

THE PAPACY

For one to claim the position of “The Papacy” as being authoritative and scriptural, they must first show the establishment and authority of the first pope. According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, “The proof that Christ constituted St. Peter head of His Church is found in the two famous Petrine texts, Matthew 16:17-19, and John 21:15-17”. (George 261) Let’s look at these texts and their additional interpretations.

Matthew 16:17-19 (KJV) ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ 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. ¹⁹ 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.

John 21:15-17 (KJV) ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ 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.”

We will begin with the first passage of scripture used for defense of the papacy. According to George, here is the Catholic interpretation of Matthew 16:17-19:

"Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven." The prerogatives here promised are manifestly personal to Peter. His profession of faith was not made as has been sometimes asserted, in the name of the other Apostles. This is evident from the words of Christ. He pronounces on the Apostle, distinguishing him by his name Simon son of John, a peculiar and personal blessing, declaring that his knowledge regarding the Divine Sonship sprang from a special revelation granted to him by the Father (cf. Matthew 11:27). (George 261)

Further, George states:

““And I say to thee: That thou art Peter. . .” He further proceeds to recompense this confession of His Divinity by bestowing upon him a reward proper to himself: Thou art Peter [Cepha, transliterated also Kipha] and upon this rock [Cepha] I will build my Church. The word for Peter and for rock in the original Aramaic is one and the same; this renders it evident that the various attempts to explain the term "rock" as having

reference not to Peter himself but to something else are misinterpretations. It is Peter who is the rock of the Church. The term ecclesia (ekklesia) here employed is the Greek rendering of the Hebrew qahal, the name which denoted the Hebrew nation viewed as God's Church (see THE CHURCH, I). (George 261)

Is their claim accurate? Let's address this closer by reviewing some of the information which was included in the Authority study. Christ asked Peter the question "But whom say ye that I am (Matt 16:15)? Peter responds with what many call the good confession "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God (Matt 16:16). Here is the point, the Jews of the day called him a prophet, but Peter confessed him as the "Son of the living God". The foundation of which his church is built must be the confession that Christ is the Messiah. If you take away that foundation (Christ is the Messiah) the entirety of Christianity would collapse. If Peter was the only one with this authority, why did Jesus also give it to the other apostles in Matt 18:18, where he says "Truly I say to you (the disciples), whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." What had been granted to Peter (Matt 16:18, is now extended to all the apostles (Matt 18:18). Therefore, if Peter was the only successor of Christ with this authority, why is this same authority also granted to the other disciples? Clearly, Christ is the only head of the church! (**Ephesians 5:23 (KJV)** For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.)

George refers to the Aramaic version for its translation. The Catholic Church claims "Kipha" is used in the Aramaic to describe both Peter and rock (this is unsubstantiated). Early Church Fathers (Eusebius) do make mention that Matthew did record a copy of Matthew in Aramaic, yet are we to assume that it contradicts the known Greek versions that we have? Additionally, no original Aramaic manuscripts exist and many scholars have agreed that in the Aramaic translation "Kipha" may not have been used to represent both "Peter and Rock" as claimed by Kirsch, but rather the Aramaic word "Shua" would have been used for rock. We stand by the fact that the Greek translations we have are inspired by the Holy Spirit, accurately translated, and are without error. In the Greek Peter (Petros) is a noun and nominative singular masculine, whereas rock (Petra) is a noun and is dative singular feminine.

Next we will address John 21:15-17 as a passage of scripture used by Catholicism in defense of the scriptural position of the Papacy.

John 21:15-17 (KJV) ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ 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.

George makes the following claim about John 21:15-17:

“The promise made by Christ in Matthew 16:16-19, received its fulfilment after the Resurrection in the scene described in John 21. Here the Lord, when about to leave the earth, places the whole flock — the sheep and the lambs alike — in the charge of the Apostle. The term employed in 21:16, "Be the shepherd [poimaine] of my sheep" indicates that his task is not merely to feed but to rule. It is the same word as is used in Psalm 2:9 (Septuagint): "Thou shalt rule [poimaneis] them with a rod of iron".

The scene stands in striking parallelism with that of Matthew 16. As there the reward was given to Peter after a profession of faith which singled him out from the other eleven, so here Christ demands a similar protestation, but this time of a yet higher virtue: "Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these"? Here, too, as there, He bestows on the Apostle an office which in its highest sense is proper to Himself alone. There Christ had promised to make Peter the foundation-stone of the house of God: here He makes him the shepherd of God's flock to take the place of Himself, the Good Shepherd.” (George 261)

We must ask the questions: Is this interpretation correct? Is it supported by Scripture? In answering those questions lets look first at the verse in question. Jesus was clearly addressing the three denials by Peter with three confessions of his Love for Jesus. There is no emphasis on placing Peter as the head of the church but rather reinforcing his acceptance of Peter who had denied him. Peter was told to be a shepherd of the flock, which we know that he indeed was. The terms for an elder included: Elder or presbyter, Overseer or Bishop, Shepherd or Pastor. It is clear from 1 Peter 5:1-4 that Peter was an elder in the church. Peter was told to be a shepherd over the church, not the Pope, not one to reign in Christ's Absence. There can be only one head over the church and that is Christ. Now, the Catholic church will make the claim that Christ is Head over the church in heaven, but made Peter the head here on earth. Once again this is not seen in this scripture or any others. One does not have to be present to be “the head” or “in charge”. Again Eph 5:23 shows he is the head of the church, and this is not based on his current location.

If Peter was the first Pope and Rome is the rightful city for the Pope to reign, let's ask a few questions. Why was the Jerusalem council in Acts 15:6-29 held in Jerusalem and not in Rome? If Peter was the first Pope, why was he not the prominent, or the only speaker? We notice that in fact James was the one who ultimately gave his judgment on the matter in **Acts 15:19 (KJV)** “Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God.” Why was there a need any more for apostles or elders in the church if Peter was already Pope? Acts 15:23 shows there were both Apostles and elders in the church

at this time! This is the scriptural organization as defined by God and proven by the Scriptures. Why does this council not only indicate Peter's prominence, but further allow Him to speak "ex-cathedra" on the matter at hand? The Answer is clear, Peter did not then, nor does any man now hold a Scriptural position of "Pope".

Next, now having made the claim of the office of Papacy, which we have disproven, they must now transfer that position to men of today. Notice, that is exactly what the Catholic Encyclopedia tries to do.

"We have shown in the last section that Christ conferred upon St. Peter the office of chief pastor, and that the permanence of that office is essential to the very being of the Church. It must now be established that it belongs of right to the Roman See. The proof will fall into two parts: that St. Peter was Bishop of Rome, and that those who succeed him in that see succeed him also in the supreme headship. (George 262)

George then makes this claim "It is no longer denied by any writer of weight that St. Peter visited Rome and suffered martyrdom there (Harnack, "Chronol.", I, 244, n. 2). (George 262). I would like to address this claim first. Catholics Assert Peter was in Rome around 43-68 A.D and at this time was established as the first pope. However, Paul went to see Peter in Jerusalem not Rome, and Peter was placed in Prison in 44 A.D. Which is when the Catholic Church places him in Rome. Additionally, Paul listed 27 names of prominence in the book of Romans and Peter was not among these names. Paul wrote 4 additional letters, of which none of his writings name Peter as being present. And, near the end of Pauls life in 2 Tim 4:11 he states "only Luke is with me". Where was Peter if he was in Rome and why was he not with the great evangelist Paul?

Furthermore most early bishops or elders of the Church were against the idea of a supreme head of the church. "Gregory the Great", who was a Bishop (elder) in Rome , and is Called "Pope Gregory I" (590-604 A.D) by the Catholic church stated in His own words in his recorded letters that no elder of the church in Rome would accept that title.

"You know it, my brother; hath not the venerable council of Chalcedon conferred the honorary title of universal upon the bishops of this Apostolic See, whereof I am, by God's will the servant? And yet none of us hath permitted this title to be given to him; none has assumed this bold title, lest by assuming a special episcopate, we should seem to refuse it to all brethren. The Lord wishing to recall to a proper humility the yet feeble hearts of his disciples, said to them, "if any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all": whereby we are clearly taught that he who is truly high is he who is most humble in mind. Let us, therefore, beware of being of the number of those who love the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of me, "Rabi,

Rabi”. In fact the Lord said to his disciples, “be ye not called Rabi, for one is you master, and all ye are brethren. Neither be ye called fathers, for ye have but one father.

What then could you answer, beloved brother, in terrible judgment to come, who desire not only to be called father, but Universal Father of the world? Beware then of evil suggestions; fly from the council of offense. It is impossible indeed, but that offenses will come; but for all that woe unto him through whom they come! In consequence of your wicked and vainglorious title, the church is divided and the hearts of the brethren are offended”. (Trice 66-67)

Although the Catholic church claims he was Pope, it is clear neither he nor any Bishop would accept that title, nor the title of “Father”. We have now shown that not only does the Bible not teach the position of a Papacy, the “Early Church Fathers” as they are often called did not support or teach the position of a Papacy.

I have only covered a few verses in this study, as well as some “outside historical references” to show that neither the Bible nor History of the early Church Fathers supported the man-made office of the Papacy. The need for additional verses or documents to demonstrate this would be futile, as the limited evidence presented in this study has already satisfactorily done its job.

Review Questions:

Question 1) Was the rock “Peter” or his “confession”? Why?

Question 2) Did the other apostles receive the same authority as was given to Peter?

Question 3) Does the Aramaic language support their argument?

Question 4) Who does the Bible say is the Head of the church ? Which verse supports this?

Question 5) When Jesus told Peter to “feed His sheep” did this refer to the Papacy?

Question 6) Does the council in Acts 15:6-29 defend or deny the case for the Papacy?

Question 7) Does the Bible ever place Peter in Rome? If so, what verse?

Question 8) Does the man the Catholic Church calls “Pope Gregory I” support the claims made by the Catholic Church about him or any of the “so-called” Popes?

Works Cited

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