structure, Hierarchy means, "rule by Priest." In March 10:42-43, the Lord Jesus made it plain that His Church was not to be governed by rulers that exercises lordship over people as in heathen governments (See also First Peter 5:3).

He goes on to say in Verse three, "*But do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.*" This was a grievous fault of the scribes and Pharisees - they said one thing and did another. There are many such religionists today, modern descendants of the scribes and the Pharisees of whom Jesus spoke. Paul spoke of those who "*profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient and unto every good work reprobate*" (Titus 1:16). We should obey only what is of the Word of God. We should not follow the example set by those who claim to be children of God but who deny Him by the unbiblical doctrines and teachings they embrace.



The Catholic Encyclopedia, Robert Broderick, ed. (Nashville TN: Thomas Nelson Inc. 1976) p. 217. Entry under Father: "Holy Father is a title of the Pope alone. God the Father is the first person of the Blessed Trinity." This is clearly a teaching of blasphemy against the Heavenly Father and Holy Spirit. Both Matthew 23:9 and John 17:11, expressly forbids this in the strongest of terms by the Lord Jesus Christ!

Verse four brings out the sharp contrast between the true and the false - the man of God and the minister of Satan. The scribes and Pharisees burdened the people with so many regulations pertaining to both moral and ceremonial conduct that those observances became "heavy burdens ..... grievous to be borne," like a great stone upon their backs. By contrast, biblical Christianity cries out that we should cast all our care upon the Lord (First Peter 5:7). The Lord Jesus invites us to, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for My yoke is easy, and My burden is light" (Matthew 11:29-30).

The scribes and Pharisees who claimed to be custodians of God's holy Law piled a great load of observances upon the people, rules which were grievous enough individually, but when bound together made a yoke that neither the people nor their fathers could bear (Acts 15:10). Yet those same religious leaders would not "*move them with one of their fingers*" (V.4).

Verse five of chapter 23 continues to expose these religious leaders character: "*But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments.*" The first part of this Verse reveals the fatal flaw in the character of these scribes and Pharisees - in that, "*All their works they do for to be seen of men.*" This is in direct contrast to the teaching of the Lord Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:1-18). The Apostle Paul admonishes in Colossians 3:23-24: "*Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.*"

It has been said that character is what we are when we are alone, unseen by others. Later in this same chapter (Matthew 23) the Lord Jesus gives a detailed description of what these men were when they were not being "*seen of men.*" They were bigots, robbers of widows, proselytes, makers of foolish oaths, hypocritical in worship and ceremonial observances. However, when they were before the public they feigned piety, deep reverence for the things of God, and careful obedience to the Law of Moses! As long as they stood well in the eyes of men, it did not matter to them how they appeared in the eyes of God. They were men-pleasers, seeking the praise of men, not the will of God. They observed holy days, holidays, feast days, but they completely missed the spiritual meaning of what they were doing. They carried out such observances to impress men, not to please God, not in obedience to His commands.

In Verse five the Lord said: "*They made broad their phylacteries.*" A phylactery was a small box containing four compartments. Each compartment contained Scripture. These phylacteries were worn by the Jews to show their constant remembrance of God's goodness and blessing. But the scribes and Pharisees had "*made broad*" their phylacteries, attracting attention to themselves for their supposed piety. The larger the phylactery, the more likely it was to draw attention to the wearer. The Word of God enclosed in the phylacteries was not hidden in their hearts. The wide fringes and the tassels with which those fringes were adorned indicated that the wearers of those fringes lived by the commandments of God, but that was far from the truth. They had no inward perception of the divine nature of God (Second Peter 1:4).

Verse six continues to reveal the true character of the scribes and Pharisees when Christ said they, "*love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues.*" Our English word "*rooms*" does not express the meaning of the original language here. The "*uppermost rooms*" actually speaks of the uppermost places ( or seats) at a feast. For us to understand this, it is necessary to realize that the custom among the Jews was not to sit at the table as we do when eating, but rather to recline on couches around the table. The "*uppermost*" seats desired by the Pharisees and scribes at the feast would be the middle couch at the upper (or head) table. In such a position they would be seen by everyone at the table and also by everyone who passed through the room while they were seated. This was a place of honor and distinction, according to the Jewish leaders, and that is why they wanted to be seated there.

The Lord Jesus continues in Verse six, they love also "*the chief seats in the synagogues.*" These were places of prominence in the synagogue. The scribes and Pharisees loved to sit in such elevated positions, denoting that they were indeed superior to others. Such a place would bring earthly glory and homage from men. But the sin involved here was the sin of self righteousness and pride. The fact that it took place in the house of God made it even worse. In Verse 12 the Lord Jesus makes it plain that the "*way up*" with God is "*down.*"

Verse seven moves closer to the Verse in question (V.9) as it relates to calling the Pope and Priests "*Father*" and "*Holy Father*" which the Lord Jesus explicitly commands us not to do! Verse seven reads like this: "*And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.*"

It mattered not where the scribes and Pharisees assembled with their fellow Jews, feasting, worshipping, or in business - they wanted to be first, foremost and uppermost! In the marketplace, great crowds of people from all classes gathered. The scribes and Pharisees wanted special attention everywhere. They loved to be greeted in the marketplace. They wanted all men to show them respect and call them "*Rabbi, Rabbi.*" This is a title signifying greatness. So to be greeted, as "*Rabbi*" would be the equivalent of being hailed as "*great one.*" The title was given to outstanding teachers of the Law among the Jews and the general impression given by the use of that title indicated that the person who answered to it and was addressed by it was a person of authority and had the ability to teach others. To the scribes and Pharisees, it denoted their superiority over their fellowman.

This prideful sin is prevalent today in the Roman Catholic Church and it is one, which the Catholic Hierarchy may easily succumb to. Their unbiblical titles for Priests lend themselves to foster pride and haughtiness. The Word of God teaches that the Christian should be of a humble mind, walking humbly before men. Christ is to be our pattern in all things whatsoever we do in the Christian life.

As Bible-believing Christians we must always be on guard lest the devil cause us to boast in our own ability and strength, instead of boasting in the Lord. We must remember that we are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God (Second Corinthians 3 :5).

Because of everything we have read thus far in Verses one through seven, which addressed the unbiblical practice of establishing titles for those in authority, the Lord Jesus issues some very candid and important commands to the Church, the body of Christ. In Verse eight Christ commands: "*But be not ye called Rabbi: for One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.*" Here is forbidden the sin of pride in the honoring of titles, one above another. There is to be no such pride among Christians. Why? The Lord Jesus explains: "*One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.*"

There can be but one Master - Christ. And in the family of God we are brethren. The disciples of the Lord Jesus, including Peter, were on one level. One was not greater than the other and they were not to covet or receive any title that would imply that one was elevated above the others. They were to have no title, which, in the eyes of men, would make them appear superior to their brethren. Please understand this was not a suggestion. Again, it was a clear command. They were to reject anything that would make a distinction between them or destroy their unity.

In the body of Christ, the Church, there are no elite and lower classes, "*For we are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus* (Galatians 3:26). However, Catholic clergy welcome the titles of "*Father*" and "*Holy Father*," along with a host of other titles, which distinguish themselves from the people they pastor. They are just as guilty of pride and vainglory as were the scribes and Pharisees of our Lord's days on earth. Bible-believing Christians who are in the ministry and led by the Holy Spirit and who want to please the Lord day by day will show humility, not an exalted attitude.

Now we come to Verse nine. The very Verse that our Catholic friends deny they are violating by referring to their parish Priest as "*Father*" and their Pope as "*Holy Father*." Let's take a closer look at this important Verse in question. The Lord Jesus commands very specifically, "*Call no man your father upon the earth.*" Clearly, He is not speaking of our earthly father from the standpoint of the flesh. God commanded, "*Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee*" (Exodus 20: 12). The Apostle Paul brings this to us in Ephesians 6:1-3: "*Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.*"

Verse nine specifically means the spiritual realm, which the Lord Jesus forbids us to call any man "*Father*." The word "*Father*" as used here denotes spiritual superiority, authority, a right to command, a claim to particular respect. Christians are one in Christ. God only is supreme and has supreme authority. Therefore we are to allow no man to assume the office of spiritual Father of our lives. Remember what Christ said in Verse nine? "*For One is your Father, which is in Heaven.*" No mere man can impart spiritual life to a person. Only One is our spiritual Father and that One is God. We are to install no man (the Pope or anyone else) as an infallible teacher. No one has any right to teach anything except that which God has already taught in the Words of Jesus, Words penned down in the New Testament as the Holy Spirit moved upon holy men. The believer's relationship to God is as close as any other person's relationship to God and Christ is the only mediator between God and man (First Timothy 2:5).

In Verse ten the Lord Jesus continues to warn against elevating people in leadership by associating particular titles to them. Verse ten: "*Neither be ye called masters: for One is your Master, even Christ.*"



A leader or guide is the literal meaning of "masters" in this Verse. It speaks of those who go before others to lead and direct them. You will notice however, that there is nothing in this passage to forbid people giving proper titles of respect to those in civil office and rendering to them honor belonging to their particular office or station. On the contrary, in Matthew 22:21 the Lord Jesus stressed giving "*unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's.*"

In Romans 13:7 Paul directed, "*Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.*" Then in First Peter we read: "*Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the King.*"

But in the New Testament Church, the Lord Jesus forbids that believers wear titles and honour that exalt them above their brothers and sisters in Christ and give occasion for pride and haughtiness.

"*For One is your Master, even Christ.*" It is Christ who leads and directs the Christian. He directs us through the Holy Spirit, the comforter promised in John 16:7-15.

In First John 2:20,27, John tells us, "*ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things .... The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him.*" Finally, Titus 2: 11-13 declares: "*For the grace of God that bringeth Salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. " "Therefore, One is our Master, even Christ."*

Finally, Catholics and Bible-believing Christians must look to the Bible for their answer to this perplexing issue of calling Catholic clergy by these titles. The Lord Jesus personally warned all believers in Matthew 23:9 and John 17:11 that these titles are reserved exclusively for God only, and expressly forbids this in the strongest of terms! To be sure, Christ primary point in this passage of Scripture seems to be that only God should be in the place of holy reverence and unquestioned obedience. Only God truly deserves the title "*Father*" in this highly exalted sense. Only God is "*Holy Father*." Only God is truly the One Who cares for us as His beloved children, in contrast to the Pharisees who often led their followers into spiritual bondage.

The same point applies to the Pope. Indeed, the Pope has set himself up in a far more exalted position as "*Holy Father*" than any Pharisee ever did. If what Christ said holds true for the Pharisees, it certainly must hold true for the Pope. 7

## Historical Problems With Papal Infallibility -

In addition to biblical problems, there are serious historical problems with the Catholic claim for Infallibility for both the Pope and the Magisterium.

Perhaps one of the greatest embarrassments to the "*infallible*" Church is its fallible judgment regarding Galileo Galilei (A.D. 1564-1642), generally known as Galileo. Threatened by the implications of Galileo's discovery, the Catholic Church, led by Pope Urban VIII (A.D. 1623-1644) threatened an elderly and very ill Galileo with torture if he would not renounce his claim that the earth revolved around the sun.

Galileo, using his telescope to view the heavens, adopted the Copernican view that the sun, not the earth, was the center of the solar system. In opposition to Galileo and the Copernican solar centric theory he adopted, the Catholic Church sided with the scientifically outdated Ptolemaic geocentric view that remained official Catholic dogma for centuries, with infallible Pope after infallible Pope affirming it: The earth was the center of the universe and all heavenly bodies, including the sun, revolved around it.

In A.D. 1616, the Copernican theory was condemned at Rome. Aristotelian scientists the Jesuits the Dominicans and through Popes (Paul' V, Gregory' XV and Urban VIII), played key roles in the controversy. Galileo was summoned by the Inquisition in 1632, tried, and on June 21, 1633, pronounced, "*vehemently suspected of heresy.*" Eventually Pope Urban VIII allowed Galileo to return to his home in Florence where he remained under house arrest until his death in 1642.



Were Popes Paul v (A.D. 1605-1621) and Urban VIII (A .D. 1623-1644) infallible, when they condemned Galileo for holding a true scientific theory? Did they not declare the Copernican theory was false, heretical, and contrary to the Word of God?

After the Catholic Church had suffered many centuries of embarrassment for its condemnation of Galileo, on November 10th 1979, Pope John Paul II spoke to the Pontifical Academy of Science. In the address titled, "*Faith, Science and the Galileo Case*" the Pope called for a reexamination of the whole episode. On May 9, 1983, while addressing the subject of the Church and science, John Paul II conceded that "*Galileo had suffered from departments of the Church.*" This of course, is not a clear retraction of the condemnation, nor does it solve the problem of how an infallible pronouncement of the Catholic Church could be in error.

It was not until 1992 that the Vatican, after a 14-month study, finally admitted that Galileo had indeed been right. 8 That admission was at the same time an acknowledgment that the many Popes who had affirmed that Galileo was wrong were themselves fallible individuals capable of making false interpretations of Scripture. Yet the Second Vatican Council reaffirmed the dogma that only the Magisterium led by the

infallible Pope may interpret Scripture and that all the faithful must unquestioningly accept their interpretation.



From Time Magazine (7/12/68) "A Catholic prelate strongly hinted that the Vatican may be prepared to lift its condemnation of Galileo Galilei, the 17th century Italian physicist whom the Inquisition put under house arrest for contending that the Earth rotates around the Sun. Galileo was forced to recant. The official censure has never been removed. An Open admission of error by the Church would do much to improve relations between religion and science."

No wonder the Second Vatican Council limits its endorsement of biblical inerrancy to matters of faith and morals. It states, "*The books of Scripture firmly, faithfully and without error teach that truth which God, for the sake of our Salvation, wished to see confided to the sacred Scriptures.*" A Knights of Columbus paraphrases this section thus: "*Hence the Bible is free from error in what pertains to religious truth revealed for our Salvation. It is not necessarily free from error in other matters (e.g., natural science).*" Apparently the God Who created the universe and Who inspired the Bible doesn't know natural science?

The Magisterium, which claims to be infallible and the only interpreter of Scripture, is obviously far from infallible and must therefore have an excuse for the scientific errors it makes. So it puts the blame on Scripture. In denying individuals the personal, moral responsibility of heeding God's Word (rather than what some Hierarchy says about it), the Roman Catholic Church clings to the last vestiges of authority, which it once exercised over the lives and consciences of all humankind and governments.

### **The Problem Of The Antipopes -**

Another monumental problem of the Roman Catholic Church as it relates to Papal Infallibility is the scandalous reality of having more than one infallible Pope at the same time, a Pope and an antipope. It is a historical fact that at times there were two or three men all claiming to be Pope. All had their followers, who gave due veneration to each man. While there has been some disagreement as to who really was the actual Pope, the Roman Catholic Church claims only one was genuine and the pretenders were all antipopes. For centuries, as we have already seen, Roman Catholic books named different Popes as genuine. As recent as 1969, some very traditional Catholics claimed that Pope Paul VI was an antipope. They said the real Pope was a man they called Clement XV.

Roman Catholic scholars identify over 30 men as antipopes, or false claimants. The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church says, "*There have been about thirty-five antipopes in the history of the Catholic Church.*" How



Did they not torture and imprison Galileo in the dungeons of the Inquisition for not sharing their erroneous views? In their decree prohibiting the book of Copernicus, the Congregation of the Index, March 5, 1616, denounced the new system of the mobility of the Earth and the immobility of the Sun as "utterly contrary to the Holy Scriptures."

can there be two infallible and opposing Popes at the same time? Which is the true Pope? Since there is no infallible way to determine who is the infallible Pope, the system has a serious logical problem.

Catholic apologists claim that there were not really two Popes, since only one can be infallible. This is at best only a theoretical solution, not an actual one, since Catholics have no way to know for sure which one is the right one. Which one should they look to for guidance, since each Pope can excommunicate the other and sometimes has? Claiming that only one is the real Pope does not solve the practical problem of which Pope should actually be followed as the infallible guide in faith and morals.

### **The Catholic Doctrine Of Papal Infallibility And Titles Claimed By The Pope Are Blasphemous -**

Finally, to be sure, the Apostle Peter would never have accepted the titles and names used of the Roman Pope today. Peter, who supposedly was the first Pope according to Rome, refused to accept worship. *"And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshiped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man"* (Acts 10:25-26). Yet, the Pope accepts, no, demands, titles of deity and accepts the worshipful genuflection of those who approach him. What unchristian blasphemy!



Ask your Catholic friend if they can prove from the Bible that the Apostle Peter taught about Papal Infallibility of the Pope, as his pretended successor the Pope does now?

As we have already seen from Scripture, the Lord Jesus condemned this type of thing with the religious leaders, saying, *"But be not ye called Rabbi: for One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in Heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for One is your Master, even Christ"* (Matthew 23:8-10). The Roman Catholic Church has organized and titled its Hierarchy with total disregard for these commands.

The Catholic teaching on the Papacy, finding no foundation in the Word of God, seriously detracts from the position and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, for He is the Head of the Church, and as He lives forever, there is no need for a "human" head upon earth. Not only this, but the Word of God tells us that there already is a "Vicar of Christ on earth" today, and He is the Holy Spirit of God, as we have already studied earlier in this chapter. When the Lord Jesus spoke of His return to the Father in John 14:16, He promised that the Father would send "another Comforter" Who would be with the believers forever, that being the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit Who indwells believers today, Who guides and directs them, and leads them into the



How can one explain the fact that there have been 35 occasions in which there has been more than one Pope at a time in the Roman Catholic Church? Doesn't this undermine the Catholic view on Papal Infallibility?

truth. The Christian does not need a "Pope" when they have the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is infallible, not the Pope.

The official titles of the Pope: *“Bishop of Rome, Vicar of Jesus Christ, Successor of the Prince of the Apostles, Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church, Patriarch of the West, Primate of Italy, Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Roman Province, Sovereign of the State of the Vatican City, now Gloriously Reigning.”* (Sometimes the last phrase is *“Servant of the Servants of God.”*)

The above titles are for the Catholic Pope. In First Peter 5:1 and Second Peter 1:1 are biblical positions (Elder and Apostle) Peter occupied. There is a vast difference between Rome's Pope and the Lord's Apostle!

### **Concluding Remarks -**

We have spent much time dealing with the issues related to the position of the Pope, of Papal Primacy and Infallibility; and we have found that the Roman Catholic interpretation of the Scripture passages Rome uses in support of these teachings is itself deficient. It is not so much that the Catholic interpretation numbers among several good options from which to choose. It is rather the case that the Catholic interpretation does not come remotely close to qualifying as a valid option. We are therefore forced to conclude that the Roman Catholic notion of a position of Pope with the authority of Papal Primacy and Infallibility is without biblical and historical support and as such must be rejected.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Eleven Biblical Events Which Disprove Primacy Of Peter -**

Even more decisive in regard to the Apostle Peter's position is that which is revealed in the progressive history of the newly established Church. We find in the New Testament books, which follow the Gospels, much disclosed as to the actions and position of various ones prominent in the early Church. All of this is most instructive. It is



In the Book of Acts we find a detailed history of the early Church and there is no mention or even a hint of the existence of a Papacy. Nor is there the slightest hint of Petrine Supremacy.

enlightening to follow through on Peter and see what actually was and was not exercised by him as shown by these later accounts. This will indicate whether or not we have rightly presented the passages observed in the Gospels.

Turning to the opening chapters of the Book of Acts, we find Peter active in the early Church. To some extent he even played a leading role. That is in accord with his use of "*the keys*" in getting the Church underway, by giving the Gospel first to the Jewish people on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:37-41) and then to the Gentiles (Acts 10:34-43). But then note - and this is important - his prominence declines. Peter not only was on the same level with the other Apostles, but, on occasion, was subject to them and challenged by them - far different from what would be expected of one who was supposedly the visible head of Christ's Church and His "*Vicar*" on earth.

While many Roman Catholic theologians just assume, without biblical proof, Peter's leadership, some Catholic scholars are disturbed, to say the least, by this discrepancy - this failure to find Peter in the place of prominence and exercising the position of authority over the other Apostles and Church. Many Catholic apologists have desperately attempted to create Peter's Primacy. But let us look into the inspired (God breathed) Scriptures to settle this issue.

### **The Brethren, Not Peter, Chose Matthias To Replace Judas -**

The first biblical event we want to survey to disprove Peter's Primacy is recorded in the Book of Acts in chapter 1:15-26. The only instance in which another man was chosen to succeed an Apostle, and there the choice was made not by Peter, but by popular choice on the part of the brethren who numbered about one hundred and twenty, and by the casting of lots. So we see, Matthias was chosen by lot, rather than by Peter's edict. This would have been the opportune time for Peter to have exercised his Primacy by appointing Matthias. But instead, it's done through a different means.



It is noteworthy that Peter did not use his supposed prerogatives as "Pope" to appoint a successor to Judas. In explaining Matthew 16:18, Bishop Murray of Maynooth, Ireland, says that one of the powers given to Peter by Christ was to "appoint the clergy of the Church." We know the present Pope appoints Cardinals and Bishops, so the lack of Peter's power and authority here is very significant. Not only did Peter not exercise his supposed right, the other Apostles and disciples had no problem with him not doing so. It is clear from Acts chapter one that Peter exercised no authority or jurisdiction over them.

The compelling question continues to be asked many years later ... why didn't Peter choose Matthias instead of having to cast lots?

### **The Selection Of The Seven Men In The Church At Jerusalem To Minister To The Needs Of The Indigent Widows Denies The Primacy Of Peter -**

The second biblical event we want to survey to disprove Peter's Primacy is found in the Book of Acts chapter 6:1-6. In this inspired passage of Scripture, we are informed that the entire Church at Jerusalem selected the seven men (Verse 5) with all the Apostles appointing them (Verse 6). If Peter had been recognized by the brethren in Jerusalem and the Apostles as the visible head of the Church, his authority alone would have sufficed to appoint these seven men.

### **Who's Sending Whom?**

The third biblical event we want to evaluate to disprove Peter's Primacy is found in the Book of Acts chapter 8:14: "*Now when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John.*"

Notice here the very reverse of what we have been led to believe should have been expected. It wasn't Peter who sent and the others who complied. It was the Apostles who sent and Peter accepted orders from them, submitting to their directives. He took the place of a subordinate. By now, according to Catholic theology, Peter is supposed to



If Peter was supreme, wouldn't he be the one sending others instead of being sent by others to Samaria (Acts 8:14)?

be the Pope. One of the Papal prerogatives is Primacy, as we have seen in chapter one. That means he is supposedly completely in charge of the Church - the absolute leader. Here in Acts 8:14, we see just the opposite occurring, his so called Primacy is absolutely absent from this revealing narrative, for we see the other Apostles sending Peter on a mission. A primate is not sent by others because there is no superior, which has any authority or power over him. If Peter was in

authority, wouldn't he be the one sending others instead of being sent by others to

Samaria? A primate can voluntarily go, or he can send someone else; but he cannot be sent!

Imagine the Pope today being sent by the Cardinals or Bishops on any such mission. It is well known that today the Popes seldom if ever preach. They do issue statements and they address select audiences, which come to them. But they do not go out and preach the Gospel as did Peter and the other Apostles.

To be sure, this event does not suggest that Peter had some "Primacy" when he and John were sent on this assignment. Rather, it strongly suggests a complete equality among the Apostles.

### **The Apostle Peter Is Challenged By Some In The Jerusalem Church -**

The fourth narrative which disproves the Catholic teaching that the Apostle Peter was given unique Primacy over the other Apostles and the entire Church, is found in chapter eleven of the Book of Acts where we find Peter, under the direction of the Lord, traveling to Caesarea, in which he had preached to and baptized Gentiles in chapter ten. Upon his return, he was challenged by some Jewish Christians in the Jerusalem Church for what he had done. We read that those there still following Jewish customs, found fault with him for his conduct (Acts 11:23).



If Peter was conferred upon by Christ with absolute authority, why is it that James was the dominant leader at the Jerusalem assembly?

The important point here, as it relates to Peter's alleged Primacy, is that he was forced to give an extended defense of his actions. Notice he did not rebuke his critics for questioning his actions, as he might have done had he been given supreme authority by Christ. No Papal authority was recognized, nor was there any attempt to exercise any. Neither were those who called Peter to task accused of any insubordination or of failure to recognize Peter's place. In submitting his defense, Peter thereby admitted their right to question his actions.

### **James, Not Peter, Presided Over The Assembly At Jerusalem -**

The fifth and perhaps the most compelling narrative that strongly refutes the Catholic dogma regarding the Primacy of Peter is found in Acts 15:1-35. In this passage of Scripture, we see a similar event like the previous narrative. The Church at Antioch, confronted by legalistic Judaizers from Jerusalem, and teaching that Gentiles which had received Christ as Saviour by faith alone, also must be circumcised and adhere to the Law of Moses. The Church, concerned by these issues relative to Gentiles, decided to send Paul and Barnabas "*and certain others of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the*

*Apostles and Elders about this question*" (Verse 2). Notice it was not convened on Peter's initiative but on Paul's. Notice also, that it was not to any one specific among the Apostles, as the highest authority, to whom they were sent. In other words, they were not sent to see Peter exclusively, the supposed head of the Church (Verse 12), and Elders were included as well as Apostles. In fact, "*the whole Church*" (Verse 22) was involved in resolving the issue. Was this the way to show deference to the Pope, again, the alleged visible head of the Apostles and entire Church? Secondly, not Peter alone, but all the Apostles, the Church and the Elders received Paul and Barnabas (Verse 4). Does this enlighten and encourage us in any way to believe that Peter was acting as a Pope? Thirdly, the members of this important assembly met by the common agreement of the Apostles and Elders (Verse 6). Had Peter been Pope, he would have convened the meeting. Moreover, if he were a Pope, recognized as such by the other Apostles and Elders, he could have settled the matter brought before the assembly entirely by himself with an *ex cathedra* pronouncement. Fourthly, Barnabas, Paul and Peter all spoke but it was James not Peter who actually presided over the assembly, formulating and crystallizing its decision. Also, Peter was not the first to speak; he spoke only after there had been much questioning and debating (Verse 7). Certainly, his words would bear much weight, since he was the first to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. But he spoke not as one presiding over the assembly, not as one making a final ruling, but as an Apostle explaining the matter under discussion in light of his individual experiences, even as Paul and Barnabas discussed their experiences (Verse 12). While Peter made an important statement, it was not doctrinal. It was mainly a summation of his experience in first bringing the Gospel to the Gentiles (Verses 7-11). James, however, drew upon the Scriptures and argued from a doctrinal point (Verses 13-18); after all, the issues at hand were indeed doctrinal issues. Moreover, it was James who said, "*Men and brethren, hearken unto me ... Wherefore, my sentence (judgment) is ...*" (Verses 13,19). His declaration became the basis of the official letter sent back to Antioch and other locations (Verses 23-27). When James gave his judgment, the meeting ended; his word was final (Verses 19-20). That the statement of James was indeed an authoritative, final judgment, is proved by the fact that it was later incorporated verbatim in the letter, which was sent by the assembly (V. 29).

Finally, the letter written by the assembly was neither sent in Peter's name alone, nor was it confirmed by him; it was sent in the name of all the Apostles, Elders and brethren (V.23). Nowhere in the letter is Peter's name expressly mentioned. Had Peter been a Pope, he would have signed and confirmed the letter by virtue of his infallible authority as Pontiff and visible head of the Church. <sup>1</sup>

**There Was Not Any Office Above That Of The  
Apostle Authorized And Ordained By The Lord  
Jesus Christ For His Church -**

The sixth narrative which disproves Peter's Primacy is found in Ephesians 4:11-16, which speaks specifically to the fact there was not any office above the position of Apostle which was authorized by Christ for His Church. "And He gave some, Apostles; and some, Prophets; and some, Evangelists; and some, Pastors and Teachers; For the perfecting of the saints (Christians), for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ ... "

Why did not the Apostle Paul mention first a Pope, a Vicar of Christ, as the head of the Church? Could the Apostle have been so negligent or envious as to fail to mention the supreme office in the Church, if there had been one? Could you imagine a reasonably intelligent person writing out a list of the offices of administration in our government and omitting the office of the presidency?

In answering the question, "*Why is it that Paul makes no mention of the Pope when he speaks of the various offices in the church?*" Catholic apologists respond this way when they say, "*Because it is not the purpose of St. Paul to describe the Hierarchy, but to show that as in the body there are different members, so in Christ's body, there are different offices - Apostles, Prophets, doctors etc.*" The play in this quotation on the words "Hierarchy" and "Offices" is simply disingenuous; an attempt to raise trivial distinctions so as to evade the issue. Are we to conclude that the members of the Catholic Hierarchy do not occupy offices in that denomination? These Catholic apologists claim that Paul is not describing the Hierarchy in Ephesians 4:11, is a fatal admission to the Catholic cause, tantamount to affirming that the Catholic Hierarchy, with its Pope, Cardinals, and archbishops, has nothing whatever to do with the "*building up of the body of Christ.*" Yes, we most assuredly agree with them that in the text Paul is not writing about the Catholic Hierarchy. But Paul does present plainly and clearly the offices that the Lord Jesus Christ ordained for His Church, or body, even offices which were set up by divine appointment for "*the perfecting of the saints (Christians), for the work of the ministry, for the edifying (building up) of the body of Christ,*" and for protection against error, "*that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.*"

This teaching in Scripture, also applies to the Lord Jesus Christ. Another important aspect of this as it relates to biblical titles and positions, is applicable to the Lord as well. As we have seen previously, He was clearly given a title or name to designate His position. He is supremely in charge of the Church; therefore, He has been given titles, or appellations, which plainly express this fact: "*the head of the Church*" (Ephesians 5:23), "*the chief Shepherd*" (First Peter 5:4), and a host of others throughout Scripture. As we have already seen, the men sent out by the Lord Jesus to be His special envoys were

given a name expressly designating this office, again, for example, the position of Apostle. "Now the names of the twelve Apostles are these" (Matthew 10:2). Those who served as Prophets were also designated as such (Acts 15:32).

Where is there a passage of Scripture that gives to Peter a name or designation expressly depicting him as a Pope, the visible head of the Church? For if Peter had been appointed to rule over the other Apostles and entire Church, his office would have been distinct from the common office of Apostle. According to distinctions now in use, it would have been signified by some distinct name or title characterizing it and distinguishing it from others. By this means it would have appeared that there was such an office, what the nature of the office was, and what respect and obedience were due the incumbent.

Surely, if any of the other Apostles had thought of the Apostle Peter as being their superior, the visible head of the Church, they would have so named him. There can be no question as to how Catholics feel toward the Pope, for whenever they refer to him they use such terms as "*His Holiness*" and "*The Holy Father*" as we discovered in chapter one. But when the Apostles spoke of Peter they always called him by name without any embellishments. To them, he was simply another Apostle (Galatians 1:18; 2:7-8).



"One is forced to admit that the gradual corruption of Christianity began very early" (Catholic Encyclopedia, Chapter XII, Page 414.

Peter never designated himself as a Pope, the visible head of the Church. In the beginning of his two Epistles, he simply declared, "*Peter, an Apostle of Jesus Christ*" (First Peter 1:1) and "*Simon Peter, a servant and Apostle of Jesus Christ*" (Second Peter 1:1). He wrote in First Peter 5:1, "*The elders therefore among you I exhort, who am a fellow Elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ who am also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed.*" It is ridiculous to argue that Peter did not refer to himself as a Pope because of modesty. Being an Apostle was an honored position; yet Peter was not too modest to call himself such. If it were modesty that kept him from calling himself a Pope, why do not the Catholic Popes practice the same modesty? When a Pope writes an encyclical or any other official document, he always refers to his official position as head of the Roman



From *Keepers of the Keys* by Wilton Wynn, Random House, New York. 1988, p. 11 "In the year A.D. 236, a farmer named Fabian wandered into Rome and stopped to watch the clergy and people select a Pope. A dove landed on Fabian's head, and the assembly instantly acclaimed him Pope."

Catholic Church, in style such as: "*I, the peculiar vicar of Christ, Prince of the Apostles, exhort and require of you,*" or as in the style of Pope Gregory's Encyclical Letter of 1832: "*Encyclical Letter of our most Holy Father, Pope Peter, by divine Providence, the First of the name ...*" Peter never called himself a Pope for the obvious reason that He never considered himself as such.

Proof that Peter did not think of himself as a Pope, as we have already seen, is worth repeating a second time

from Acts 10:25-26: *"And when it came to pass that Peter entered, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter raised him up, saying, stand up; I myself also am a man."* Peter, unlike the Popes of the Roman Catholic Church, would not allow Cornelius, a man, to bow down to him, another man. Does his action here strike us as being in keeping with the office of a Pope? If Catholics argue that Peter refused the worship of Cornelius because it was offered to him as one that was divine, we reply that had Peter been the supreme Apostle he would have taken advantage of the occasion to receive obeisance from Cornelius as that which was due a Pope, saying in effect, *"Now, Cornelius you are worshiping me as though I were divine. This is wrong, for I too am a man. But you can certainly bow down before me as a manifestation of the respect due me as a Pope, the supreme Pontiff and visible head of the Church."* But he didn't say this, because he knew this was absolutely prideful and certainly sinful!

Do not the Catholic Popes accept obeisance from those to whom they give audience? But Peter, unlike the Popes, refuse to accept any kind of obeisance from Cornelius, simply saying to him, *"Stand up; I myself also am a man."*

### **Request From James And John To Sit Next To Christ During The Kingdom Age -**

In the Gospel of Mark, chapter 10:35-45, we find another important narrative which soundly disproves the Catholic dogma of Peter's Primacy. In fact, this passage of Scripture speaks volumes, not only refuting Peter's Primacy, but also refutes the whole system of the Papacy.



Acts 8:1-4 states that every Christian making up the great Church at Jerusalem "went everywhere preaching the Word." If we had no other evidence, this forever does away with the Catholic idea of a special Priesthood and the very elaborate system erected upon it.

James and John once came to the Lord Jesus asking if one of them might sit on His right hand and the other on His left in the Kingdom (In Eastern Kingdoms, the two principal ministers of state, ranking next in authority to the king, hold these positions). If the Roman Catholic claim is true, it seems that Christ would have explained that He had given the place on His right to Peter and did not intend to create any position on the left. But to the contrary, here was the answer of Christ: *"Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you"* (Mark 10:42-43).



If Primacy was conferred upon Peter, there should be explicit testimony from Christ, the Apostles, Paul and even Peter, to substantiate this important teaching. Why isn't there?



In this statement, the Lord Jesus plainly said that none of them was to be a ruler over the others. Instead, He taught an equality, clearly denying the principles that are involved in having a Pope ruling over the Church as the Bishop of bishops.

Jesus further taught the concept of equality, as we have seen earlier in chapter one, by warning the disciples against using flattering titles such as "*father*" (the word "*Pope*" means Father), *Rabbi*, or *Master*. "*For one is your Master, even Christ,*" He said, "*And all ye are brethren*" (Matthew 23:4-10). The idea that one of them was to be exalted to the position of Pope is at utter variance with this passage of Scripture. So we see, in Mark chapter ten, the Lord Jesus Christ made it plain that His Church was not to be governed by rulers that exercise lordship over people as in heathen governments (see also First Peter 5:3).

### Who's The Greatest?

The eighth biblical event that disproves Peter's Primacy is found in Luke 22:24-30. This event is similar to the previous narrative in that we have Apostles, like James and John, desiring something from the Lord. They were desiring to know "*which of them should be accounted (considered) the greatest*" (V.24). It is noteworthy that in this passage of Scripture, just prior to the time of Christ's arrest and crucifixion, some of the Apostles got into an argument regarding who among them would be considered the greatest. One must wonder why the Apostles would continue to even ask this question if the issue had been settled, with Peter supposedly having emerged as God's choice for some unique position. The very fact that such discussions took place shows that no Apostle had attained a supreme position during the Lord's three-year ministry. Moreover, if the Apostles had known that Jesus already had appointed Peter as leader, they could only have argued who would be second. In Acts 8: 14 it is recorded that the other Apostles sent Peter to Samaria. Primate's don't get sent, because there is no one over them to send them. If Peter were in a supreme position of authority, he would have said something in his Second Epistle to the effect that his readers should be sure to follow his successor in Rome. After all, Peter was getting on in years and would have supported the Papacy had such a Papacy existed. But Peter did no such thing because there was no such Papacy.



Contrast Peter's designations of himself with the titles of the present Roman Catholic Pope: Bishop of Rome, Vicar of Jesus Christ, Successor of the Prince of the Apostles, Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church, Patriarch of the West, Primate of Italy, Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Roman Province, Sovereign of the State of the Vatican City.

Another argument we can make note of is the fact that the Apostle Paul affirmed in Second Corinthians 12:11 that he was not inferior to any of the other Apostles.

"I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended by you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest Apostles, though I be nothing." Paul would not have said this had a Papacy been in existence. It is also highly revealing that while Peter is prominent in the first 12 chapters of the Book of Acts, the Apostle Paul is the prominent figure in chapters 13-28. This would not make sense if Peter were the Pope. Further, when Paul lists the authority structure in the early Church in First Corinthians 12:28, there is no mention of a Pope: "*And God hath set some in the Church, first Apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers*" (First Corinthians 12:28).



How could the Apostle Paul affirm he was not inferior to any other Apostle in Second Corinthians 12:11 if Peter had risen to a position of unique authority?

### **Argument Number Nine Which Disproves Peter's Primacy -**

The Primacy of Peter is refuted by the fact that he had no powers that were not possessed by all the other Apostles. As was stated earlier in chapter one, there is no question God used Peter in a significant way. We saw in Matthew chapter fourteen, Peter and the other Apostles in the boat on the Sea of Galilee and it is Peter taking the initiative to walk on water to the Lord Jesus. Peter demonstrated leadership by taking the initiative.

In Acts chapter two at Pentecost, we see Peter's first use of the keys and the Gospel presented to the Jews. In Acts chapter three, we see also the first apostolic miracle where the lame man was healed. Peter took the initiative to minister to this man. Moreover, in Acts chapter ten, we see Peter's second use of the keys and the Gospel given to the Gentiles. To be sure, God used Peter in a great and mighty way. But nowhere in the inspired Scriptures do we find that Peter was chosen by God to be supreme, the infallible primate over the other Apostles and entire Church! Keep in mind there is a vast difference between leadership and Primacy! Rather, the whole of Scripture in the New Testament, teaches an equality among the Apostles. Consider the following facts: first, Peter was a minister of Christ, but so were the other Apostles: "*Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ*" (First Corinthians 4:1). Secondly, Peter was an ambassador of Christ, but so were the other Apostles: "*we are ambassadors for Christ*" (Second Corinthians 5:20). Thirdly, Peter was a witness of Christ, but so were the other Apostles: "*But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judaea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth*" (Acts 1 :8). Fourthly, Peter had a universal commission, but so did the other Apostles: "*And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, all power (authority) is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go Ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world (age)*" (Matthew 28:18-20). Fifthly, Peter was

baptized in the Holy Spirit, but so were the other Apostles: "*For John (the Baptist) truly baptized with water: But ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence*" (Acts 1:5). Sixthly, Peter possessed the power to work miracles, but so did the other Apostles: "*Truly the signs of an Apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.*" (Second Corinthians 12:12).

What prerogatives, then, did Peter have that the other Apostles did not have? Certainly none, except those which the Roman Catholic Church has invented. And even among the leading scholars of Catholicism, there are those who have the candor and good judgment to affirm the equality of all the Apostles. Cardinal Cusanus wrote, "*We know that Peter did not receive more power from Christ than the other Apostles; for nothing was said to Peter which was not also said to the others: therefore we rightly say, that all the Apostles were equal to Peter in power.*"

The ancient fathers, so called, assert either in express terms or by consequence that the Apostles were equal, in power. Cyprian declared, "*The other Apostles were indeed that which Peter was, endowed with equal participation of honor and power.*" Chrysostom said, "*Paul showeth that each Apostle enjoyed equal dignity.*" Cyril wrote, "*Peter and John were equal in honor one to another, as they were also Apostles and holy disciples.*" Jerome affirmed, "*that the strength of the Church is equally settled on the Apostles.*"

The same kind of equality can be seen when we look to Paul's writings as well. He writes in Second Corinthians 12:11: "*for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest Apostles,*" If Peter was given a Primacy, how could Paul say this? Did Paul believe Peter was the head of the Church? There is no evidence he did at all. Instead, when Peter was in error in Antioch, as recounted by Paul in Galatians 2:11, Paul withstood him to the face and rebuked him publicly for his hypocrisy. And well he should have! Peter's failure struck at the very heart of the Gospel message itself and Paul would have none of that. Aside from the fact that here we have anything but an infallible Pope in Peter (surely his actions are relevant to "*faith and morals,*" are they not?), it is apparent that Paul was not hindered by any idea that he was publicly rebuking the "*Prince of the Apostles,*" the very "*Vicar of Christ on earth*"! No, for Paul, and Peter, and all the Apostles, there was only one Vicar of Christ, that being the Holy Spirit of God. None of them dared to blaspheme Him by claiming His titles.

### **The Apostle Paul Rebukes Peter -**

The tenth narrative which disproves the Catholic doctrine of Peter's Primacy is found in Galatians chapter 2:11-14. But before we survey this passage of Scripture, let us take a closer look at the Apostle Paul. It is very interesting to notice Paul's attitude toward Peter. Paul was called to be an Apostle at a later time, after the Church had been launched. Yet Peter had nothing to do with that choice, as he surely would have had if he had been a Pope. Instead, God called and ordained Paul without consulting Peter, as

He has called and ordained many thousands of men since then without reference to the Popes of Rome. To be sure, Paul was easily the greatest of the Apostles, with a deeper insight into the way of Salvation and a larger revealed knowledge concerning the mysteries of life and death. He wrote much more of the New Testament than did Peter. His thirteen Epistles contain 2,023 Verses, while Peter's two Epistles contain only 166 Verses. And if we ascribe the Epistle to the Hebrews to Paul, as does the Roman Catholic Church (Confraternity Version, p. 397), he wrote an even larger proportion. Paul worked more recorded miracles than did Peter and he seems to have established more Churches than did Peter. Apart from the Church at Rome, which we believe was established by laymen, Paul established more prominent and more permanent Churches than did Peter. And, so far as the New Testament record goes, Paul's influence in the Church at Rome was much greater than was that of Peter. Paul mentions Peter more than once, but nowhere does he defer to Peter's authority, or acknowledge him as a Pope.

Indeed, quite the contrary is the case. Paul had founded the Church at Corinth, but when some there rebelled against his authority, even to the extent of favoring Peter, he does not give even an inch on his own authority. Instead, he vigorously defends his authority, declaring, "*Am I not an Apostle? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?*" (First Corinthians 9:1), and again, "*for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest Apostles*" (Second Corinthians 12:11). Paul also declares that he has been entrusted with the Gospel of the uncircumcision, even as Peter with the Gospel of the circumcision (Galatians 2:7). He therefore put himself on a level with all the other Apostles. Certainly, those ideas were incompatible with any idea of a Pope in Paul's day.

In respect to Peter's conduct, Paul's testimony, which comes to us in his inspired (God breathed) writing, is most illuminating. It underscores and makes even more emphatic what we have seen in the Book of Acts. In regards to what happened at Antioch and Peter's subsequent behavior, we find on one occasion the Apostle Paul publicly rebuked Peter. Paul not only rebuked Peter to his face in front of a whole assembly, but then later put it on permanent record for the whole world to read.

### **Peter Goes To Antioch -**

Peter had no part in founding the Church at Antioch. Paul, however, arrived there early, building up the Church and there the believers were first called Christians (Acts 11:19-26). Some time later Peter showed up, taking a Jewish position contrary to full Gentile freedom from Mosaic regulations. Because of this, Paul publicly rebuked Peter (Galatians 2). When Peter sided with the "*false brethren*" (V. 4) in their Jewish legalism and "*he withdrew and separated himself*" from the Gentiles and was even the cause of Barnabas being misled, Paul administered a severe rebuke. We read: "*But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: But when they (false brethren, V. 4)*"

were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews (legalists) dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation (hypocrisy). But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" (Galatians 2:11-14)

The Apostle Paul then impressed upon Peter some good, sound, biblical theology, declaring that, "*a man (or woman) is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we (Jews) have believed in Jesus Christ, that we (Jews) might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified*" (V. 16). In other words, Paul gave the Apostle Peter a "*dressing down*" before them all, accusing him of not walking uprightly in the truth of the Gospel.

Just think of anyone, even an Apostle, withstanding to the face one who was supposed to be the supreme Pontiff and then adding, "He was to be blamed"! Imagine publicly giving "*the holy Father*" such a reprimand! But that is the clear record and is entirely destructive of Romanist assumptions. Peter was the only one of all the Apostles who was ever "*withstood*" or "*blamed*" by another Apostle.

This is enough to destroy any illusion that the Apostle Peter was infallible or that Paul thought him to possess a Primacy that would have kept him from publicly denouncing Peter. After all, Infallibility and Primacy are suppose to be attributes of the Pope, according to Catholic theology, so this passage of Scripture proves these two prerogatives don't exist with their Popes in the Catholic Church.

And, to be sure, the Church has ever since followed the position taken by Paul rather than that taken by Peter. Peter's policy would have proven fatal to the whole future of Christianity. Clearly, Peter was not recognized, and happily so for the Church, as having any supreme status. Peter was guilty of serious misjudgment and the Apostle Paul was compelled by the Holy Spirit to confront Peter with this personal sin.



The Apostle Paul had to rebuke Peter for his vacillation, inconsistency and spiritual hypocrisy (Galatians 2:11-14).

Had Peter been conscious of his alleged superior status, he would have put Paul in his place very shortly, and had the others recognized Peter's position they would have backed him up in this. But we find nothing of the sort. The Church was saved from future peril by Paul being able to rightly discern the will of the Lord and by his courage in resisting Peter's narrow and mistaken viewpoint. Had Peter prevailed here he would have done the opposite of what would have "*strengthened his brethren*" (Luke 22:32).

## Was The Apostle Peter In Rome?

The eleventh narrative which disproves Peter's Primacy is found in numerous passages of Scripture. Perhaps the most compelling argument against the Catholic teaching of Peter's Primacy is found in the important question, was Peter in Rome? In other words, did Peter actually minister in Rome? Catholics believe Peter took up residence in Rome in A.D. 42 and became Bishop of Rome and remained there until his martyrdom in A.D. 67.

We start by asking, where is the biblical proof to substantiate Rome's claims regarding Peter as it relates to him being Bishop of Rome?

The most compelling argument refuting Peter's Primacy and ministry in Rome, is the fact there is not one shred of credible historical or biblical evidence to support the assertion Peter was in Rome. Roman Catholic apologists use First Peter 5:13, to "prove" Peter was in Rome, saying that Babylon was a code word commonly used for Rome but that Peter, for his own protection, could not say he was in Rome. This is a ridiculous assertion! Why would Peter be afraid of persecution? Did not Christ indicate that he would die a martyr's death? No pagan power is able to put to death one whom God desires to be kept alive, and approximately ten years after this Epistle was written, Peter himself was put to death by the Roman powers, as Christ had prophesied to him in John 21:18-19; and Second Peter 1:14.



Doesn't the fact that the Apostle Paul publicly corrected Peter on a matter of faith and practice demonstrate that Peter himself was not viewed as supreme (Galatians 2:11-14)?

Peter's method and manner of writing are in no sense written in some mysterious code. He is direct and matter-of-fact. That this man Peter, plain of speech almost to bluntness, should interject into the midst of

his personal explanations and final salutations such a mystical epithet, with no hint of what he means by it, is beyond credulous. In his Epistle, Peter says the elect in Babylon send greetings to the Jews of the Dispersion in Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. "Babylon" is no more cryptic than "Pontus," "Asia," or the rest. Peter means what he says. His "Babylon" is the Babylon on the Euphrates. It is a part of that eastern world where Peter lived his life and did his work.

The city of Babylon was still in existence when Peter wrote this, was home to many Jews and was well known as a major city on the Euphrates River. The great historian, Josephus, writes of Babylon during this same period. Why then would Peter send salutations from Babylon if he was actually in Rome? This would be as irrational as today claiming you were in San Francisco when you were



Peter did not ascribe himself as being a supreme Pontiff, with authority over the entire Church; he called himself "a servant" (Second Peter 1:1). According to Strong's Concordance, the word means "a slave."



really in New York. Sad to say, Catholic assertions about this don't hold water when exposed to the facts of the case.

While Roman Catholic theologians like to assume that everyone agrees with the theory that Peter had a long ministry in Rome, the facts point otherwise. Paul wrote the Epistle to Romans in A.D. 58-59 and, although he greeted many Christians in Rome, made no mention of Peter. Mark is with Peter at the writing of First Peter in A.D. 62-64, and in A.D. 66, Paul writes to Timothy from Rome, "*bring Mark with you.*"

Since Peter was the Apostle to the Jews (Galatians 2:7), it is unlikely that his ministry would center in Rome. There had been a large colony of Jews there, but they were driven out by the emperor Claudius in A.D. 49 (Acts 18:2). Some did return, as we find Paul conferring with the Jewish Elders in Acts 28, but Rome could scarcely have been



If Peter ministered in Rome, why didn't he ever visit the Apostle Paul while Paul was imprisoned in Rome? (There is no mention of a visit by Peter in any of the Epistles Paul wrote from Rome (Romans 1:17; 16:1-16).

termed a center for Jewish evangelism. If Peter had been in Rome, why were the Jewish Elders so "*in the dark*" about matters of Christianity (Acts 28:22)? If Peter were acting as Pope then certainly the Jewish leaders would already know all about Christianity, since Peter was Apostle to the Jews!

There is not one passage in the New Testament which states that Peter was Bishop of Rome or was ever in Rome. There are twenty-seven books in the New Testament and yet not one word is found in all the inspired writings (God breathed) to prove this fundamental claim of the Church of Rome. This silence is striking and shows that Peter was not in Rome, because if he had been there, some reference would have been made to it in the New Testament. Again, Paul wrote a long letter to Rome, but he never once mentioned Peter in his Epistle, as he would have done if Peter were there. To put this incident in proper perspective, imagine a missionary writing to his home Church and greeting twenty-seven of its prominent members, while completely ignoring the Pastor!

The Apostle Paul lived in Rome for two years at one time and while there he wrote a number of Epistles, but he never mentioned Peter once, as he certainly would have done if Peter had been in Rome; but he was not there and that is why Paul did not refer to him.

The New Testament tells us that Peter went to Jerusalem, Antioch, to Samaria, to Joppa, to Caesarea and to other places named, but not that he went to Rome. Why was this omission, since the alleged event is absolutely necessary to establish the authority of the Popes? There is not one word in the New



Peter was the Apostle to the Jews, there was a large Jewish community in Babylon and his Epistle's were written from Babylon to dispersed Jews in that area.

Testament to show that Peter was ever in Rome, and this shows that he was never there.

Furthermore, even outside of the Bible, there is no historical book or other documents of any kind, written within the first 150 years after Christ's ascension, which says that Peter was Bishop of Rome or was ever in Rome. Surely so vital and important a fact (if it were a fact) would have been mentioned by some writer of that time, or within a hundred years after-ward. But it is not The indisputable fact remains that there is absolutely no evidence whatever, either in the New Testament or outside of it, to show



If Peter had been working in the Church in Rome for 16 years, why did Paul write to the people of the Church in these words: "for I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established"? (Romans 1:11).

that Peter was ever in Rome or was ever Bishop of Rome. Rome's claims rests entirely upon false Tradition, manufactured in later centuries without any biblical support, in an attempt to support the false claim to the supremacy of the Pope.

Another argument the Catholic Church uses to "prove" Peter went to Rome is found in Acts 12:17, where we read that following Peter's release from prison, "*he departed and went into another place.*" It is suggested by some Roman Catholics that "*it is possible that the place*

*mentioned in Acts 12:17 was Rome.*" This position is highly speculative. In terms of chronology, Peter going to "*another place*" in Acts 12:17 would have been around A.D. 42-45. Yet we know for a fact that Peter attended the Jerusalem Assembly in A.D. 49 (Acts 15:7). While Catholics suggest that Peter may have gone to Rome, he could have just as easily gone to Bethany, or Caesarea, or Capernaum, all of which were more easily accessible to Jerusalem than Rome. To be sure, this passage of Scripture is hardly a "*proof-text*" that supports Peter was in Rome.

We also know that Peter was in Antioch some time prior to A.D. 49-52 (Galatians 2: 11), and before A.D. 56, so it is possible he may have been in the city of Corinth since there was a group of supporters of Peter there (First Corinthians 1:12). Furthermore, Paul who disdained to build upon another man's foundation (Romans 15:20), would scarcely have written a treatise such as the Epistle to the Romans had Peter been in Rome as Bishop for around fourteen years.



The remarkable fact about Peter's alleged ministry in Rome, is that the New Testament has not one word to say about it! The word "Rome" occurs only nine times in the Bible and never is Peter mentioned in connection with it!

### **Concluding Biblical Truths Regarding This Most Important Narrative -**

As we have read, the Roman Catholic Church teaches Peter went to Rome in A.D. 42, wrote his Epistles from there and was martyred there. His bones were allegedly found under the Vatican. This forms the basis for the claim that the Pope is successor to Peter and head of the entire Church.

We have also seen, there is not any credible historical or biblical evidence to support the assertion Peter was in Rome let alone the Bishop of Rome. First of all, the Scriptures teach Peter wrote his Epistles from Babylon, not Rome. In First Peter 5:13, Peter writes: *"The Church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you."* Babylon, a Jewish city, was nowhere near Rome. Rome, however, was a Gentile city (Acts 18:2). Beloved, the Lord designated Paul to minister to the Gentiles and Peter to the Jews. Paul writes in Galatians 2:7-8: *"When they saw that the Gospel of the uncircumcision (Gentiles) was committed unto me, as the Gospel of the circumcision (Jews) was unto Peter; for He that wrought effectually in Peter, to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles."* Also in Acts 23:11, we find the Lord Jesus confirming to the Apostle Paul that he would be the one ministering in Rome. *"The Lord stood by him (Paul) and said, be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of Me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome."* I think we can say with much assurance, it was the Lord's will that Paul and not Peter go to Rome.



When Paul writes to Timothy near the end of his life in Second Timothy 4:16, he indicates that "no one stood with me" at his first defense; surely, if Peter were the Bishop of Rome at this time, this would be a devastating charge against him, for Paul goes on to ask that "the Lord not hold it against them."

Another important biblical truth is the Apostle Paul ministered only where other Apostles hadn't established a Christian witness. In Romans 15:20, it states: *"So have I strived to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation."* Certainly, Paul wouldn't have ministered in Rome had Peter already been there, because as the Scripture states, he never built upon another man's foundation. And besides, God wouldn't have sent Paul there, like He did in Acts 23:11, if He already sent Peter there to minister.

Furthermore, in Paul's Epistle to the Romans, he acknowledges twenty-seven Christians by name for their faithfulness to Christ and help in the ministry, but never mentions the Apostle Peter. These Christians all have Gentile names. Peter, however, is the Apostle to the Jews! Paul is the Apostle to the Gentiles! If Peter were Bishop of Rome,



The very idea that Peter ended up going to Rome is extremely problematic. We know from Church history that Irenaeus's list of the 12 Bishop's of Rome did not include Peter's name. Irenaeus lived from A.D. 130-200, and he certainly would have been aware of all the Bishops who lived in the first century. That would have been an incredible omission if indeed Peter had been a Bishop in Rome.

why wasn't he acknowledged and saluted by Paul? In Paul's Second Epistle to Timothy he states, *"only Luke is with me"* (Second Timothy 4:11). Paul mentions, by name, those who were no longer with him - Demas, Crescens and Titus, and says that only Luke is with him. One would have thought that, with the close ties between Peter and Paul, if Peter had been in Rome, he would have stood by his brother in the faith. However, we continue to find the Word of God consistently pointing away from the possibility

of a long ministry of Peter in Rome!

This was written from Rome in A.D. 67-68. It is another strong indication that Peter did not become Bishop of Rome in A.D. 42, as is commonly reported by Catholic scholars. In A.D. 52, ten years after he was supposed to go to Rome, Peter is in Jerusalem, telling of his experience with the Gentile Cornelius, but not breathing a word about any Gentile ministry in Rome. If Peter being in Rome is so important, why do the Scriptures point away from any connection of Peter and Rome?

We can also turn to Philemon 23, and again, see those that were once with Paul during his incarceration in Rome, were no longer with him. This letter was written by Paul around the year A.D. 60, when, according to the Roman Catholic Church, Peter is well enthroned as Bishop of Rome (and the first Pope). Paul mentions several Roman Christians who send their greetings to Philemon, but there is no mention of Peter. With the good relationship that continued between Peter and Paul, the Holy Spirit is telling us that Peter was not in Rome at this time.

### **In Conclusion -**

We have surveyed closely eleven important biblical narratives along with other key passages of Scripture all which disprove the Roman Catholic Church's teaching regarding Peter's Primacy and ministry, as the first Pope and Bishop of Rome. We



In Catholicism and fundamentalism, page 203, Catholic apologist, Karl Keating quotes Eusebius Pamphilus as giving the precise date of A.D. 42, when the Apostle Peter is sent to Rome. In the previous paragraph (quoted again in This Rock publication, December 1990), Lactantius was quoted as saying, "When Nero was already reigning Peter came to Rome ... " Nero began his reign in A.D. 54, so one of the two authoritative ancient writers was at least 12 years off in his calculations. If one history book says Columbus discovered America in A.D. 1492, and another says it happened in A.D. 1504, at least one of them is wrong.

God never promised to preserve the writings of the Church fathers and historians. The Catholic Encyclopedia (Volume VI, page 136) admits, "Substituting of false documents and tampering with genuine ones was quite a trade in the Middle Ages."

discovered some profoundly important biblical truths as it relates to Rome's claims about Peter. We discovered the word Pope is not found in the Bible, not even once. No such office as Pope is mentioned in the Bible. Christ never recognized Peter as Pope, and never told the other disciples that He had made Peter a Pope. Not one of the other Apostles ever acknowledged Peter as Pope. Peter never claimed to be Pope, and he never was Pope. And since Peter never was Pope, therefore the Roman Popes are not his successors, because Peter never had any successors.

We also discovered that the Apostle Peter was never in Rome and was never the Bishop of Rome. Not one Word of biblical proof can be produced to show that Peter was ever in Rome. On the contrary, there is much biblical evidence that he was never there and never was Bishop of Rome. The whole claim of the

Roman Church as to Peter's presence in Rome rests upon mere Tradition, which that Church has manufactured to support its claims and which cannot be proven.

Moreover, we have seen the whole claim of the Roman Church to rule, rests upon the assertion that Peter was Bishop of Rome and therefore the biblical proof should be abundant and clear. But it is not; there is no proof whatever. And since there is no proof that Peter was ever in Rome or was ever the Bishop of Rome and no proof that the Lord Jesus gave him any special authority or that he was ever the head of the Church, therefore the entire claims of the Church of Rome collapses under the weight of Scripture, because it is founded upon falsehood, misrepresentation, deception and manufactured Tradition, which has no foundation whatever in biblical truth.

## Time Line Of Events In The Life Of Peter The Apostle -

The following chronology of the Apostle Peter's life and ministry is established. Catholic Tradition states Peter was in Rome from the year A.D. 42 until A.D. 67, when he was martyred. However, there is no credible historical or biblical evidence to substantiate this Catholic Tradition. Peter's actions and whereabouts can easily be traced biblically, to disprove his Primacy and his alleged positions as Bishop of Rome and Pope.

- |   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| - Christ's ascension, Peter is in Jerusalem (Acts 1:9).   | Around<br>A.D.33 |
| - The Apostle Paul was converted about A.D. 37 (Acts 9). Paul states in the first chapter of Galatians (Galatians 1:13-18) that after his conversion he went into Arabia, " <i>then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter and abode with him fifteen days.</i> " This takes us to around A.D. 40, and Peter is still in Jerusalem.  | Around<br>A.D.40 |
| - Peter and John sent to Samaria to aid Phillip.  | Around<br>A.D.40 |
| - Sometime during those days Peter made his missionary Journey through the western part of Judea, to Lydda, to Joppa, to Caesarea, and back to Jerusalem (Acts 9:32 through 11:2).  | Around<br>A.D.41 |
| - Then came the imprisonment under Herod Agrippa I and the miraculous deliverance by the angel of the Lord (Acts 12). Peter then " <i>went down from Judea to Caesarea and there abode</i> " (Acts 12:19). Herod Agrippa died not long after these events (Acts 12:20-23). Josephus, the historian, says that the death of Agrippa occurred in the fourth year of the reign of Claudius. This would be about A.D. 45 and Peter is still in Palestine. | Around<br>A.D.45 |
| - Paul writes in the second chapter of Galatians that fourteen years after his first visit to Jerusalem to visit Peter he went again to see him. The first journey was A.D. 40; fourteen years later brings us to A.D. 54 and Peter is still in Palestine (Galatians 2).  | Around<br>A.D.54 |
| - Peter speaks at the Jerusalem Assembly (Acts 15:7-11).  | Around<br>A.D.54 |
| - Peter returns the visit and goes to Antioch where Paul is working. This occasioned the famous interview between the two recorded in Galatians 2:11-14. Peter is still in the Orient, not in Rome.   | Around<br>A.D.54 |



- After A.D. 54, and after the Antioch visit, the Apostle Peter makes an extensive missionary journey or journey's throughout the Roman provinces of the East. On these missionary tours Peter takes his wife (First Corinthians 9:5). They labor in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia. So vast a work and so great a territory must have consumed several years. This would take us, therefore, to at least A.D. 60 and Peter and his wife are still not in Rome but in the East.

Around  
A.D.60

- Peter writes his Epistles from Babylon and not from Rome (First Peter 5:13).

Around  
A.D.60

- Paul writes to Rome but not to Peter (Romans 16)

Around  
A.D.60

- Around A .D. 60, Paul wrote a letter to the Church at Rome. In the last chapter of that Epistle, Paul salutes twenty-seven persons, but he never mentions Peter. In Romans 1:11, Paul wants to impart special gifts and in Romans 1:15 he is ready to preach there. If Peter were "*governing*" the Church at Rome, it is most strange that Paul should never refer to him.

Around  
A.D.60

- Romans 1:13 shows that the Church at Rome was a Gentile Church. At the Jerusalem Assembly (Galatians 2:7-9), it was agreed that Peter should go to the Jews and Paul to the Gentiles.

- The Gospel ministry of Paul was motivated by a great principle which he clearly repeats in Romans 15:20: "*yea, so have I strived to preach the Gospel not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation.*" Where no other Apostle has been, there Paul wanted to go. Having written this plainly to the people at Rome, his desire to go to the Roman city would be inexplicable if Peter were already there, or had been there for years.

- In A.D. 61, Paul is conveyed a prisoner to Rome and certain brethren go to meet him, but not Peter.

Around  
A.D.61

- Paul's first Roman imprisonment took place around A.D. 60 to A.D. 64, from his prison the Apostle to the Gentiles wrote five Epistles: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon and Second Timothy. In these letters he mentions many of his fellow Christians who are in the city, but he never once refers to Peter. Also, at Rome Paul writes to the Galatians and mentions Peter, but not as being there or as having been Pontiff there for twenty years.

Around  
A.D.62

- From Rome also Paul's last letter is written (the Second Epistle to Timothy). He says, "*At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me*" (Second Timothy 4:16). So if Peter were Bishop of Rome he enjoyed an immunity which was not accorded to Paul and is guilty of having forsaken the Apostle.

Around  
A.D.66

- So Paul had written to Rome, he had been in Rome, and at the end he writes from Rome, and not only never once mentions Peter, but declares, "*Only Luke is with me.*"

- Also at Rome, Paul writes to the Galatians and mentions Peter, but not as being there or as having been Pontiff there for twenty years.

- Paul's second Roman imprisonment brought him. martyrdom. This occurred around A.D. 67. Just before he died Paul wrote a letter to Timothy, our "*Second Timothy.*" In that final letter the Apostle mentions many people but plainly says that "*only Luke is with me.*" There is never a reference to Peter.

Around  
A.D.67

- Paul is imprisoned in Rome and makes his defense without Peter's presence (Second Timothy).

Around  
A.D.67

- Peter has not arrived in Rome as of the year A.D. 67.

Around  
A.D.67

We have traveled throughout the years of A.D. 42 to A.D. 67, the years Peter is supposed to have been the prince and Bishop and ruler of the Church at Rome. There is not a suggestion anywhere that such a thing took place! Rather, the New Testament clearly and plainly denies the fiction.

## **Chapter Three**

### **The Scriptures Alone Reveal The Real Peter -**

In the two previous chapters the author presented biblical evidence that refuted the Roman Catholic Church's dogmas regarding the Primacy and Infallibility of Peter as well as other important doctrines related to him. In chapter three we shall survey both Epistles authored by Peter to establish what the important and relative truths were that he was commissioned by the Holy Spirit (the Vicar of Christ) to communicate, not only with the locations mentioned in his Epistles, but with all the churches of the world.

#### **What Will Be Discovered From Peter's Epistles?**

We will discover what the Holy Spirit revealed to Peter as it relates to Salvation. Did he teach a sacramental system of Salvation as Rome does, or did he teach one is saved by God's grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone? Did he believe in the eternal security of the believer? Does Peter mention a Roman Priesthood? Does he confirm he was the first Pope, conferred upon by the Lord Jesus Christ with the prerogatives of Papal Primacy and Infallibility? Does he inform his successor of Apostolic Succession? Does he confirm a Papacy, with the establishment of a Hierarchy? These are questions that should be answered in his Epistles by the man Catholic authorities call the Pope. To be sure, we shall further discover the "*Real Peter*" as we venture through his two inspired (God breathed) Epistles.

What we will find, however, is none of these Catholic distinctives will be discovered in Peter's Epistles! To the contrary, we find just the opposite occurring. We find biblical doctrines that are diametrically opposed to Catholic doctrines.

#### **Major Doctrines From Peter's Epistles, Which Disprove Many Of Rome's Central Dogmas -**

In First Peter chapter one, we immediately come to the first major doctrine contrary to Rome's teaching. The biblical teaching of the doctrine of eternal security, for the one who has received the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. But, before we consider this passage of Scripture let us review Rome's official teaching regarding this important doctrine.

#### **Rome Completely Rejects The Biblical Teaching Of Eternal Security -**

Catholicism maintains that believing you are assured of going to Heaven when you die is to commit the sin of presumption. The Roman Catholic Church denies that it is possible for anyone to know for sure that they are in a right standing with God; nor can

one have the assurance of Salvation. All such ideas are mortal sins of presumption, according to Catholic theology. The Council of Trent pronounced a curse to Hell on anyone who claims to know they have been justified before God.

*"If anyone shall say that justifying faith is nothing else than confidence in the divine mercy which remits sins for Christ sake, or that it is this confidence alone by which we are justified: let him be anathema."*

*"If anyone says that justice once received is neither preserved nor increased in the sight of God by good works, but that the works themselves are no more than the effects and signs of the justification obtained, and not also a cause of its increase: let him be anathema"* (Council of Trent, "Canons Concerning Justification," Session 6, No. 24).

Now we turn to the 1994 Catholic Catechism, which states:

*"There are two kinds of presumptions. Either man presumes upon his own capacities, (hoping to be able to save himself without help from on high) or he presumes upon God's almighty power or his mercy (hoping to obtain his forgiveness without conversion and glory without merit" (Page 507, No. 2091 and 2092).*

By taking this position, the Catholic Church once again lines itself up against written and inspired Scripture.

*"These things have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the Name of the Son of God"* (First John 5:13).

Stop and reason for a moment. To be sure, there is a place called Heaven, a glorious paradise wonderful beyond imagination, and there is a place of eternal torment called Hell, wouldn't a loving God tell us how to obtain one and avoid the other?

Would God make us endure an entire lifetime, never knowing how we could escape the flames of Hell and be assured of enjoying Heaven with Him?

Would a loving God say, *"Do as many good works as you can, then keep your fingers crossed and hope for the best when you stand before Me someday."* No, beloved, that's not love, that's torture! That's cruelty of the highest sort. A God of love would give us a clear, simple plan of Salvation, spelling out how to miss this awful place of torment and be assured of Heaven. And He has:

*"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).*

The Bible declares that those who receive Christ by faith and put their trust in Him can know right now that they have eternal life:

*"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).*

*"He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24).*

It's not a sin to presume you are going to Heaven if you have been born into God's family through faith in Christ. It is a biblical fact and a precious promise from the Lord Jesus. It is never presumptuous to take God at His Word. In fact, He loves it when we do:

*"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand" (John 10:27-28).*

God wants His children to rest in the fact that they have been born into His family and that their eternal destiny is settled:

*"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life" (John 6:47).*

Notice, the promise is not that you may have it someday if you do enough good works. You may have it right now. This is God's will. The Lord Jesus said:

*"And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:40).*

The Apostle Paul didn't consider it presumptuous to declare that he was on his way to Heaven:

*"For I am in a strait betwixt (between) two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better" (Philippians 1:23).*

How tragic that our Catholic friends remain in bondage, serving the Catholic Church in hopes of earning Heaven, when God's desire is for them to be assured of Heaven right now:

*"In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;"* (Titus 1:2).

*"And this is the promise that He hath promised us, even eternal life"*  
(First John 2:25).

When God promises something, He is bound by His honor to produce. If He did not produce what He promised, He would sacrifice His honor and integrity. But what God promised, He produced. The Bible teaches in First John 5:10-11.

*"He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son. And this is the record, that God hath (present tense) given to us eternal life, and this is in His Son."*

And we read in Romans 6:23: *"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."* God promised and God produced eternal life for the believer.

Many Scriptures throughout the New Testament make it unmistakably plain that the person who is trusting Jesus Christ as Savior has eternal life. John 5:24 says,

*"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life."*

Notice the Word of God does not say, "He that believes on the Son will have." It says, "hath." That is present tense. That means the one who is trusting Jesus Christ completely for Salvation has everlasting life now. It is not something that God promised, provided they meet certain additional conditions. Rather, it is something one has the moment they receive the Lord Jesus as Savior.

**God Not Only Gives Eternal Life But Promises  
That The Believer In Christ Will Never Perish -**

Let's look at John 10:28 again. It states, *"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand."*

When you look up the word "*never*" which occurs in John 10:28, in the Strong's Concordance on page 715, you find that it comes from four different Greek words,





The three "incorruptible" things we have in First Peter chapter one is an incorruptible inheritance (Verse 4), an incorruptible redemption (Verses 18-19), and an incorruptible Word by which we are born again (Verse 23).

which spelled in English letters are: oume, eis, ho, and aion. When you look up each of these words in the Strong's Concordance you find that oume (#3364) means "not at all, by no means, in no case, never"; eis (#1519) means "place, time, purpose"; ho (#3588) means "male, female, or (even) neuter"; aion (#165) means "perpetually, eternally."

When we put the meanings of all these root words together, you find that when Christ said "never" here in John 10:28, it carries with it very powerful assurance - more than one word "never" ordinarily carries with it. Looking at this Verse with this additional understanding, we could write it this way and give it the emphasis Christ did when He spoke it: "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall not at all, by any means, in any case, in any place, at any time, for any purpose, whether they are male or female, perpetually and eternally, ever perish."

### **Believers In Christ Are Kept By God, They Do Not Keep Themselves Saved -**

The Word of God makes it perfectly clear that the person that has received the Lord Jesus as Saviour is securely kept saved by God. We cannot keep ourselves saved. In Second Timothy 1:12, the Apostle Paul said, "For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." Here, the Apostle says, "I am persuaded (that is, I am thoroughly convinced) that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him."

### **First Peter 1:3-5**

Now we come to the important Epistle of Peter, which confirms the biblical teaching of eternal security, which we have already substantiated, the very doctrine the Church of Rome has denounced and denigrated by pronouncing a curse to Hell on anyone who would embrace and believe this biblical teaching! Let's read it.

*"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively (living) hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance (heavenly home) incorruptible (this home is perfect), and undefiled (this home is pure), and that fadeth not away (this home is permanent), reserved in Heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto Salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (First Peter 1:3-5).*

In these Verses we are promised by God that the inheritance (heavenly home) is reserved for us and we are reserved or kept for the inheritance! The Word of God says,

"To an inheritance incorruptible." This heavenly home is perfect! That means that it will not corrupt, will not decay. It will last. It will be there when we get there! Peter continues, "To an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, that fadeth not away."

No mention of Purgatory by the Apostle Peter! Just eternal bliss! The Word of God says here our inheritance "fadeth not away." Then he continues: "reserved in Heaven for you." It is reserved. No one can take it. It is yours if you have received the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour!

Not only is the inheritance reserved in Heaven for you, but the Bible teaches, "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto Salvation." The word "Salvation" here denotes our final redemption, when we are saved from the very presence of sin, that is, when the Lord Jesus comes for us and we see Him and are made like Him. Beloved, the



Peter not only taught that Salvation was by God's grace through faith in Christ alone; he also taught the believer would have the assurance of Salvation and the eternal security promised by God!

believer in Christ does not and could not keep themselves saved. Rather, they are kept by the power of God. Remember Verse five? "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto Salvation"! Remember what John 10:28 proclaimed? "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." The born-again believer is in the hand of God! And the Bible says that no man can pluck them out of His hand!

### **We Have Seen From The Inspired Scriptures How We Can Know For Certain Where We Are Going To Spend Eternity -**

Roman Catholicism isn't any different from most other religions. Whether it is Islam, Hinduism, a mixture of Chinese religions, or one of the Christian sects such as Mormonism or the Jehovah's Witnesses, most religions are basically the same. Like Roman Catholicism, they all teach that if you live a good life here on earth, and practice their requirements, you have a pretty good chance of going to Heaven in the next life.

However, biblical Christianity is unique, it stands apart from all other belief systems. It teaches that "no one is good except God alone" (Mark 10:18), that "all our righteous deeds are as filthy rags and we are all sinners" (Isaiah 64:6; Romans 3:10, 23; 5:12). Biblical Christianity teaches that sinners can be accepted by God through the righteous Work of Christ: <sup>1</sup>

*"But now the righteousness of God without (apart from) the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference (no distinction between the*

need of the Jew and the Gentile): *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation (atoning sacrifice) through faith in His (Jesus) blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission (forgiveness) of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without (apart from) the deeds of the law"* (Romans 3:21-28).

The Apostle Paul gets to the message of his Epistle to the Romans: The only way one can be justified before God is by faith in Christ. The righteousness of God is imparted



We are emphatically and very frequently in the Scriptures said to be justified by Faith and not Baptism (Romans 4:22-26; 3:28; 4:4-5; Ephesians 2:8-10).

because of faith; Justification is a gift through the grace of God. No one can boast of Salvation by human works or by law-keeping. God can and will justify everyone who trusts in Christ by faith apart from works.

Biblical Christianity proclaims a Saviour Who paid our penalty for us with His own life (Mark 10:45; First Peter 2:24). Again, it tells of God's offer of eternal life to anyone who repents and receives Christ as Saviour (Mark 1:15; John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-9). Those who accept this free gift of God can know that they are going to Heaven, because their acceptance before God is in Christ, not in themselves. The Lord Jesus assured His disciples, saying, "*Rejoice, because your names are written in Heaven*" (Luke 10:20). He said, "*I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand*" (John 10:28-29).

Why does the Catholic Church teach that you can never be assured of eternal life when the Bible teaches you can know for sure? The basis for this assurance is the written Word of God. "*He that hath (present tense) the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the Name of the Son of God*" (First John 5:12-13).

The Holy Spirit also participates in guaranteeing the future of the redeemed. At the moment of Salvation, the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in each believer. This truth is stated in Ephesians 1:13: "*In whom (Christ) ye also trusted, after that ye heard the Word of truth, the Gospel of your Salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.*" And in Ephesians 4:30, Paul states the Spirit seals the believer until the day of redemption. If Salvation can be lost, then their sealing would

not be until the day of redemption but only until the day of sinning, or apostasy, or disbelief. Moreover, when we are born again by the Spirit when we receive Christ, then if we can renounce our faith to lose our Salvation, we would have to have the new birth taken away as well. The new birth is one of the greatest miracles in the Bible! How is a miracle no longer considered a miracle? The Holy Spirit joins the believer to the body of Christ when they receive Christ as Saviour (First Corinthians 12:13; 27); therefore, if Salvation can be lost, the Christian would have to be detached from the body of Christ.

Of course, Scripture gives no hint that a Christian can lose the new birth, or that they can be disindwelt, or that they can be removed from the body of Christ (thus maiming His body), or be unsealed. Salvation is eternal and completely secured to all who receive Christ.

To be sure, believers in Christ sin and are warned against false profession and Christian immaturity, but God never takes back the gift of His Salvation once it is received. Christians will not always persevere in godliness. Peter did not (Galatians 2:11). Many Ephesian Christians did not (Acts 19:18). Lot did not (Second Peter 2:7) At the Judgment Seat of Christ there will be some whose works will be burned and who will be saved; "*yet so as by fire*" (First Corinthians 3:15).



Few Catholics realize, the Apostle Peter believed completely in the Assurance of Salvation and the Eternal Security of the believer, for those who come to "faith" in Christ alone for their Salvation (First Peter 1:3-5).

The Apostle Paul confronts the false doctrine of losing one's Salvation in Romans 8:38-39. "*For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*"

Paul stood boldly in the confidence that nothing, including any other created thing (which has to include yourself), can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ! And again he declared: "*If we believe not* (If we are faithless at times), *yet He abideth faithful* (He remains faithful), *He cannot deny Himself*" (Second Timothy 2:13). The consistency of God's character guarantees a secure Salvation for the person who has received the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour.

### **Presumption Or Faith?**

The sin of presumption is what the Catholic Church calls this. And certainly it would be presumptuous if Salvation were dependent, even in part, upon our own righteous deeds. Believing the truths of Scripture as it relates to Salvation is not presumption, but faith in God's plan of Salvation! It is not presumptuous to take God at His Word. That is

called faith. When the Lord Jesus walked the earth, He gave all who put their faith in Him this wonderful promise:

*"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3).*

Beloved, if you have never been saved by the grace of God, we want to encourage you and implore you to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your perfect Saviour, your sin bearer! Receive Christ this very moment in time. You'll be eternally grateful you did! Remember First John 5:12-13? Receive it gladly into your heart:

*"He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the Name of the Son of God."*

### **Peter, Paul, John And The Lord Jesus Taught That You Must Be Born Again -**

The next central doctrine the Apostle Peter addresses in his First Epistle is the teaching regarding being born-again or the doctrine of Regeneration as it relates to Salvation. Scripture teaches emphatically that one must be born-again in order to be saved spiritually. The important question is, how is one born again? Let's read this important Verse of Scripture found in First Peter 1:23.

*"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."*

The Roman Catholic Church refers to the term "*born again*" in this passage of Scripture, and others, to mean that when a Catholic is baptized something supernatural occurs. According to their doctrine, baptism is "*the sacrament in which, by water and the word of God, a person is cleansed of all sin and reborn and sanctified in Christ to eternal life*" (Modern Catholic Dictionary, page 53). This was reiterated at the Second Vatican Council: "*Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God. Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through. water in the word.*" "*This sacrament is also called 'the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit,' for it signifies and actually brings about the birth of water and the Spirit without which 'no one can enter the Kingdom of God.'*" <sup>2</sup>

In theology this is known as Baptismal Regeneration. So according to their doctrine, one receives the new birth via baptismal water! As we will see in subsequent pages, Roman Catholicism teaches an entirely different meaning from what Scripture reveals regarding being born-again.

There is not a Verse in all of the Word of God that is any clearer or more easily understood than First Peter 1:23, as it relates to the new birth and Salvation. We are born-again - not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible - and the incorruptible seed is the written Word of God, "*which liveth and abideth for ever.*"

Let's look closely at the conversation between the Lord Jesus and Nicodemus regarding the new birth found in the Gospel of John chapter three.

*"There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto Him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto Him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus answered and said unto Him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?"*

### **First, What The New Birth Is Not -**

It is not religion! Nicodemus was a Pharisee, a very strict religionist. He celebrated the Passover, paid tithes, said prayers, brought sacrifices, strived to keep the Law of Moses. To him the Lord Jesus said, "*ye must be born again.*" Joining the Catholic or a Protestant Church, being baptized, and living up to a religious creed will not save you. Many will not escape the reality of Hell who did all of these things.

### **It Is Not Morality!**

One may try to keep the golden rule and live a moral life, but that won't save anyone. It's not recorded in Scripture that the Lord Jesus said, "*ye must be born again,*" to Pilate or to Judas. Why? Because people would say they know hypocrites like Judas and men like Pilate need to be born-again, but claim they are not like them. They would be quick to say they wouldn't betray Christ after professing to be His friend. Moreover, they wouldn't hesitate to say they wouldn't have ordered Jesus to be beaten and turned over to a mob to be crucified.



Beloved, do you realize that the Lord Jesus Christ spoke these words regarding the new birth to a man who was doing his best to gain Heaven? Without a doubt he was a faithful husband, a good neighbor, a man of godly morals and religious, but spiritually lost! If he needed to be born-again, so do you. How do you expect to make it to Heaven without being born-again if Nicodemus couldn't?

### **It Is Not Reformation!**

Making New Year resolutions and starting over again, are common practices by the spiritually lost! Even if you were to quit all your selfishness and ungodly behavior, that would not be the new birth. Your trouble is not on the outside, but on the inside. You don't need exterior decoration, but interior regeneration (born-again). Satan wants you to rest in a false peace; a false sense of security. We warn you in Jesus' Name, don't be satisfied unless you have been born-again.

### **What The New Birth Is!**

It is a mystery you cannot explain, but a reality no man can explain away. "*The wind bloweth where it listeth (pleaseth), and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit* (John 3:8). Just as Nicodemus could not understand or explain the wind, so no man can understand or explain the new birth.

But the wind is a reality no man can explain away. Only a fool would say, I don't believe in the wind because I have never seen it, I can't understand it.

See the wind move the big limbs of an oak tree. Watch the wind tear a house to splinters. You cannot deny the reality of wind! You cannot see the Holy Spirit; you cannot explain Him. But see His mighty power transform the prostitute, give the alcoholic deliverance from drunkenness, turn the blasphemer and moralist to a prayer warrior, and then try to deny the reality of it.

It is the work of God by which a spiritually lost sinner who receives the Lord Jesus as Savior, receives a new nature, becomes a child of God and begins a new life. It is a second birth, a spiritual birth.

Physical life begins by birth. Spiritual life begins the same way - not by joining a Church and becoming religious. You cannot join the family of God, you must be born into it. Someone has said, "*You can't make a Christian out of anybody.*" True, Christians are not made, they are born.

A birth is the coming into being of a new life, which has the nature of its parents. When you were born the first time you were made a partaker of the old nature, the sinful

nature we all received from Adam. When you are born-again you become a partaker of the divine nature (Second Peter 1:4). Is this true of you? Do you have the divine nature? <sup>3</sup>

No matter what kind of a religious profession one has made, no matter how good a person one may be morally, unless one has been made the partaker of the divine nature, you are not saved. God gives one this new nature the moment they receive His Son. It is instantaneous. When one is born-again they begin living a new life. That is what happened when one is born the first time, they began living a life they had never lived before. When one is born-again spiritually, there will be a new attitude towards the Lord Jesus Christ, His Word, and His People.

### **Why One Must Be Born Again -**

Everyone must be born again in order to go to Heaven! Why? Because everyone is born into this world with a sinful nature. The nature we all receive from Adam is fallen and corrupt. God says the heart of man is desperately wicked and deceitful above all things. With this old nature one could not enjoy themselves in Heaven. If one can't find any joy and peace attending a Bible believing Church now, how can one expect to be blessed in Heaven? Heaven is a Holy place. When one is born-again God gives them a Holy nature that one might be content and be blessed in Heaven, a Holy place.

Another reason is because one cannot save themselves. *"For by grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast"* (Ephesians 2:8-9). *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us"* (Titus 3:5). Beloved, please do not skip lightly over these two passages of Scripture. Read them again and again until the truth of God's Word grips you. One cannot save themselves - they must be born again. We will again look in-depth at Ephesians chapter two in the next chapter.

### **How To Be Born Again -**

In the Gospel of John we find another beautiful passage of Scripture that makes it perfectly clear how one is to be born-again. It is revealed in John 1:11-13:

*"He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him (Jesus) to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."*

### **First, It Is Not Of Blood -**

You are not a Christian just because your parents may be. You do not inherit Salvation from your parents. Even though your parents may be saved, if you have not been born-again you are spiritually lost.

### **Second, Nor Of The Will Of The Flesh -**

You are not born-again by your own efforts and will power. You will fail. So why not stop trying? Instead of trying, why not receive and depend upon the Lord Jesus Christ - the One Who died and rose again?

If I asked you if you were a child of God, you may say, "*I don't know for sure, but I'm trying to be, in my poor weak way.*" Now suppose you ask Johnny Jones if he is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Jones and he answered, "*I am not certain, but I'm trying to be, in my poor weak way.*" He is not their son because he tries to be, but because he was born into their home. Likewise, if you are a child of God it is not because you are trying to be, but because you have been born into His family.

### **Third, Nor Of The Will Of Man -**

Salvation is not brought about by any of man's religious creeds, systems or ceremonies. No man or organization can do anything to you that will make you a child of God. Join what you will, go through ceremony after ceremony, memorize creeds, and try to keep the rules and regulations of man made systems, but it will not save you.

### **Fourth, But Of God -**

The Lord Jesus said you must be born of the Spirit. It is God's work, not yours. It is a miracle only God can perform it. If God has not done a work in your life you are not born-again. Your part is to believe God's record about you, that you are spiritually lost and in need of Christ and receive Him as your Saviour. Remember what Verse twelve says? "*But as many as received Him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name.*" He died at Calvary satisfying the righteousness and justice of God, that He might take your sins and punishment upon Himself. He arose and is seated today as God's Son at the right hand of the majesty on high and He is offered to you as God's Salvation. When you receive Him you will be saved for the Apostle Paul says we are "*children of God by faith in Christ Jesus*" (Galatians 3:26). You do not receive Christ by taking communion. You receive Christ by faith. Just share with Him that you receive Him as your Savior.

## **The Catholic Church Looks To John 3:5 As A Proof Text For The Teaching Of Baptismal Regeneration -**

We read earlier in John 3:1-10, according to the Words of the Lord Jesus, "*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*" (Verse 3). Nicodemus then asked a question - a very natural question, one that indicates his sincerity. He asked, "*How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?*" Like so many people today, Nicodemus was thinking in terms of the flesh, but Jesus was talking about a spiritual birth.

In answer to the question of Nicodemus, the Lord Jesus replied, "*Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit*" (Verses 5-6). When Jesus said, "*Except a man be born of water,*" the Catholic Church teaches He was referring to water baptism. Beloved, the "*water*" of John 3:5 is not water in a baptistry. The water to which Jesus refers, the water that "*borns*" us into God's family, is the Word of God.

### **Water In Scripture -**

Water in the Bible has three symbolic meanings:

(1) When used in large quantities ( floods and rivers), it speaks of judgment; such as the flood of Noah, or when the Psalmist says, "*All thy waves and thy billows have gone over me.*"

(2) When water is used for drinking purposes, it refers invariably to the Work of the Holy Spirit.

(3) When it is used for washing or for laving, as in John, chapter three, it refers to the living Word of God (the Bible). Water for cleansing, then, symbolizes the Word of God. The Apostle Paul, speaking about Christ and His relationship to the Church, says, "*That He (Christ) might sanctify and cleanse it (the church) (but how?) with the washing of water by the Word*" (Ephesians 5:26).

Here the Word is the means by which God sanctifies and cleanses believers through the washing of the water of the Word. This is in itself a very clear statement, throwing light upon the meaning of water in the third chapter of John. But there is a great deal more. Jesus said to His disciples,

*"Now ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you"*  
(John 15:3).

The Word of God is not only a quickening Word, but a cleansing Word which washes. Paul refers to the new birth in this manner, calling it a "*washing of regeneration*."

*"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5).*

When we take all these passages together, we understand that the regenerative process is called a "*washing*," and is accomplished by the Word of God. Peter clinches the entire matter when he tells us,

*"Being born again, not of corruptible seed (that is the natural, human seed of Adam), but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever (First Peter 1:23).*

This passage clearly teaches that we are born-again by the Word of God. What Jesus refers to in our text is undoubtedly the Word of God and the Spirit of God. To the question of how a man is born from above, Jesus responds, "*Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit.*" It may be legitimately paraphrased, "born of the Word of God and by the Spirit of God."

The Spirit of God takes the Word and applies it to the heart of the sinner, and the result is conviction and faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour. This is what it means to be born of the water and of the Spirit. <sup>4</sup>

Before we move on to the next section of this chapter, I want to ask the most important question one will ever be confronted with. Have you been born again? Have you received by faith the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour? If you have, are you willing to invest in eternity with your time and energy in the lives of those that are in your circle of influence by sharing the biblical Gospel with them? Will you share the need to be born-again as the Scriptures teach? What an honor and privilege we have to be able to share the glorious Gospel with those we love!

**Peter Taught That Christ Was The Foundation  
And Head Of The Church, Not Himself -  
First Peter 2:4, 7-8**

The next primary doctrine Peter addresses in First Peter is the biblical teaching that the Lord Jesus Christ is the foundation and Head of the Church, not himself.

If our Catholic friends read and studied the Apostle Peter's First Epistle, they would have soon discovered that his inspired writings taught the very opposite of what Rome's official teachings are as it relates to Peter being the foundation and head of the Church.

As we learned earlier in chapter one, the Church of Rome leans heavily on Matthew 16:18 to establish their belief that Peter is the foundation upon which the Church is built. In Matthew 16:18, it states in the original Greek text the word for Peter is Petros, meaning a small stone. Moreover, the word for Rock here is Petra, meaning a foundation stone or massive Rock. In the original text this distinction is made: "*Thou art Petros (a stone) and upon this Petra (Rock) I will build My Church.*" As we have already seen before, this Verse then can be paraphrased this way, "*Thou are Peter, a small stone, and upon Me, the foundation Rock, I will build My Church.*" If Christ had meant that Peter was to be the foundation upon which the Church was to be built, the structure of His statement would have been framed differently. The Lord would have said, "*Thou are Peter, and on thee I will build My Church,*" but He does not say this because Peter was not to be the Rock on which the Church was to be built. Instead, Christ uses the phrase "*upon this Rock*" and the word "*this*" pointing to Himself whom Peter had confessed when he said, "*Thou art the Christ.*" Christ didn't promise to build His Church upon Peter, but upon Himself, as Peter himself is careful to tell us: "*Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a 'Chief corner stone,' elect, precious: and he that believeth on Him (Christ) shall not be confounded (confused). Unto you therefore which believe He is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed (rejected), the same is made the head of the corner, And a 'stone of stumbling' and a 'rock of offence,' even to them which stumble at the Word, being disobedient whereunto also they were appointed*" (First Peter 2:6-8). The Lord Jesus Himself even quotes the Old Testament prophecy from Psalm 118:22-23 which reveals Him as the One that would be the head of the corner or the chief corner stone of the Church: "*Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes*" (Matthew 21:42)?

The Prophet Isaiah wrote prior to Christ first advent, describing Him as a "*foundation stone a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation*" (Isaiah 28:16).

We also discovered earlier over in Second Samuel 22:32, there is no other Rock except God, "*For Who is God, save (except) The Lord? and Who is a Rock, save (except) our God?*" In both the Old and New Testament it is God Himself Who is the believer's Rock, their foundation, security and protection. Indeed, over thirty times in the Old Testament God is called a Rock. Four times in the New Testament Christ is called a Rock (Matthew 16:18; Romans 9:33; First Corinthians 10:4 and First Peter 2:8). Beloved, only Christ Himself could be the Church's Rock and foundation; and this is precisely what the Lord was promising in Matthew 16.

The Apostle Paul enlightens us as well as to whom the chief corner stone of the Church is, and upon the foundation which believers are established. This passage of Scripture explicitly teaches the Church is built on the foundation of the Prophets, Apostles and



Jesus Christ in Ephesians 2:20 which states: "*And (believers) are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone.*" Certainly, once a foundation is established, no further foundation is needed, there is no need for a perpetual Papal Primacy. The Word of God clearly teaches that the Apostles and Prophets were foundational gifts and there is not any biblical proof that there were to be one individual (i.e., the Pope) with unique authority to rule the entire Church. Instead, Ephesians 2:20 teaches emphatically that all the Apostles, not just Peter, are the foundation of the Church with Christ. Also, the only One Who was given a place of preeminence was Christ. Remember, Peter himself referred to Christ as the "*chief corner stone*" of the Church (First Peter 2:6), and the rest of believers as "*living stones*" (First Peter 2:5), in the structure of the Church. Peter is one "*stone*" along with the other Apostles as revealed in this passage of Scripture. So we see in Ephesians 2:20 that the Church was built on the foundation of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prophets, and Apostles (plural) and not on Peter alone (singular).<sup>5</sup>

Moreover, Colossians 1:17-18 and Ephesians 5:23 confirm that Christ, and Christ alone, is the head of the Church: "*And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the Church: Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence*" (superior to all others). Also, the book of Ephesians was written approximately thirty years after Pentecost and Christ was still proclaimed by the Apostle Paul in the inspired Word the head of the Church at that time. Since Christ is referred to in the New Testament as the "*chief corner stone*" (foundation) of the Church (First Peter 2:6; First Corinthians 3:11) and head of the Church (Ephesians 1:19-23; Colossians 1:17-18), this uniquely places the Lord Jesus Christ alone as having the preeminent position in the Church, not the Apostle Peter.

The next central doctrine Peter outlines for us in First Peter is the biblical teaching regarding the Priesthood of all born-again believers.

### **The Apostle Peter Believed Fully In The Priesthood Of Believers As Outlined In First Peter 2:5, 9 and Revelation 1:6 -**

First, let us look at the unauthorized Roman Priesthood of the Catholic Church. Roman Catholicism has established a Priesthood, which serves as mediator between God and man to offer supposedly blood sacrifices for an individual's sins in the form of the Catholic Mass. The function and structure of the Catholic Priesthood, which includes a sacrificial system (Mass), is of Jewish origin and was abolished through Christ. New Testament believers in Christ do not require human Priests to serve as mediators by offering sacrifices for them or forgiving and remitting their sins through confession.

The Bible gives no authority to Rome's attempt to place the Priest between the confessor of sins and the forgiveness of sins, or to exalt the Priesthood as mediator between the sinner and God. The Word of God declares that, "*there is one God, and one*

*mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"* (First Timothy 2:5). Regardless of the religious title, no man has the power to forgive sins (Mark 2:7). Furthermore, every believer has free, unrestricted access to God's grace through prayer (Romans 5:2; Hebrews 4:16). There is no need to repeat Christ's sacrifice for sins because it has been accomplished once and for all (Hebrews 9:26; 10:10-14). Any attempts to do so are an abomination before God.

Though the New Testament lists various kinds of ministries and offices within the Church (Ephesians 4:11-12; First Corinthians 12; 28-29; First Timothy 3), it never mentions the Roman Catholic concept of Priesthood. According to Peter, the Christian Priesthood is a universal Priesthood consisting of all born again believers and is not the exclusive privilege of a select few:

*"Ye also, as lively (living) stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy Priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices ... ye are a chosen generation (people), a royal Priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people (a people set apart)"* (First Peter 2:5,9, see also Revelation 1:5-6).

The Catholic concept of the Priesthood is unscriptural and didn't even originate until around the third or fourth century. Furthermore, as we have already learned in chapter one, there is no reference to such titles as archbishop, cardinal, or Pope, and the requirement of the celibacy of the Priesthood is an idea condemned by the Apostle Paul (First Timothy 4:1-3).

### **The Priesthood Of Born Again Believers -**

Writing under divine inspiration, in First Peter 2:5, 9, the Apostle Peter was not addressing a Roman Priesthood or a priestly cast, but all true believers, as is shown by the fact that his Epistle was addressed to Jewish Christians who were scattered throughout the various nations, "*strangers (sojourners) throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia*" (First Peter 1:1), even to those who are as "*newborn babes*" in the faith (2:2). And in Revelation 1 :5-6, John, writing to the seven Churches in Asia Minor says: "*Unto Him (Christ) that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings (a kingdom) and priests unto God and His Father.*"

The sacrifices offered by the Christian in the exercise of this Priesthood are, of course, not for sin, as professedly are those of the Roman Catholic Church. Christ offered the true and only sacrifice for sin, once for all. His sacrifice was perfect. When He had completed His Work of redemption upon the cross and was ready to give up His Spirit He said, "*It is Finished*" (John 19:30). With His sacrifice, God was fully satisfied. It therefore does not need to be repeated, nor supplemented, nor modified in any way.

## **The Sacrifices Offered By Christians Are Termed Spiritual And They Relate To Worship And Service-**

Born-again Christians are Priests in the sense of having, in the Words of Hebrews, "*confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus.*" They can, with confidence, draw near to the throne of grace. They are Priests in the sense of offering spiritual sacrifices.

First, they offer the sacrifice of praise continually to God. "*By Him (Christ) therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His Name*" (Hebrews 13:15). This offering of thanks and praise to God in worship, which expresses the gratitude of the heart, is an acceptable offering.

Second, the sacrifice offered through our gifts. There is the sacrifice offered through our gifts, as our substance is given for the support of God's Work. He has declared that it is His pleasure to receive such gifts when they are given willingly and with pure motives: "*But to do good and to communicate forget not [i.e., sharing with others, helping those who are in need]; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased*" (Hebrews 13:16).

Third, there is the offering of themselves to God. This is the offering of ourselves, our bodies, our lives, in Christian service; "*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service*" (Romans 12:1).

Furthermore, we are sons of God through faith in Christ (First John 3:1-2). As sons in His family we have direct access to Him as our Father and no longer need the mediation of any order of human Priests. To depend upon priestly mediation is to return to Judaism and to introduce an element of apostasy into biblical Christianity.

So the New Testament sets forth a new and different kind of Priesthood: first, Christ, the true High Priest, Who is in Heaven; and second, the universal Priesthood of believers, through which they offer the spiritual sacrifices of praise, of gifts, and of themselves in Christian service. It thereby repudiates the claims of the Roman Priesthood, which would perpetuate the Jewish Priesthood and limit it to a few chosen men who are set apart from the laity, who profess to offer literal sacrifices in the Catholic Mass, and who supposedly are nearer to God than any other people.

Every born-again believer now has the high privilege of going directly to God in prayer, without the mediation of any earthly Priest, and of interceding for himself and for others. We are told: "*Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you*" (Matthew 7:7). "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you*" (John 16:23). "*Whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord shall be saved*" (Acts 2:21).

The believer, of course, approaches God not on their own merits but only through the merits of Christ Who has made a perfect sacrifice for them. It is precisely at this point that the Roman Catholic fails to see God's true plan of Salvation; for they think that man still must approach God as in Old Testament times through a Priest, or now perhaps through Mary or some saint whose merits can work for them. But the Apostle Paul says, "*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast*" (Ephesians 2:8-9). Christians have, by virtue of their union with Christ, free access to God at all times. This privilege is one of the glorious possessions we have as Christians, and it is a present possession. Yet the Church of Rome would rob us of this privilege and would interpose her Priests and dead saints between the soul and God. Rome's teaching and practice is heresy, for in many places the Bible invites us to come to God through Christ, without any reference to Priests or other intercessors.

The Bible, as we have already seen, teaches that, "*For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*" The Church of Rome teaches that there are many mediators, the Priests, Mary, a host of saints, and the angels, and that it is right and proper to pray to them. The Church of Rome fails to recognize Christ is the only true Priest, the only true Mediator!

### **In Conclusion -**

In the New Testament, there is not even an illusion to the fact that there is a Roman sacrificing Priesthood. When Church rulers are mentioned in the New Testament, it is always Bishop or Elder. In First Timothy 3, it gives the requirements of an Elder. There is no mention of Priest there or in Titus 1. There is only the word Elder. When Paul wrote about different kinds of ministers (Ephesians 4:11 and First Corinthians 12:28), there was no mention of Priest. The only places where the word Priest is used is first, when it talks of the mediator Priesthood of Christ (Hebrews 7:17), and second, when it talks of a universal Priesthood of all believers (First Peter 2:5, 9 and Revelation 1:5-6). It is not a sacrificing Priesthood as is thought of in Catholic Churches. All believers (Romans 12:1), are chosen by the King of Kings to be His Priests and to declare the Salvation message to the lost.

Moreover, we are also a royal Priesthood. That means that we have been called, chosen, to be His Priests before our fellow men. We are not first of all clergy and layman. We are first of all a royal Priesthood, under obligation individually to make known the message of Salvation. And the strength of biblical Christianity lies precisely here, in the willingness of its people to accept this office and all that it means, and to serve in the household of God as the royal Priests that we really are.

## **The Apostle Peter Along With Paul And Isaiah Taught Christ's Death On The Cross Was A Substitutionary Sacrifice -**

The Apostle Peter, in his First Epistle, brings to the fore a profoundly important biblical doctrine that the Roman Catholic Church completely rejects. Few Catholics are acquainted with one of the most important aspects of the Work of Christ on the cross. The doctrine of substitution! We are referring to the substitutionary death of Christ taught in both the Old and New Testament. The Bible clearly teaches regarding Christ dying in our place and bearing our sins on the cross.

Substitutionary or vicarious atonement simply means that Jesus Christ suffered as a substitute for us, that is, instead of us. Rome's Gospel denies the substitutionary death of Christ. The concept of substitution is hated by Catholic theologians. Paulist Priest Bertrand Conway, from The Question Box, a former Catholic apologetics ministry wrote: *"The guilt of actual sin cannot be transferred from one soul to another. To assert that the guilt of men's sins was transferred to our Lord dying on the cross is absurd and blasphemous. Such a view is utterly alien to Catholic teaching."*

But that is exactly what inspired Scripture proclaims about the Work of Christ - that it is substitutionary. The Apostle Peter clearly states this in First Peter 2:24 and 3:18. *"Who His (Christ) own self bare our sins in His (Christ) own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed (spiritually). "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust (that's substitutionary), that He might bring us to God."*

The Apostle Paul was in perfect harmony with Peter regarding the Work of Christ being substitutionary. In Second Corinthians 5:21, he states the same truth about the Lord Jesus in different words. *"For He (God the Father) hath made Him (God the Son) to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."*

The Apostle Paul's intended meaning in Second Corinthians 5:21 is that Christ was always without sin actually, but at the cross He was made to be sin for us judicially. While the Lord Jesus never committed a sin personally, He was made to be sin for us substitutionally. Just as the righteousness that is imputed to Christians in justification is extrinsic to them, so the sin that was imputed to Christ on the cross was extrinsic to Him and never in any sense contaminated His nature. As one Bible teacher put it, *"The innocent was punished voluntarily as if guilty, that the guilty might be gratuitously rewarded as if innocent."*

The whole redemptive plan, contrary to what the Catholic Church teaches, is one of substitution - and without such substitution there can be no Salvation. It was by His utterly selfless sacrificial death on the cross that our sinless Saviour - the unblemished

Lamb of God - paid the penalty for our sins and thereby canceled the debt of sin against us; wondrously making possible our reconciliation with God.

The Prophet Isaiah also wrote of the suffering Saviour and that His Work on Calvary would be substitutionary: "*But He (Christ) was wounded for our transgressions, He (Christ) was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him (Christ); and with His (Christ) stripes we are healed (spiritually). All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord (God the Father) hath laid on Him (God the Son) the iniquity of us all (that's substitutionary).*"

The Salvation by God's grace a Bible-believing Christian rejoices in is without respect to works, but Catholics believe God's grace gives them the ability to do the works necessary for Salvation. The Bible-believer says "*Jesus died for me,*" and believes in Christ's completed Work of substitution. Although a Catholic might use the same words, the concept of substitution is totally foreign to most Catholics. For the Catholic, the Lord Jesus' death on the cross merely opened the previously locked gates of Heaven.

The Bible teaches that Heaven is a free gift of God (Romans 5:15; 6:23 and Ephesians 2:8), purchased by the Lord Jesus' death on the cross. The Roman Catholic Catechism, The Teaching of Christ, says, "*God's gift was not to be only the blessed life of Heaven, but the further gift of letting men gain blessedness as a MERITED REWARD*" (p.35).

Throughout this chapter, we can plainly see that the Scriptural truths, which are revealed to us in the New Testament concerning the Apostle Peter and the Lord Jesus Christ are not known by our Catholic friends because they have missed the foundational truths taught in the Word of God regarding both the Apostle and the Saviour!

**The Sixth Doctrine In This Chapter That  
Continues To Reveal The Real Peter Is Found In  
First Peter 3:18A -**

It's the biblical teaching that refutes the Catholic dogma that Christ is continually offered as a sin offering in the Sacrifice of the Mass. The Catholic Church teaches the Sacrifice of Christ must continue daily on its altars for the reparation of the sins of the living and the dead. However, the Apostle Peter reminds us that Christ's death on the cross was a onetime never to be repeated sacrifice: "*For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God*" (First Peter 3:18A).

When the Lord Jesus cried out on the cross, "*It is Finished*" He had completed the work of redemption for our Salvation. Moreover, the Apostle Paul states in Romans 6:9-10, "*Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion*



*over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God."*

But Rome's Gospel denies the one-time never to be repeated Sacrifice of Christ. From the Second Vatican Council: *"The Mass is a sacrifice in which the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated. In it (the Mass) Christ perpetuates in an unbloody manner the sacrifice offered on the cross, offering Himself to the Father for the world's Salvation through the ministry of the priests."*

For Bible believing Christians, the idea that the Mass is in any sense a repetition of the death of Christ is reminiscent of the repeated sacrifices of the Law of Moses, which was a reminder of sins year after year (Hebrews 10:3). The Mass gives a constant reminder of sins and remaining guilt to be atoned for week after week. To be sure, one of the detracting things about the Old Testament sacrificial system was that people were reminded year after year of their sins. We see the Roman Catholic Mass resembles the Old Testament system in that it constantly serves to remind us of our sins instead of the biblical truth that our sins have once-for-all been forgiven by Christ. In Hebrews 10:14 one of the great things about the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ is that people have full assurance of complete forgiveness of sins.

According to the writer of Hebrews, Christ's sacrifice is one in number, once in time, and completed. This truth is confirmed in Hebrews 10:12 where it says that, after His sacrifice, Christ *"sat down on the right hand of God,"* again, denoting completion. The purpose of this phrase is to show absolute completion of Christ's sacrifice - it cannot be repeated, nor can it be continued. Contrary to Catholic belief, Christ is not continuing this one sacrifice, but (in regard to sacrificial work) is now seated, waiting for *"His enemies to be made His footstool"* (Hebrews 10:13).

The Lord completes this series of Verses by making it perfectly clear the end result of this one perfect sacrifice of Himself results in forgiveness of sins - past, present and future in Verses 17 and 18: *"And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission (forgiveness) of these (sins) is, there is no more offering for sin."*

How do our Catholic friends reconcile Verses 17 and 18 with the continual re-presentings of Christ's sacrifice in the Mass? Beloved, any honest evaluation must admit - one cannot!

**An Exhortation By Peter To Fellow Elders  
(Pastors) Not To Impose Themselves Over God's  
Heritage (Christians) In An Unbiblical Way -**

*"The Elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an Elder; and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of*

*God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage (Christians), but being examples to the flock" (First Peter 5:1-3).*

Every Bible-believing Christian knows and has the understanding that God knows the end from the beginning, and knew that a system of religion would arise that would claim Petrine roots. Therefore, He caused certain truths to be brought forth from the pen of the very Apostle to whom the charges would be laid of usurping the place of the Holy Spirit by pretending to be the universal Bishop, or Pope, of this false belief system.

Notice first the ones to whom this passage of Scripture is addressed to; the Elders, roughly the equivalent to Presbyters or Church leaders. The word for Elder (singular), which Peter uses to describe himself, is the same root word with the added connotation of comparison. Peter was not claiming to be more or less than a fellow Elder.

He speaks of himself as a witness of the sufferings of Christ. It is noteworthy that this man, who would be accused of usurping the role of the Holy Spirit, did not mention the co-redeemer of the Church that he was supposed to have founded. He also does not mention the role of Mary in redemption.

One of Peter's supposed descendants on this "throne," Benedict XV said, "*she (Mary) suffered so much for us ... that we may rightfully say that she has, with Christ, redeemed the human race.*" Odd that the supposed foundation stone of this system had so little (nothing) to say about Mary. John Paul II could scarcely write a paragraph without mentioning her. Rather, Peter was a partaker of the glory that would be revealed, and had no compunction about heralding the completed Salvation of Christ and the assurance of Heaven that is already a possession of believers.

Pope Paul VI, on his 80th birthday said, "*Death holds motives for apprehensive concern by reason of the imminent judgment of God.*" Cardinal Krol, a loyal follower of the Papacy was asked if he had any worries about food, clothing and shelter. Dismissing any worry about these, he was asked what his greatest concern was. He replied, "*My Salvation ... getting to Heaven.*"

Then we come to the portion of this Scripture which dismisses the Roman Catholic claim that the threefold "*Feed My lambs and sheep*" of John 21 was Peter's official entrance into Papal responsibility. Those familiar with Paul's admonition to the Ephesian Elders in Acts 20 will remember that he told them to feed the flock of God. Certainly he had no thought of making them all Popes.

Now Peter, speaking to the fellow Elders, tells them in this passage of Scripture, to feed the flock of God. He was instructing them to do that which every Christian leader should do - feed God's flock! But the restrictions Peter puts on this exercise immediately

excludes the Papacy from any link with Peter's admonition. "*Not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock.*"

One problem with 21st century Roman Catholicism is that few people remember very many Popes. Most remember well the Papacy of John Paul II, and some can remember as far back as Pius XII. But who has delved into history and read on the Catholic Internet Encyclopedia, that Benedict IX was a disgrace to the Chair of Peter. As Pope, his reign was interspersed with imperial decrees against him, and even the Catholic historian will admit his morals were abominable. Yet he was Rome's Vicar (representative) of Christ. If he were the only questionable Pope, the glorious title deed of the Roman Catholic Church is still proved to be invalid, for he, and a number of other Popes during the same period of time, did exactly what Peter had said Elders should not do! Peter said, "*not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock.*"

Aspiring Popes over the centuries have fought like cats and dogs for the prized possession of the Papal tiara. As far as squandering Papal wealth, several have been guilty of this, and there were very few Middle Age Popes who set a good moral example for their followers.

A Catholic apologist will plead guilty to the charges of inept or even sinful Popes, but say that as long as they didn't teach false doctrine, there is no problem. The best way to do away with a problem is to look the other way, and the conglomerate of men who have been called Popes militate against any credibility of Peter having a role of authorship in this line of Popes, some of whom may have been good men just acting as overseer of Rome's local Church. But freely sprinkled in this lot are the number of Popes that even the Roman Church criticizes, and certainly do not fulfill Peter's requirements for a local Pastor, not to mention head of a billion strong religious people, taught by the leader and leaders to employ sacramental emptiness and religious works as a means of meriting Heaven.

In Second Peter, chapter two, Peter warns us what false teachers look like. In a general characterization, he informs us that they teach damnable heresies. They deny the Person and Work of Christ, and twist the Scriptures. They bring biblical faith into disrepute. But Peter was just as concerned to show the immoral character of these teachers as he was to expose their teaching. He describes them in more detail than he describes their doctrines. Wickedness is not the product of sound doctrine, but of "*damnable heresies*" (Second Peter 2:1-22). The Papacy is far removed from Peter's ministry!

**The Apostle Peter Didn't Think Very Highly Of  
Tradition Yet Tradition Is The Central Authority  
In The Roman Catholic Church (First Peter 1:18-19) -**

**The Apostle Peter Exalts The Scriptures and  
Likens Them To A Light Shining In A Dark Place  
(Second Peter 1:19-21)**

As we enter into the last section of chapter three, we want to survey the Apostle Peter's inspired (God breathed) teachings regarding Tradition and Scripture. We will study these two together in order to make the biblical argument for "*Scripture Alone*" in all matters of faith and practice.

**Catholic Authority -**

The Catholic authority for all of its dogmas and teachings came from the belief that the Bible, Tradition and the Magisterium (teaching authority of the Catholic Church) are equally inspired by God. So what some Pope said officially (ex cathedra) two hundred years ago is considered infallible and is Catholic teaching today. The Catholic Church rules that, "*The task of authentically interpreting the Word of God, whether written or handed on (Tradition), has been entrusted exclusively to the living teaching office of the Church, whose authority is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ.*"

First, notice that Peter did not think very highly of Tradition; yet Tradition is the central authority in the Catholic Church. In his first Epistle in chapter 1:18-19, in the middle of making a profoundly important statement regarding how we are redeemed, he emphatically states we "*were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by Tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ.*"

Keep in mind, during Peter's travels with the Lord Jesus during His earthly ministry, no doubt, heard many messages filled with warnings about Jewish Traditions that had eventually overtaken the Scriptures, in terms of perceived importance, as we shall see later in this section. It is extremely important to know and remember that Tradition is not inspired by God, it is the thoughts, ideas and teachings of men, not God. On the other hand, inspired Scripture is God breathed and we have a guarantee that all Scripture, both Old and New Testament, is inspired by God. As was stated earlier, the Apostle Paul enlightens us again of this tremendous truth in Second Timothy "*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*" (Second Timothy 3:16).

## **Biblical Authority -**

Second, in Second Peter 1:19-21, the Apostle Peter exalts the Scriptures and likens them to a light shining in a dark place (V.19). Peter says in this Verse we have "*a more sure Word of Prophecy.*" It should be noted that he had just described the mighty transfiguration, but now declares that the written Word (the Scriptures) become a surer confirmation for the believer than even Peter's eyewitness account on that mountain. This of course does not contradict Christian experience, but it does say that Christian experience should be confirmed by the Word of God. The Word of God is the only light we have in this world. We are to heed this Word, and not the ideas of men (Tradition).

In Verses twenty and twenty-one, the Catholic Church has completely misinterpreted this passage of Scripture. They claim that only the Church of Rome has the authority to interpret Scripture. Beloved, these Verses do not teach that it is wrong for Christians to read and interpret the Bible, because the Word was given to us to be read, obeyed, and passed on to others. The word "*private*" here means "*by itself.*" No Scripture is to be interpreted "*by itself,*" that is, apart from the rest of the Word of God, and apart from the Holy Spirit Who first gave it. The prophecy did not come by the will of men, so it cannot be interpreted by the natural mind. Here we are told that the authors of the Bible were carried along by the Spirit of God as (it may be said) a sailboat is carried along by the wind. They did not go into a coma or trance, but were fully aware of what was happening (see also Second Timothy 3:16; Luke 1:70, Acts 3:18). The same Holy Spirit, Who originally gave the Word, now desires to teach it both to Christians and through Christians today. Beloved, the Holy Spirit gave the Word and the Spirit must teach us the Word (First Corinthians 2:9-16; John 14:26 and 16:13-14).

## **Rome's Development Of Doctrine -**

During the years between the beginning of the Church and the completion of Scripture, people relied on the Apostle's oral teachings. Then, as cultures grew, they felt that the Bible was not able to meet their spiritual needs, so Tradition was developed to meet the demands of men of all ages. The sad result, less emphasis was given to Scripture and more attention was directed toward Tradition.

The Roman Catholic Church likens itself to a flower box in which many seeds have been planted. These are, according to Rome, God's revelations to men; some have just sprouted, others are blossoming, etc. They claim these seeds were all planted by Christ, but that they develop at different times depending on the need of the Church.

The first error in this reasoning process is saying Christ planted the seeds. Many important Catholic doctrines have no Scriptural basis! For example, the Catholic doctrines of Mary's Immaculate Conception, her Assumption and the teaching of Purgatory, to name just a few, are totally contrary to the teaching of inspired Scripture!

The next error in Rome's reasoning is to suppose that a particular need was not provided for the infant Church. The Apostle Paul stated he preached the whole counsel of God, "*For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God*" (Acts 20:27). How could Paul proclaim this truth, if some of God's truths were in seed form, buried beneath the earth?

Scripture was given by inspiration of God, "*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God (Christians) may be perfect (complete), thoroughly furnished (fully and completely equipped) unto all good works*" (Second Timothy 3:16-17); and its interpretation by the Holy Spirit, "*Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come*" (John 16:13). He never changes; God's truth never changes. Any development of doctrine is of human or satanic origin. To be sure, Roman Catholic Traditions not only add to the Word of God, they severely alter it!

### **Rome's Gospel Denies The Sole Authority Of Scripture -**

The Second Vatican Council (1962 - 65) decreed: "*The Church does not draw her certainty about all revealed truth from the Holy Scriptures alone. Hence both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with equal feelings of devotion and reverence*" (Dei Verbum, Vatican II document).

The Bible teaches, "*To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them*" (Isaiah 8:20). The reason for this is simple - only in Scripture do we have God's inspired authoritative Word. To be adequately equipped, we need nothing more than Scripture.

Rome appeals to Tradition because her belief system cannot be established from Scripture. By making Tradition of equal authority with Scripture and by insisting that Scripture must be interpreted so that it agrees with their Tradition (Profession of the Tridentine Faith, Article III), Rome does the very thing for which Christ condemned the Pharisees: "*Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own Tradition*" (Mark 7:9). Paul's warning to the Colossian Christians should alert all of us to the danger of Rome's devices: "*Beware lest any man spoil you ... after the Tradition of men*" (Colossians 2:8).

## **Do You Consider The Bible The Sole Authority For Your Life?**

Every born-again Bible-believing Christian should regard the Bible as God's Word, the supreme authority, the sole authority, the all-sufficient guide for life!

In Catholicism, the Bible-believer would have to embrace Catholic Tradition as another source of authority, which is considered by Rome as inspired by God and has the same authority as Scripture. However, there is no biblical basis for claiming inspiration for Catholic Tradition. To the contrary, the Bible teaches only Scripture is inspired and authoritative, not Tradition. (Second Timothy 3:16-17; Second Peter 1:21; Matthew 21:42; Matthew 22:29; John 5:39, 46; John 10:35; First Corinthians 4:6; First Timothy 5:18; Second Peter 3:16).

When we look into the Word of God, we see how the Lord Jesus and the Apostles responded to those embracing Tradition rather than the Scriptures.

In the Gospel of Mark, chapter 7:1-9 and verse 13 we find the classic passage of Scripture where the Lord warns against men's Tradition:

*"Then came together unto Him the Pharisees and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem. And when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the Tradition of the Elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brasen vessels, and of tables. Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the Tradition of the Elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands? He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. Howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the Tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And He said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own Tradition. Making the Word of God of none effect through your Tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye."*

Notice some very specific things the Lord reveals about those embracing Tradition over Scripture:



- V.6: He calls them hypocrites.
- V.7: Their attempt to worship God is done in vain.
- V.7b: He calls Traditions the commandments of men.
- VV.8-9: He says, they reject the commandments of God.
- V.13: The Lord Jesus says, teaching Traditions makes the Word of God of no effect.

In this passage from the Word of God the Lord identifies how embracing Traditions violates the Scriptures and dispels any notion that Tradition could ever be on the same authority level as Scripture. Throughout the New Testament the Lord Jesus used Scripture alone, as the final court of appeal in every matter under dispute. To the Sadducees He said, "*Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God*" (Matthew 22:29).

The Bible teaches that Scripture alone is the sole authority for the Church and the individual believer (First Corinthians 2:13; First Thessalonians 2:13; Second Timothy 3: 16-17; Second Peter 1:21). Scripture has sole authority because it is a direct revelation from God and carries the very authority of God Himself. The Apostle Paul said, "*For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, (how then) but by the revelation of Jesus Christ*" (Galatians 1:12).

**The Catholic Church Disregards The Fact That  
Tradition Adds To And Often Alters God's Word,  
Which Is Forbidden In Scripture -**

Bible-believing Christians understand that the divine command throughout the Bible is not to add, delete or alter the Word of God. The Bible sets boundaries, which we are not at liberty to go beyond. The Apostle Paul for example exhorted the Corinthian believers "*not to exceed what is written*" (First Corinthians 4:6). In Deuteronomy 4:2 we are commanded: "*Ye shall not add unto the Word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.*" Proverbs 30:5-6 instructs us: "*Every Word of God is pure: add thou not unto His Words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.*" Revelation 22:18-19, likewise tells us: "*For I testify unto every man that heareth the Words of the prophecy of this Book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this Book: And if any man shall take away from the Words of the Book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of life.*"

Beloved, the Bible teaches us everything we need to know relative to our spiritual life. We do not have to go outside the Bible for anything relative to Salvation and living the Christian life.

## **The Result Of Catholic Tradition Over The Centuries -**

Below we can see the time-line of how the Catholic Church developed and the process by which unbiblical teachings could be added on the basis of Church authority through Tradition. Collectively, these dates are given by several sources, are approximate, and refer to the time such practices were either first introduced, formulated, adopted by Council, or proclaimed by a Pope.

- A.D. 310 - Prayers For The Dead Began.
- A.D. 375 - The Worship Of Saints.
- A.D. 394 - The Mass Was Adopted.
- A.D. 431 - The Worship Of Mary Began To Develop Although It Was Not Popularized For 350 Years.
- A.D. 593 - The Doctrine Of Purgatory Was Introduced.
- A.D. 606 - Claims To Papal Supremacy Took Root.
- A.D. 650 - Feasts In Honor Of Mary Started.
- A.D. 666 - Latin Services - Vitalius, Bishop Of Rome, Was The First Who Ordered Services To Be Celebrated Everywhere In Latin.
- A.D. 750 - The Pope First Assumed Temporal Power.
- A.D. 787 - The Worship Of Images And Relics Was Introduced.
- A.D. 819 - The First Observance Of The Feast Of Assumption Began.
- A.D. 850 - The Invention Of Holy Water.
- A.D. 965 - The Blessing Of The Bells.
- A.D. 983 - The Canonization Of Saints Was Formulated.
- A.D. 998 - Lent, Advent And Abstinence From Meat On Friday.
- A.D. 1003 - Feasts For The Dead Were Introduced.

- A.D. 1073 - Title Of Pope - Gregory VIII Decreed There Should Be But One Pope In The World And That Was To Be Himself. Up To This Time The Title Of "Pope" Or "Papa," Father, Was Common To All Bishops.
- A.D. 1074 - The Celibacy Of The Priesthood Was Asserted.
- A.D. 1076 - The Doctrine Of Papal Infallibility Was First Announced (Or Suggested).
- A.D. 1090 - The Use Of Prayer Beads (The Rosary).
- A.D. 1115 - Confession To A Priest Instituted.
- A.D. 1140 - The Doctrine Of Seven Sacraments Was Introduced.
- A.D. 1190 - The Sale Of Indulgences Started.
- A.D. 1215 - The Dogma Of Transubstantiation Was Adopted By Pope Innocent III.
- A.D. 1216 - The Acceptance Of Auricular Confession Of Sins To A Priest.
- A.D. 1220 - Holy Water Accepted.
- A.D. 1226 - The Elevation And Adoration Of The Wafer Began.
- A.D. 1274 - Purgatory Was Declared Doctrine At The Second Council Of Lyons.
- A.D. 1303 - The Roman Catholic Church Was Proclaimed As The Only True Church Where Salvation Can Be Found.
- A.D. 1316 - The Ave Maria Was Introduced.
- A.D. 1414 - The Declaration That Only Priests Could Say The Mass And Partake  
-15 Of The Wine.
- A.D. 1438 - Purgatory And The Seven Sacraments Were Officially Decreed By the  
- 39 Council Of Florence.
- A.D. 1546 - Roman Tradition And The Apocrypha Were Officially Placed On The Same Level As Scripture By The Council Of Trent.
- A.D. 1547 - The Seven Sacraments Were First Mentioned By Peter Lombard In A.D. 1140 And Made An Article Of The Catholic Faith By The Council Of Trent.

- A.D. 1547 - Trent Officially Rejected Justification By Faith Alone And Upheld Salvation By Faith and Works.  
- 62
- A.D. 1562 - The Mass Was Declared A Propitiatory Sacrifice.
- A.D. 1563 - Adoration Of Images - Condemned By Council Of Constantinople In A.D. 754; Approved By Council Of Nice, In A.D. 787; But Rejected By Council Of Frankfort, In A.D. 794. Made An Article Of The Catholic Faith By The Council Of Trent.
- A.D. 1563 - Indulgences - Restrictions Were Imposed On The Practice Of Issuing Indulgences By The Fourth Council Of Lateran in A.D. 1215. Council Of Trent Decrees That The Use Of Them Is To Be Retained In The Catholic Church And Anathematizes Those Who Declare Them To Be Useless.
- A.D. 1563 - Invocation Of Saints - Was Made An Article Of The Catholic Faith At The Council Of Trent.
- A.D. 1564 - Scripture Was To Be Interpreted Only In Accordance With The Unanimous Consent Of The Fathers (Creed Of Pope Pius IV).
- A.D. 1564 - The Supremacy Of The Pope Was First Promulgated As An Article Of The Faith By Pope Pius IV In His Creed.
- A.D. 1854 - The Immaculate Conception Of Mary Was Made An Article Of The Faith By Pius IX.
- A.D. 1864 - The Doctrine Of The Temporal Power Of The Pope Was Proclaimed.
- A.D. 1870 - Papal Infallibility Was Proclaimed A Dogma At The First Vatican Council.
- A.D. 1950 - The Bodily Assumption And Personal Presence Of Mary In Heaven Was Proclaimed By Pope Pius XII.

As you can see, the history of the Roman Catholic Church proves that both doctrine and Tradition can be corrupted and that only God's Word is an adequate standard to keep them pure. Otherwise, it is perilously easy for sinful human tendencies to undermine both.

Is there any doubt why the Apostle Peter was very careful to embrace only inspired (God breathed) Scripture and reject man's Traditions?

### **In Conclusion -**

We began this chapter by asking questions regarding what we should discover in Peter's Epistles as it related to doctrines unique to Catholicism. However, we did not find one distinctive of Roman Catholic doctrine in either Epistle. What we did find were biblical teachings diametrically opposed to Catholic doctrine. Moreover, we surveyed nine biblical doctrines from Peter's Epistles, which soundly disproved long-standing teachings of the Church of Rome. We also discovered not a semblance of the teaching of sacramental Salvation. No mention of a Roman Priesthood! Not a word regarding him being the first Pope, conferred upon by Christ with the prerogatives of Papal Primacy and Infallibility. No establishment of Apostolic Succession. No confirmation of a Papacy, with the establishment of a Hierarchy. Also, we made the statement at the start of this chapter, that these doctrinal teachings should have been clearly addressed in his Epistles, if they were originated by God and revealed to the Apostle by the Holy Spirit. But they were not, because Rome's central doctrines are not a part of inspired (God breathed) Scripture. As we have seen, they are a part of Catholic Tradition, which we have studied earlier in this chapter.

## Chapter Four

### The Scriptures Alone Reveal God's Plan Of Salvation -

Of all the teachings which distinguish Bible-believing Christians and Catholics perhaps none is greater than that which relates to the doctrine of Salvation. The most vital information known is that which comes to the soul in answer to the question - "*How is one saved from the penalty of sin?*" There must be no mistaking or misstating of the question, as it is paramount to all questions, which relate to man's life and eternal destiny. The wrong answer to the question is the most fatal heresy ever perpetrated on mankind.

But no one need be mistaken concerning how to be saved, for the Bible is very plain concerning the matter, as we have seen in previous chapters. It is set forth in such simple and explicit terms, over and over again, and so prominently made understandable throughout the Scriptures as to preclude all possibility of error. Such is to be expected in a matter so vital and momentous. If the Bible did not make plain the way of Salvation, all else it says about spiritual things would lose its value.



“Neither is there Salvation in any other: for there is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

### The Catholic View Of Salvation -

Instead of Salvation being the gift of God, received by faith at the hearing of the Gospel, Rome claims it is ministered through the “*sacraments*” of the Catholic Church by means of her Priesthood. There are seven sacraments according to the Roman Church, with five of them serving as vehicles of saving grace: Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, the Anointing of the Sick and the Eucharist (Lord's Supper). The other two sacraments are Matrimony and Orders. The Council of Trent defined it to be of faith that these sacraments were all instituted by Jesus Christ; that they confer grace on all who receive them worthily and with the right disposition; that Baptism, Confirmation, and Orders imprint an indelible character on the soul and so cannot be repeated; and that the sacraments are necessary to Salvation, though not all are necessary to every person.

According to Catholic definition, a sacrament is “*a sacred sensible sign instituted by Christ in perpetuity to signify sanctifying grace and to confer that grace on the soul of the recipient.*” “*A sacrament is not fulfilled by the fact that one believes in it but by the fact that it is performed ... a sacrament consists essentially of three things, the matter, the form, and the minister who makes the sacrament with the intention of doing what the Church does; if any one of these be wanting, the sacrament is not made*” (or valid)!<sup>1</sup>

It is evident from the above that the Catholic Church has made a definite departure from inspired Scripture as it relates to Salvation. Biblical Christianity offers the following objections to the Catholic view of Salvation:

(1) Salvation is a supernatural work performed in the soul of man by the Holy Spirit alone, and not by the “sacraments” or the ministrations of a Priest or Church. (Titus 3:5; John 1:13; 3:8; 6:63; Romans 8:4; 8:14; First Corinthians 2:14; Second Thessalonians 2:13).

(2) Salvation is provided by the grace and mercy of God alone, and is not produced in whole or in part by the morality, merit, or good works of men. (John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-10; Romans 3:24; 5:15; 11:6; Psalm 27:1; 37:29; Isaiah 12:2; 25:9; Zephaniah 3:17; First Timothy 4:10; Acts 15:11; Titus 3:7).

(3) Salvation is bestowed on the merit of Christ’s atonement alone, through the mediation agency of the Holy Spirit, and is not procured through the mediation of Priests, Saints, Mary or the sacraments. (John 1:12-13; Acts 4:12; Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 7:25; 9:28; Titus 2:14; Titus 3:5; First Peter 2:24; Revelation 5:9; Isaiah 53:6).

(4) Salvation is secured to the individual through repentance and faith in Christ alone, and not through the sacraments. (Matthew 3:1-2; John 6:28-29; 3:15; 5:24; 11:25; 12:46; 20:31; Acts 2:38; 17:30; 3:19; Galatians 2:16; 3:26; Romans 10:9-10; First John 5:1, 4, 10, 13).

**The Teaching Of Sacramental Salvation Is Not In  
Harmony With The Whole Of Scripture  
Regarding Salvation -**

The Church of Rome makes it very clear receiving the sacrament of the Eucharist is essential for Salvation. The Verses in Matthew 26 and in John chapter 6 which refer to eating Christ's flesh and drinking His blood, when interpreted literally, contradict the rest of Scripture regarding what it teaches about Salvation. For example, in Acts chapter eight we read about the Salvation of the Ethiopian eunuch. Faith in Christ alone sealed his Salvation (Acts 8:26- 37). In the book of Acts in chapter nine we see the Apostle Paul's new found faith in Christ alone saved him (Acts 9:1-6). Also in Acts 16, we see the Philippian jailor saved by faith in Christ alone (Acts 16:25- 32). These are but a few of the many examples in the New Testament which teach that personal Salvation is in receiving Jesus Christ by faith alone (John 1:12-13; 3:16-18; First John 5:9-13).

When the Catholic Church interprets John 6:53 literally and essential for Salvation, it is in disharmony with the rest of the Bible. Because it opposes hundreds of Scriptures that declare Salvation and Justification are by faith in Christ alone. To say that a person receives eternal life by eating and drinking is to deny the grace of God in Salvation. The



Catholic Bible also confirms this most important truth concerning God's grace, which many people never come to receive because of closed hearts to this revelation from God's Word. Even the youngest and oldest among us who open their heart to this truth, God will reveal His plan of Salvation. Let's read a passage of Scripture from the Catholic Douay Bible found in the Epistle to the Ephesians to further help us understand this important truth.

*“And you (hath He quickened) when you were dead in your offences, and sins, Wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of this air, of the spirit that now worketh on the children of unbelief In which also we all conversed in time past, in the desires of our flesh, fulfilling the will of the flesh and of our thoughts, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest: But God (who is rich in mercy) for his exceeding charity wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened (to make alive) us together in Christ, (by whose grace you are saved,) and hath raised us up together, and hath made us sit together in the heavenly places, through Christ Jesus. That he might shew in the ages to come the abundant riches of His grace, in His bounty towards us in Christ Jesus. For by grace (God's unmerited favor toward man) you are saved through faith (in Jesus Christ), and that not of yourselves, for it (Salvation) is the gift of God: Not of works (good deeds, religious acts such as Confirmation, Baptism and Holy Communion, etc.), that no man may glory (lest any man should boast). For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus in good works, which God hath prepared that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:1-10).*

The Catholic Bible enlightens us as to the important issues involved in one becoming a Christian. That is why we quoted this extensive passage of Scripture because it explains God's plan of Salvation so clearly and precisely that no one should err in understanding God's offer of eternal life through faith in Christ alone.

### **First, The Holy Spirit Describes What A Person Is Before They Are Saved -**

In the first three Verses, the Word of God describes the desperate condition of those who have not experienced Salvation by God's grace. To begin with, they are dead spiritually, that is, their inner being is dead, they have no response to spiritual things (V.1 ). This means they were lifeless toward God. They had no vital contact with Him. They lived as if He did not exist.

It is interesting to note that the Lord Jesus raised three people from the dead: a 12 year old girl (Luke 8:49-55); a young man (Luke 7:12-15); and an old man (John 11:43-44). Each of them was dead; the only difference was in the state of decomposition. All

spiritually lost souls are dead, regardless of age. There is no difference between the unsaved religionists and the dregs of society on skid row. This passage from Ephesians confirms the spiritually lost are not only dead, they are enslaved by the world. They live for the pleasures and fashions of the world. Tell them that this world is under the condemnation of God and they will ridicule you. Also those without Christ are under the sway of Satan (V. 2). Satan is at work in the lives of unsaved people. This does not mean necessarily that he makes them drunkards or murderers; his usual tactic is to give people a false security through self-righteousness. The Lord Jesus called the religious Pharisees “*children of the devil*” (John 8:44), yet they were religious, upstanding citizens.

### **Second, The Holy Spirit Describes What God Did When A Person Is Saved -**

In Verses 4 through 9, the Bible explains what God did in the lives of those He saves. In Verse 4, the words, “*But God,*” form one of the most profound transitions in the Bible. They indicate that a supernatural change has taken place. It is a change from the doom and despair of the valley of death to the pinnacle of God's love, mercy and grace. The Author of the change is God Himself. No one else could have done it, and no one else would have done it. In Verses 4 and 7, we see why God did it, in the words, “*for His exceeding charity (love) wherewith He loved us* (V.4). God's love is great because of the price He paid. Love sent the Lord Jesus, God's only begotten Son, to die for us at Calvary. Because of His love for us, God has offered His grace to all who are spiritually dead in their sins. This grace is God's unmerited favor toward us (V.5). And in Verse 7, the Word says, “*That He might shew in the ages to come the abundant riches of His grace, in His bounty towards us in Christ Jesus.*” So those who once so richly deserved His wrath will, throughout all eternity, display His grace.

When we place our faith in Christ alone, as Verses 8 and 9 declare, God brings us from death to spiritual life, from sin to good works, from deserving God's wrath to being received in Heaven. What a change God's grace brings about when He saves us.

### **Third, The Holy Spirit Describes What A Person Is After They Are Saved -**

Now we come to Verse ten. What did the Catholic Bible say? “*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus in good works, which God hath prepared that we should walk in them.*” The result of Salvation is that “*we are His workmanship*” - the handiwork of God, not of ourselves. Those who are saved are the products of God's marvelous grace. They are created by God. This is not accomplished through religious training, sacraments or receiving the Eucharist. Rather, a person must be created in Jesus Christ, thereby becoming a new creation. This happens by the provision and the operation of the grace of God. Those who are truly born of the Spirit, regenerated (made alive

spiritually) by the power of God, saved by the grace of God, are truly the masterpiece of all God's creative acts.

Perhaps the Scripture which best characterizes what a person is after receiving Jesus Christ by faith alone to save their soul, is found in Second Corinthians 5:17. *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away: behold, all things are become new.”* The Word of God teaches they are a new person in Christ. They have experienced a spiritual birth; they have been born again - born from above. This new birth and repentant attitude creates in us a whole new perspective and belief system as it relates to God, ourselves, sin and the world around us.

The object of this new creation is found in the phrase, *“in good works,”* from Verse ten. We have learned from the second chapter of Ephesians that we are not saved by good works. We are not saved by faith plus good works. We are saved through faith in Christ alone. Once you add good works of any kind or in any amount as a means of gaining eternal life, Salvation is no longer by God's grace (Romans 11:6). One reason that good or religious works are positively excluded is to prevent human boasting. If anyone could be saved by his good works, then he would have reason to boast before God. This is impossible (Romans 3:27). If anyone could be saved by their own good works, then the death of Christ was unnecessary (Galatians 2:21). Ephesians 2:10 teaches that we are saved for good works. We do not work in order to be saved, but because we are saved.

This is the aspect of the truth that is emphasized in James 2:14-26. When James says that *“faith without works is dead,”* he does not mean we are saved by faith plus works, but by the kind of faith that results in a life of good works. Good works prove the reality of our faith. God's order is this: Faith → Salvation → good works → reward. Faith leads to Salvation. Salvation results in good works. Good works will be rewarded by God.

There is God's plan of Salvation from God's Word, the Bible. There is no mention of receiving the Eucharist as an essential aspect of Salvation. Rather, as we have seen, personal Salvation originates with the grace of God: He takes the initiative in providing it. Salvation is given to those who are utterly unworthy of it, on the basis of the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is given as a present possession. Those who are saved can know it, as we have seen in previous chapters. John the Apostle, writing in First John 5:13 states: *“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God: that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”* John knew it, and they knew it. The way we receive the gift of eternal life is through faith in Christ. Faith means that man takes his place as a lost, guilty sinner and receives Jesus Christ as his only hope of Salvation. <sup>2</sup>

## A Final Word Regarding Biblical Salvation -

We have completed studying two opposing teachings on the very important subject of Salvation; one from a biblical perspective, the other from Rome's perspective. One is profoundly true, the other untrue. Belief in one will secure Heaven. Belief in the other results in eternal separation from God.



All roads may lead to Rome, but there is only one "Way" that leads to Salvation - Christ.

Remember, God has provided through the Lord Jesus Christ a perfect Work of redemption and remedy for sin, the benefits of which are enjoyed by all who repent (change their mind) and receive Him for Salvation. Remember also, no one can be saved because of natural goodness, by what he can do, or by what another human being can do or has done for him. Remember too, Salvation is not of good works, partial or entire, personal or proxy, nor by ceremonialism, ritualism, morality, Tradition or benevolence, but is by Grace through faith in Jesus Christ. The blood of Jesus Christ, and not the "*sacrament*" of Penance, or Baptism, or the purging of Purgatory, cleanses us from all sin (First John 1:7). It is the only remedy provided, and no other is needed. Those, and those only, who receive the Lord Jesus Christ, are saved. This alone is the Gospel of Salvation, and there is no other! Which will it be for you? Faith in Christ alone for your Salvation and assurance of Salvation, or the unbiblical teaching of forgiveness taught by Rome with no assurance of Salvation? I trust you will embrace the inspired and inerrant Word of God to lead you to biblical faith in the Lord Jesus alone, for your Salvation.

## **Chapter Five**

### **The Scriptures Alone Reveal Those Who Deny The Biblical Gospel, Proclaim A False Gospel -**

In our study thus far we have compared and contrasted the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church with the teachings of the Bible regarding what both proclaim about Peter and related doctrines regarding the Apostle. We have studied what both teach about Tradition and the Scriptures and a host of other important teachings.

We have discovered there is a vast difference between biblical Christianity and Roman Catholicism. The contrasts between the two highlight the monumental and irreconcilable differences between Bible-believing Christians and Roman Catholics. The glaring differences Rome embraces regarding Peter, authority, Salvation and doctrine are clearly deviations from God's inspired Scriptures.



The inspired Scriptures contain all of life and Salvation that is necessary for us to possess, to have “the faith” - what we are to believe, what we are to be, and what we are to do.

When individuals or religious systems move away from the four main doctrinal tenets of the biblical Gospel (First Corinthians 15:3-4), this tends to be a springboard to other major deviations from God’s Word. For example, as we have already seen, the Primacy of Peter, the Roman Priesthood, the Mass as a re-sacrifice of Christ, a sacramental system of Salvation; Catholic Tradition on equal par with Scripture and Mary as the queen of Heaven and co-redemptress with Christ, to name just a few, all are a result of deviating from the biblical Gospel.

#### **Proclaiming Another Gospel -**

The Catholic Church has nullified the Gospel of grace by adding additional requirements for Salvation. It teaches baptism is essential for Salvation. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states the following about baptism.

*“The Lord himself affirms that Baptism is necessary for Salvation. He also commands his disciples to proclaim the Gospel to all nations and to baptize them. Baptism is necessary for Salvation for those to whom the Gospel has been proclaimed and who have had the possibility of asking for this sacrament. The Church does not know of any means other than Baptism that assures entry into eternal beatitude; this is why she takes care not to neglect the mission she has received from the Lord to see that all who can be baptized are “reborn of water and the Spirit.” God has bound Salvation to the sacrament of Baptism, but he himself is not bound by his sacraments.”<sup>1</sup>*

Secondly, Rome has added church membership as a condition for Salvation.

*"To reunite all his children, scattered and led astray by sin, the Father willed to call the whole of humanity together into his Son's Church. The Church is the place where humanity must rediscover its unity and Salvation. The Church is "the world reconciled." She is that bark which "in the full sail of the Lord's cross, by the breath of the Holy Spirit, navigates safely in this world." According to another image dear to the Church Fathers, she is prefigured by Noah's ark, which alone saves from the flood."*

*"Outside The Church There is No Salvation-"*

*"How are we to understand this affirmation, often repeated by the Church Fathers? Reformulated positively, it means that all Salvation comes from Christ the Head through the Church, which is his Body."*

*"Basing itself on Scripture and Tradition, the Council teaches that the Church, a pilgrim now on earth, is necessary for Salvation: the one Christ is the mediator and the way of Salvation; he is present to us in his body which is the Church. He himself explicitly asserted the necessity of faith and Baptism, and thereby affirmed at the same time the necessity of the Church, which men enter through Baptism as through a door. Hence they could not be saved who, knowing that the Catholic Church was founded as necessary by God through Christ, would refuse either to enter it or to remain in it."*<sup>2</sup>

Thirdly, the Catholic sacraments are necessary for Salvation.

*"The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are necessary for Salvation."*<sup>3</sup>

Fourthly, obeying the commandments are essential to Salvation.

*"The council of Trent teaches that the Ten Commandments are obligatory for Christians and that the justified man is still bound to keep them; the Second Vatican Council confirms: The bishops, successors of the apostles, receive from the Lord ... the mission of teaching all peoples, and of preaching the Gospel to every creature, so that all men may attain Salvation through faith, Baptism and the observance of the Commandments."*<sup>4</sup>

Fifthly, good works are paramount to meriting Salvation according to the Church of Rome.

*"We can therefore hope in the glory of heaven promised by God to those who love him and do his will. In every circumstance, each one of us should hope, with the grace of God, to persevere "to the end" and to obtain the joy of heaven, as God's eternal reward for the good works accomplished with the grace of Christ."*<sup>5</sup>

Sixthly, attending and participating in the weekly sacrifice of the Mass is mandatory for Salvation.

*"There is no surer pledge or clearer sign of this great hope in the new heavens and new earth 'in which righteousness dwells,' than the Eucharist (consecrated bread). Every time this mystery is celebrated, 'the work of our redemption is carried on' and we 'break the one bread that provides the medicine of immortality, the antidote for death, and the food that makes us live for ever in Jesus Christ.'"*<sup>6</sup>

All six elements of Rome's Gospel are necessary for Salvation. This is another Gospel and those who embrace and teach it are condemned as severely as the Apostle Paul condemned the Judaizers for teaching a false Gospel (Galatians 1:6-9). They teach Catholic Priests are needed to dispense Salvation through seven sacraments. From baptism through Purgatory, Catholics are taught they can gain a right standing before God by what they do instead of believing what God has done for them through Christ. The precious Catholic soul is taught they *"can merit for ourselves and for others all the graces needed to attain eternal life."*<sup>7</sup>

These beliefs Catholics must embrace in conjunction with faith in God, are necessary, they say, for eventually securing Salvation, could not be more opposed to God's plan of Salvation revealed in the Bible. *"For by grace (God's unmerited favor toward man) are ye saved through faith (in Jesus Christ) and that not of yourselves: it (Salvation) is the gift of God: Not of works (good deeds, church membership, etc.), lest any man should boast"* (Ephesians 2:8-9). Notice also what is stated in Romans 4:4-5: *"Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace (God's unmerited favor toward man), but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him (Christ) that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."* The Apostle Paul further states, *"Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law"* (Romans 3:24; 28). These are but a few of the many passages of Scripture throughout the Epistles of the New Testament confirming personal Salvation is by faith in Christ alone, apart from anything we can do to merit favor with God.



## **The Scriptures Alone Reveal Those That Embrace A False Gospel Deny Salvation On The Merits Of Christ Alone -**

As we have seen throughout this book, in spite of the teaching of Scripture that propitiation of sin is found in Christ alone, the Catholic Church still insists there are other ways in which Catholics can experience forgiveness of sin and less punishment in terms of time spent in Purgatory. According to Catholicism, the Mass, the Confessional, penance, indulgences, and Purgatory all play a vital role in assisting Catholics with their quest for forgiveness and hope of eventual entrance into Heaven.

For instance, the Catholic Church teaches that through indulgences, *“Catholics can attain their own Salvation and at the same time cooperate in saving their brothers.”* <sup>8</sup> The Pope claims to have the power to transfer the merits of one Catholic to another to reduce their punishment for sin. *“An indulgence is a remission of the temporal punishment due to sins which the sinner gains through the Church, which ... dispenses from the Vatican treasure ... the prayers and good works of Mary and all the saints.”* <sup>9</sup> Rome also *“commends alms-giving and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead.”* <sup>10</sup> Yet, from Scripture we know that: *“None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him”* (Psalm 49:7).

For over hundreds of years Rome has not only preached a different Gospel but also has condemned anyone who believes the glorious biblical Gospel. Many Bible-believing Christians are unaware the Council of Trent and Vatican II issued over 100 anathema's (condemnations) on anyone who believes Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. All these condemnations are still in effect today as evidence by these two statements:

*“If anyone says the sinner is justified by faith alone, meaning that nothing else is required to cooperate in order to obtain the grace of justification, let him be anathema.”*

*“The Catholic Church ‘condemns with anathema those who say that indulgences are useless or that the Church does not have the power to grant them.’ ”*

The Roman Catholic Church also condemns anyone who believes they are assured of eternal life. This anathema denies the Words of Christ, Who said, *“I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand”* (John 10:28). For those who reject the Words of Christ, Jesus said, *“He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My Words, hath one that judgeth him: the Word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day”* (John 12:48). Catholics must recognize there are more serious consequences for being condemned by the infallible Word of God than by the fallible teachings of their Church.

**The Scriptures Alone Reveal Those That Embrace  
A False Gospel Deny The Sufficiency Of Christ's  
Work On Calvary -**

The Church of Rome's teaching denies that Christ's sacrifice was sufficient to expiate all the guilt and punishment of sin. Instead, they teach a cleansing fire is needed for "*Those who are expiating their sins in Purgatory.*"<sup>11</sup> The doctrine of Purgatory is an utter denial of the sufficiency of Christ's perfect sacrifice for sin, yet Catholics are asked to accept it as a grace.<sup>12</sup> According to Catholic theology, the Pope has the power to bring them out of Purgatory, but refuses to do so, unless indulgences are offered in their name. Their Catechism states, "*All who die still imperfectly purified undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.*"<sup>13</sup>

Rome teaches that Catholics can carry their own cross to expiate their sins and the sins of others.<sup>14</sup> What a glaring contradiction this is. The Work of the sinless and perfect Saviour on Calvary's cross is said to be insufficient to completely expiate sins, yet the cross of lowly sinners is said to be sufficient to do what Christ could not do. No Priest can tell Catholics how many indulgences are needed or how long one has to suffer for each sin. This only perpetuates a religious system that holds Catholics in bondage and at the mercy of their Church indefinitely. However, the writer of Hebrews declared, "*For by one offering He (Jesus) hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified*" (Hebrews 10:14), and "*when He (Jesus) had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high*" (Hebrews 1:3).

**The Scriptures Alone Reveal Those That Embrace  
A False Gospel Deny Christ's  
Sacrifice Is Finished -**

As we have seen earlier the Catholic Church teaches the sacrifice of Christ must continue daily on its alters for the reparation of the sins of the living and the dead.<sup>15</sup> The Second Vatican Council declared, "*The Mystery of the Eucharist (consecrated bread) is the true center of the sacred liturgy and indeed of the whole Christian life.*" In this central act of worship, Rome claims that the Mass is "*a sacrifice in which the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated.*" This is done, they say, so that sins may be expiated and the wrath of God may be appeased.

Although Scripture teaches the Lord's Supper is a memorial of the Person and Work of Christ, Rome declares it is a real sacrifice and asserts Jesus is immolated (killed) as a sacrificial victim each time the Mass is offered. "*The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice.*"<sup>16</sup> Rome claims the Catholic Priest has the power to call Jesus down from Heaven, and transubstantiate a wafer and wine into His physical body, blood, soul and divinity. After almighty God has been reduced to a lifeless

inanimate piece of bread, the Priest lifts it up to be worshiped. The Priest then represents Jesus Christ as a sacrifice to the Father. This practice is strongly rebuked by Scripture. The Apostle Paul wrote "*Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God*" (Romans 6:9-10). In anticipation of those embracing a false Gospel and declaring Christ is present when He is not, The Lord Jesus warned us, "*if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not*" (Matthew 24:23). When the Lord Jesus, "*after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God ... there is no more offering (sacrifice) for sin*" (Hebrews 10:12,18). To deny the Words of our precious Saviour, Who said "*It is Finished*" is to reject one of the essential doctrines of the biblical Gospel, "*The Work Of Christ.*" For if the Work of redemption is not finished then all humanity remains condemned to Hell and dead in their sins.

**The Scriptures Alone Reveal Those That Embrace  
A False Gospel Deny Salvation And Justification  
By God's Grace Through Faith In The Person And  
Work Of Jesus Christ-**

Rome says, "*If anyone shall say that it is by the righteousness of Christ itself that men are formally justified - let him be accursed*" (Council of Trent, Session VI, Canon 10). Further, "*If anyone shall say that justifying faith is nothing else than trust in the Divine mercy pardoning sins for Christ's sake; or that it is that trust alone by which we are justified - let him be accursed*" (Canon 12). Here, Rome places her curse on the very Word of God!

The Bible teaches "*By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight...But now the righteousness of God ... which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe*" (Romans 3:20-22). Again it states, "*A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law*" (Romans 3:28), and "*God imputeth (credits) righteousness without works*" (apart from works) (Romans 4:6). And the Apostle Paul states in Romans 4:5, "*To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.*" Further, in Acts 13:38-39, we read about Paul's sermon in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia concerning the all-important subject of how one is justified before God and receives forgiveness of sins. "*Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man (Christ) is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the Law of Moses.*"

Rome's Gospel, however, is a Gospel of human works and merits. "*Sins must be expiated (to atone or make amends for). This may be done on this earth through sorrows, miseries and trials of this life and, above all, through death. Otherwise, the expiation must be made in the next life through fire and torments or purifying punishment*" (Purgatory) (Vatican II, Indulgentiarum Doctrina, I.2).

In total contrast, the Bible teaches, "*Being now justified by His (Christ's) blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him*" (Romans 5:9). Again, "*Therefore being (having been) justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*" (Romans 5:1). "*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus*" (Romans 8:1). The Apostle John gives the reason for this freedom from condemnation: "*your sins are forgiven you for His (Christ's) name's sake*" (First John 2:12). This is the Gospel that Rome rejects.

**The Scriptures Alone Reveal Those That Teach A  
False Gospel Demand Submission To Mediators  
Other Than Christ -**

Catholics must submit to the Pope who "*by reason of his office as Vicar of Christ, has full supreme and universal power over the whole Church, a power he can exercise unhindered.*" They must also submit to the Magisterium, which is said to be the infallible teaching authority of the Catholic Church. Catholics are taught they cannot receive forgiveness for mortal sins unless they confess to yet another mediator, a Priest. Catholics also seek Mary, the earthly mother of Jesus, as a mediator. "*The blessed Virgin is invoked in the Church under the titles of Advocate, helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix.*" (Vatican II, Lumen Gentium, VIII, Paragraph 62). Paragraph 61 of the same document says Mary "*Shared her Son's sufferings as He died on the cross. Thus, in a wholly singular way she cooperated ... in the work of the Saviour in restoring supernatural life to souls.*"

John Paul II, the former Pope, has stated emphatically that in Mary "*is effected the reconciliation of God with humanity ... is accomplished the work of reconciliation*" (Pope John Paul II, On Reconciliation and Penance, St. Paul Editions, p. 139).

It is vain for Rome to claim that all this does not violate the Scriptures, which clearly teaches, "*There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*" (First Timothy 2:5). Also the Bible teaches, "*God was in Christ (not Mary), reconciling the world unto Himself*" (Second Corinthians 5:19). Again, the Word of God says, "*God hath given (present tense) to us eternal life and this life is in His Son*" (First John 5:11). Contrast the slogan adopted by the Second Vatican Council, "*Death through Eve, life through Mary*" (Lum. Gent. VIII, Paragraph 56). This is Rome's Gospel. Rome's Gospel pronounces a curse on any man who comes to believe that he is assured of Salvation and Heaven in this life: "*If any says that he will for certain ... have that great gift of perseverance unto the end, let him be accursed*" (Council of Trent, Session VI, Canon 16).

The Apostle Paul opposed those who preached a Gospel like Rome's. He said, "*Though we, or an angel from Heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed*" (Galatians 1:8).

**The Scriptures Alone Expose Rome's Gospel Of  
Banning Those Seeking Salvation From Going  
Directly To Christ For Forgiveness, Is Diametrically  
Opposed To What The Word Of God Teaches -**

Rome's Gospel bans those seeking Salvation from going directly to Christ for forgiveness. Catholicism teaches, "*Confession to a priest to obtain absolution (forgiveness) from him constitutes the only ordinary way in which the faithful who are conscious of serious sin are reconciled with God ... every serious sin must always be stated, with its determining circumstances, in an individual confession*" (John Paul II, On Reconciliation and Penance, p. 132).

Rome allows no access to Christ for forgiveness, except through a human Priest. Is this pointing men to Christ? Nowhere in the New Testament is any man placed between a penitent sinner and Christ. The Lord Jesus said: "*Come unto Me ... and I will give you rest*" (Matthew 11:28).

The Bible teaches, "*Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having an high Priest (Christ) ... let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith*" (Hebrew 10:19-22). Rome's teachings utterly contradicts this. Far from pointing people to Christ, Rome places a barrier in their way to keep them from Christ.

**The Scriptures Alone Reveal Those That Embrace  
A False Gospel Deny The Sufficiency And Authority Of The Bible -**

In First Corinthians 15:3 we find the third core component of the biblical Gospel in the phrase "*according to the Scriptures.*" This phrase is synonymous with the Bible describing the Word of God as inspired (God breathed), authoritative and inerrant. The truth and reliability of Scripture is reiterated over and over again in the New Testament by the Lord Jesus, the Apostle Paul, Peter, John and others.

In Matthew 21, the chief Priests and Elders of the Jews questioned the Lord Jesus' authority as it related to His teaching in the temple. Christ was quick to teach that all responses to spiritual questions are either "*from Heaven*" (the inspired eternal Scriptures) or "*of men*" (man's Traditions) (Matthew 21:25). Likewise, the basis for all spiritual truth for Christians must be the inspired Bible! The absolute standard established by the Lord Jesus Christ is the fact that "*the Scripture cannot be broken*" (John 10:35). The Lord also declared the truth and reliability of God's Word by stating "*Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth*" (John 17:17). From this statement we understand that God's Word not only contains the truth, but rather, it is truth itself. The Bible is the sole source of the believer's standard of truth. Since Scripture alone is

inspired, it alone is the ultimate authority, and it alone is the final judge of all human Tradition and reasoning. Moreover, the Word of the Lord states, "*Add thou not unto His words lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar*" (Proverbs 30:6). In His written Word, the absolute authority of the Lord is totally sufficient for all Bible-believer's needs, as outlined by the Apostle Paul when he wrote, "*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*" (Second Timothy 3:16-17). The Lord rebuked the Pharisees because they placed their human Traditions on the same level as the written Word of God. The Pharisees corrupted the people's understanding by confusing them in regards to God's Word as the very basis of truth. The Lord Jesus declared to them, "*[you are] Making the Word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered*" (Mark 7:13).

In spite of this clear standard of truth, the Catholic Church declares her own standard of truth. Rome begins her reasoning with the following words: "*Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, then, are bound closely together and communicate one with the other. And Holy Tradition transmits in its entirety the Word of God, which has been entrusted to the Apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit.*" The fact is that no Tradition transmits in its entirety the Word of God. This task is solely that of the Holy Spirit. In an exclusive sense, the Scriptures are the composition of the Holy Spirit, as stated by the Apostle Peter: "*holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit*" (Second Peter 1:20-21). The Holy Spirit is fully fitted for this work because He is "*the Spirit of truth*" (John 16:13). He has perfect knowledge of the truth because He is God, One with the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit reveals truth of the written Word to believers. For this reason the Lord Jesus said, "*He shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you*" (John 16:15). So we see, the Holy Spirit perfectly transmits the Word of God in its proper fullness.<sup>17</sup>

Having equated her "*Sacred Tradition*" with Sacred Scripture and stating that her Tradition transmits the Word of God in its entirety, the Catholic Church reaches its conclusion with the following words:

*"As a result the Catholic Church, to whom the transmission and interpretation of Revelation is entrusted, does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the Holy Scriptures alone. Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence."*

This statement is a formal denial of the sufficiency of Scripture and a repudiation of its unique authority. For a Church, claiming to be Christian, to affirm her equal love for Tradition as she does Scripture is to make Scripture of no unique value. It is like a husband who declares his love for his wife and at the same time states that he also loves equally the woman across the street. Such love would be adulterous; so also are Papal

Rome's "*equal sentiments of devotion and reverence.*" Such a declaration is tantamount to a rejection of Scripture and unfaithfulness to the God of Scripture.

The Church of Rome, however, does have a standard for truth that is taken to be absolute. It is not the authority of God in His written Word; rather, it is the authority of a man, the Pope of Rome. <sup>18</sup> For Catholics, the ultimate authority lies in the decisions and decrees of the reigning Pope. This is seen in their official teaching which states:

*“The Roman Pontiff ... enjoys this infallibility in virtue of his office, when, as supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful . . . he proclaims by a definitive act a doctrine pertaining to faith or morals . . . the Church through its supreme Magisterium proposes a doctrine for belief as being divinely revealed, and as the teaching of Christ, the definitions must be adhered to with the obedience of faith.”*

So in practice, the Catholic Church's basis for doctrine is Rome's Pope and what he states to be truth. In other words, this is claimed truth by decree. How ludicrous the claim is when we realize that some Popes were declared to be heretics and as a result, were condemned by Church Councils. For example, as we have already seen in chapter one, Pope Honorius was condemned as a heretic by the Sixth Ecumenical Council. (680-681 A.D.). He was also condemned as a heretic by Pope Leo II, as well as by every other Pope until the eleventh century. It was not until 1870 at the First Vatican Council that the Catholic Church for the first time declared that the Pope is infallible.

### **Man's Traditions Versus God's Inspired Scriptures -**

Perhaps Charles Spurgeon's warning to those attempting to elevate their unbiblical teachings to the divine level with inspired Scripture enlightens us all of such a futile deed:

*“The word of God is quite sufficient to interest and bless the souls of men throughout all time: but novelties soon fail. ‘Surely,’ cries one, ‘we must add our own thoughts thereto.’ My brother, think by all means; but the thoughts of God are better than yours. You may shed fine thoughts as trees in the autumn cast their leaves; but there is One Who knows more about your thoughts than you do, and He thinks little of them. ‘The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity.’ To liken our thoughts to the great thoughts of God would be a gross absurdity. Would you bring your candle to show the sun? Your nothingness to replenish the eternal all? It is better to be silent before the Lord, than to dream of supplementing what He has written.”*



### **A Parting Word -**

Is the Roman Catholic Church guilty of embracing a false Gospel? The evidence appears to be overwhelming. The truth must be told in love with courage and conviction by Bible-believing Christians. The eternal destiny of millions of precious souls hangs in the balance. The Catholic Church has fallen away from the faith of the Apostles and gone the way of a false Gospel.

How are Christians to respond? Toward individual Catholics we must obey the Scriptures and call them out of their false Gospel (Revelation 18:4). We must proclaim the true biblical Gospel and make disciples of them! Toward the belief system that holds Catholics in bondage, we must expose their unfruitful deeds of darkness (Ephesians 5:11). We must correct and rebuke their false teaching (Second Timothy 4:2) and contend for the biblical faith (Jude 3).<sup>19</sup>

And finally, we must avoid those who oppose sound doctrine (Romans 16:17). This means refusing to join hands with apostates "to advance the mission of Christ." It means rebuking the ecumenical thrust for unity at the expense of biblical truth. We must obey the Scriptures for the glory and purpose of Christ. May He be exalted and praised in all that we do!

## **A Word With My Catholic Friends -**

If you have read this entire book, I want to commend you for your patience and open-mindedness to examine this biblical contrast with the Catholic Church's teaching regarding the Apostle Peter. You could have discarded it, assuming the author was just another disgruntled former Catholic with an ax to grind. However, you would have been mistaken. I wrote this book, not out of anger or bitterness, but out of a deep respect for what God teaches in the Scriptures as inspired. The Lord states explicitly: *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God (God breathed), and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect (spiritually mature), thoroughly furnished (fully and completely equipped) unto all good works"* (Second Timothy 3:16-17). This book was presented in a spirit of respect and love for those of the Catholic faith. My only motive is to point people to the biblical Christ of Scripture for personal Salvation.

It is my sincere hope and prayer that this book has helped the convinced follower of Catholicism better understand biblical Christianity and, at the same time, more clearly understand the faith on which he is staking his destiny in this life and eternity.

## **A Word Of Encouragement -**

I want to encourage you to go back to the beginning of Christianity in the Gospel's and Epistles and start your journey from there. Read them all with an open heart and mind. Seek the Christ of the Bible by returning to the voice of God speaking in the Scriptures.

Do you know what will occur if one goes back to what the Scriptures teach and embrace through faith alone in the Christ of the Bible? You will simply be a biblical Christian, a member of the body of Christ. One can turn to the Bible and read what the Apostle Paul and Peter preached and how people responded to the Gospel. It is all there, very clearly, very distinctly, in the most understandable terms, for any of us to read. The assurance they enjoyed in knowing that their sins were forgiven can be yours also if we receive the same biblical Gospel, for God has only one way of forgiving sin and saving people.

Breaking with Tradition, stepping outside the religious norm and going against the tide are not easy for any of us. But when our beliefs are shown to be in conflict with sacred Scripture, we are left with no other option than to abandon those beliefs in favor of the truth.

Look at all the Jews in the days of Christ, who broke with their religious Traditions in order to follow Him. Even the Apostle Paul and Peter had to acknowledge that what they had believed and practiced all their lives was not in line with the will of God. As a result, they had to make a drastic change. Paul and Peter's new-found faith in the Lord

Jesus Christ brought them persecution and eventually death, but it also brought them into a right relationship with God. If we could ask them right now if the decision to change from ritualistic religion was worth it, we know what they would say. Whenever any of us chooses to differ from what the majority accepts as being correct, then we can expect to meet with conflict.

**An Invitation To Become Part Of The Family Of  
God By Trusting The Biblical Plan Of Salvation -**

I want to conclude with a personal invitation to my Catholic friends. After reading the Scriptures presented in this book, why not, right now, as the Holy Spirit leads you to, accept the sacrifice of Christ once and for all time to redeem your soul?

Realize and accept the biblical way to eternal life by trusting the completed sacrifice of Jesus Christ as your only means of Salvation. He alone made a sufficient sacrifice for sin. He alone is able to forgive sin and impart the power to live the Christian life. Therefore, look back to the cross of Calvary for it is there that your redemption was accomplished. It is there that you can receive a full and complete pardon for your sins. Do not look to another sacrifice, or a representation of the sacrifice of Christ. There is no need to do so. It is clear from Scripture, that Catholic teaching regarding the Gospel is not compatible with what Scripture teaches and therefore is a counterfeit, a substitute for the real thing. Rome's Gospel does not exalt nor glorify Jesus Christ, for it teaches falsehood about His death. If you willingly partake in it after seeing the teaching of God's Word, you are knowingly rejecting the finished Work of Christ in favor of the incomplete and imperfect way of the Catholic Gospel. What will your response be? I trust it will be for Christ!

If you have trusted Christ alone to save you we would love to hear from you so that we may rejoice with you. We have resources available to help in your daily walk with the Lord. If you would like to know more about biblical Salvation or have questions concerning other subject matter, please write or call:

Missionary Outreach To Catholics  
P.O Box 17453  
Louisville, KY 40217-0453  
Email: motc777@cs.com  
(502) 228-5037 (home)  
(502) 548-9774 ( cell)

## **A Word With My Bible-Believing Friends -**

In comparing and contrasting biblical doctrines with Catholic doctrines regarding the Apostle Peter, I have endeavored to be true to biblical Christianity and honest and fair to the Roman Catholic Church. I trust, by God's grace, I have accomplished my objective.

If you are a Bible-believing Christian, dedicated in the past to sharing the Gospel with our Catholic friends, I commend you for your love and desire to see these wonderful people come into a right relationship with Jesus Christ. Keep up the godly work you are doing!

If you are a Christian unaware of the unbiblical teachings of Rome prior to reading this book, I want to challenge you to allow God to open your eyes to the spiritual needs of Catholic people. Hopefully, after reading this book, you are better prepared to be an effective witness to them. You have been alerted to the unbiblical doctrines and practices of Catholicism and now your heart has been prepared to enjoy a ministry among these people. Your former fear and uncertainty are gone and you anticipate each new opportunity to witness to Catholics with new-found joy and confidence.

## **Bible-Believing Christians Must Be Discipled In Catholic Evangelism -**

We must realize that the moral opinions shared by Catholics and Bible-believing Christians are not more important than the doctrinal issues that divide us. In the Church today, there seems to be a basic lack of understanding regarding Catholicism than any other period of Church history. Perhaps this is why our present efforts in evangelism are not more directed to reach Roman Catholics. Graduates from many Bible Colleges are no more familiar with Romanism than they are with the Moslem faith. They may never meet a Muslim, but they may very well encounter Catholics every day. Many Pastors and Evangelists are not trained to preach a message that will especially touch the heart of these people.

In the past, have you believed that it is more important to unite with Catholics to fight against the social ills ( abortion, etc.) of America rather than give them the biblical Gospel for eternity? We must ask ourselves repeatedly whether we truly believe that our Lord Jesus Christ is the only way to Heaven and whether we live according to His Words. Can we say with the apostle Paul, "*I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ*"? *Do we really believe that His Gospel is "the power of God unto Salvation to every one that believeth"* (Romans 1 : 16) and that the world is lost without Christ? Has the full and awesome meaning of that fact truly gripped our hearts and minds?

Are you content with your Catholic friends embracing a sacramental system of Salvation? Do you see Heaven as their home? Do you believe there is more than one way to Heaven? The ministry of Missionary Outreach To Catholics and others has endeavored to expose the false Gospel of Roman Catholicism that is still sending countless millions to Hell. Yet in spite of excellent scholarship available to Christians to reach these precious people, the Catholic "*Gospel*" gains an ever-wider acceptance among Evangelicals and Fundamentalists. There used to be many sound authors and leaders who powerfully opposed Catholicism. Now scarcely anyone raises an objection to this religious system that has likely sent as many to Hell as has Islam. Yet well known leaders of the evangelical Church still embrace Catholicism as just another way to Heaven.

Didn't the Lord in "*The Great Commission*" command His disciples to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature? Has that command ever been revoked? Absolutely not! It still holds for every Christian today. But which Gospel should one preach? The Gospel has been so perverted, compromised and Catholicized that the power of God unto Salvation has been taken out of it for fear of giving offense. Would those in Hell thank us for sparing them the offense that would have taken them instead to Heaven?

Do we withhold the Gospel from the unsaved for selfish reasons? Are some of us ashamed of the narrow gate that the Gospel directs us to present to those who prefer the broad road to destruction? The Word of God is clear: "*The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe*" (Proverbs 29:25). Time is short and eternity is forever. We need to reexamine our hearts and begin to live as though we really believe that if our Catholic friends die embraced to a sacramental system of Salvation, will spend eternity alienated from God. That alone, beloved, is sufficient incentive for us to do everything possible to reach these precious souls with the biblical Gospel. What will your response be?

## **What The New Testament Teaches About Saving Faith -**

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Faith has to be in Christ (Acts 24:24).

Justification comes by faith in Christ (Galatians 2:16).

The justified person must live by faith (Romans 1 :17).

Jesus Christ becomes a place of mercy (a propitiation) through faith (Romans 3:25).

Faith brings Salvation (Ephesians 2:8).

Righteousness comes by faith (Hebrews 11 :7).

Faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17).

People become the children of God by faith (Galatians 3:24).

The nation must come to Christ through the obedience of faith (Romans 16:26).

Salvation comes by believing the truth (Second Thessalonians 2: 13).

Jesus is the finisher of ( One who completes) our faith (Hebrews 12:2).

## **What The New Testament Teaches About Living Faith -**

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Faith purifies the heart (Acts 15:9).

Believers walk by faith (Second Corinthians 5:7).

Children of God stand firm in their faith (Second Corinthians 1:24).

The Christian life is established by faith (Colossians 2:7).

There is a "work" of faith that helps others (First Thessalonians 1:3).

The Christian is protected by the breastplate of faith (First Thessalonians 5:8).

Faith can grow exceedingly (Second Thessalonians 1:3).

Believers can be bold in faith (First Timothy 6:12).

Believers should live sound (healthy) in the faith (Titus 2:2).

Believers should fight the good fight of faith (First Timothy 6:12).

Faith produces good works (James 2:18).

Prayer enhances faith (James 5:15).

Faith is often tried by adversity (First Peter 1:7).

Believers are to be steadfast in faith (First Peter 5:9).

The believer's faith can overcome the world (First John 5:4).

The believer's faith is said to be holy (Jude 1:20).

Christian faith toward God is to be seen by others (First Thessalonians 1:8).

Patience originates from faith (James 1:2-4).



## **Illustrations Of Faith From The Bible -**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Reference</b>
Samuel, the priest of the Lord, was characterized by faith.	First Samuel 2:35
Hananiah was a faithful commander who feared God.	Nehemiah 7:2
Abraham was the father of the faithful.	Romans 4:12
Sarah, by faith, believed God for the promise of a child.	Hebrews 11:11
Isaac, by faith, blessed Jacob and Esau.	Hebrews 11:20
Jacob, by faith, blessed his family when he was dying.	Hebrews 11:21
Moses' entire ministry was characterized by faith.	Hebrews 11:23-29
Rahab the harlot saved the spies because of her faith.	Hebrews 11:31
Silvanus was a Christian brother known for his faith.	First Peter 5:12
Antipas was a martyr who died for his faith.	Revelation 2:13

## Christ And The Pope Contrasted -

Christ wore a crown of thorns.

The Pope wears a triple crown filled with jewels.

Christ said: "*My kingdom is not of this world.*"

The Pope claims the spiritual and temporal sovereignty of the world.

Christ washed his disciples' feet, thus manifesting a spirit of humility worthy of emulation by His followers.

The Pope presents his foot to be kissed and requires genuflections and kneeling from those who have audiences with him.

Christ was poor and lowly.

The Pope's material wealth is immense.

Christ carried on His shoulders the cross.

The Pope is carried on the shoulders of his servants in splendor.

Christ preached peace and good will among men.

The Popes have instigated more wars than all other aggressors combined.

Christ promulgated the laws of His kingdom and urged His followers to do the same.

The Pope tramples them under foot and substitutes his own in their stead.

Christ had no place to lay His head.

The Pope lives in a magnificent palace surrounded by wealth and pomp.

Christ gave His Gospel freely to all.

The Pope sells his masses and other favors.

Christ said: "*Call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your Father, which is in heaven.*"

The Pope commands all to call him "*Holy Father*," and his priests feel insulted if persons do not address them as "*Father*."

Christ lived a chaste and pure life.

Many of the Popes have lived immoral and degraded lives.

Christ taught nothing but true doctrine.

The Pope teaches false doctrine.

Christ sent the Holy Spirit to be His Vicar on earth.  
The Pope claims to be the Vicar of Christ on earth.

Christ is the Head of the Church.  
The Pope claims to be head of the Church.

Christ claimed infallibility for Himself and the Word of God alone.  
The Pope claims infallibility for himself in matters of faith and morals.

Christ taught that sin should be confessed to God.  
The Pope teaches that sin should be confessed to him and his priests.

Christ taught His followers to pray to God through Him.  
The Pope teaches his followers to pray to Mary, the earthly mother of Christ.

Christ gave His Church two ordinances, which portray the Gospel of His death, burial, and resurrection - baptism by immersion and the simple Lord's Supper.  
The Pope teaches seven "sacraments" which are supposed to confer grace actually and effectually on the recipient.

Christ taught that He alone is the Savior.  
The Pope teaches that the Church is necessary for Salvation.

Christ taught that the Church and State should be separate.  
The Pope insists that they should be united.

Christ taught that there was but one mediator between God and men - Himself.  
The Pope teaches that there are many mediators between man and God.

Christ taught that Salvation was by grace (meaning a free gift).  
The Pope teaches Salvation is by grace plus the works and sacraments of the Roman Church.

## **End Notes -**

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### **Chapter One - Upon This Slippery Rock -**

1 First Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ from Vatican I, cited in Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985) pp. 258 - 262.

2 James R. White, *Answers To Catholic Claims*, pp. 107 - 08.

3 Ron Rhodes, *Reasoning from the Scriptures with Catholics*, (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2000}, p. 105.

4 Samuel Fisk, *Letters to Teresa: Earnest Epistles to One Inclined Toward the Roman Catholic Church*, (Biblical Evangelism Press, Brownsburg, Indiana, 1973), pp. 44-48.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 46

6 Dr. Bill Jackson, *The Vicar of Christ?* Published by Christians Evangelizing Catholics, pp. 1-3.

7 Oliver B. Green, *The Gospel According to Matthew, Volume V*, 1975, pp. 159-179.

8 Dave Hunt, *A Woman Rides the Beast*, (Harvest House Publisher, 1994), pp. 511-512.

### **Chapter Two - Eleven Biblical Events Which Disproves Primacy Of Peter -**

1 Samuel Fisk, *Letters to Teresa*: pp. 47-48.

### **Chapter Three - The Scriptures Alone Reveal The Real Peter -**

1 James G. McCarthy, *Conversations With Catholics*, Gospel Folio Press, 1997, pp. 52-53.

2 *Catechism Of The Catholic Church* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), p. 312.

3 Paul J. Levin, *The New Birth*, pp. 1-5.

4 M. R. De Haan, M. D., *Ye Must Be Born Again*, pp. 20-21.

5 Ron Rhodes, Reasoning from the Scriptures with Catholics, (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2000), pp. 98-99.

#### **Chapter Four - The Scriptures Alone Reveal God's Plan Of Salvation -**

1 The Council of Trent, Sessions 7, 13, 14, 22, 24, with special emphasis on the Cannons of Session 7. Philip Schaff, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 118-198.

2 William MacDonald, Believers Bible Commentary, (Thomas Nelson Publishers, Inc. Nashville, Tennessee, 1990), pp. 1917- 1919.

#### **Chapter Five - The Scriptures Alone Reveal Those Who Deny The Biblical Gospel, Proclaim A False Gospel -**

1 Catechism Of The Catholic Church (New York: Doubleday, 1994), p. 320.

2 Ibid., p. 224.

3 Ibid., p. 292.

4 Ibid., p. 502.

5 Ibid., p. 448.

6 Ibid., p. 354.

7 Ibid., pp. 371, 490.

8 Ibid., p. 371.

9 Ibid., pp. 370-372.

10 Ibid., p. 269.

11 Ibid., p. 371.

12 Ibid., p. 370.

13 Ibid., p. 268.

14 Ibid., p. 371.

15 Ibid., p. 356.

16 Ibid., p. 344.

17 Richard Bennett, Are Catholics Christians? (The Berean Beacon, 2011), p. 3.

18 Catechism Of The Catholic Church (New York: Doubleday, 1994, p. 234.

19 Mike Gendron, Preparing Catholics For Eternity, (21st Century Press, Springfield, Mo. 2005) pp. 103-108.



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