

Was the Church built on Pope Peter?

1. In 1983, Pope John Paul II made an eight-day, eight-nation tour of Central America. The Pope stressed four major themes throughout the trip, the second of which was: *“insistence on loyalty and adherence to the holy mother church, unity, and submission to the hierarchy and to himself as successor of Peter and vicar (an earthly representative) of Christ...”*

He also said, in Guatemala, that *“faith must extend to the church (Roman Catholic Church). The church Christ builds upon the rock of Peter, of whom I am the humble successor...and which has received power to forgive sins.”*

His address was marked with banners saying: *“Thou art Peter,” “Where Peter is, there is Christ — where the Pope is there is Christ.”*

— CHRISTIANITY TODAY, APRIL 8, 1983

A. It must be noted that the Pope used such words as *“loyalty,” “adherence” and “submission”* in reference to the Roman Catholic Church (referred to as *“The Holy Mother Church”* or the *“Church of the Virgin Mary”*) — not Christ’s Church, or the Church of Christ! And, when the Pope insisted on *“loyalty, adherence and submission to the hierarchy,”* he was referring to the Vatican, which is composed of the bishops, led by the Pope, who is the *“successor of Peter and vicar (earthly representative) of Christ.”*
NOTHING WAS SAID ABOUT BEING LOYAL TO, ADHERING TO, OR
SUBMITTING TO JESUS CHRIST, AND HIS NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES!

(1) **John 14:6:** *“Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me’.”*

(2) **II Timothy 3:16:** *“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.”*

(3) **II Timothy 2:15:** *“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed but who correctly handles the Word of Truth (New Testament Scriptures).”*

B. Instead, the Pope says we must extend our faith to the Roman Catholic Church, which is built upon *“the rock of Peter,”* of whom the Pope is the *“successor,”* which now enables him to *“forgive sins.”* Why do Catholics ask the priest to forgive them (*“Father, forgive me for I have sinned”*)? Why are they not asking God through Jesus Christ for forgiveness?

(1) **After Jesus resurrected and was about to go back into Heaven, in John 20:23, Jesus indeed told His Apostles:** *“If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”*

(2) **But, as the Apostle John said in I John 2:12:** *“...your sins have been forgiven on account of His (Jesus Christ) name (not a priest).”*

(3) As a matter of fact, Peter told “*God’s elect*” (Christians) in ***I Peter 2:4-9***, that they were “*a holy priesthood,*” and “*a chosen people, a royal priesthood.*”

(a) Even the Apostle John told Christians in ***Revelation 1:6***: “*and has made us (Christians) to be a kingdom and priests to serve His (Christ) God and Father.*”

(4) Christians no longer need to confess their sins to a priest, ***James 5:16*** says: “*Therefore, confess your sins to each other...*”

(5) **And, Peter (the first Pope?) told the first Church in Acts 4:12**: “*Salvation is found in no one else; for there is no other name (including the priest who wants you to call him “Father”— which Jesus forbade in Matthew 23:9) under Heaven given to men by which we must be saved (than Jesus Christ).*”

2. So, where does the Roman Catholic Church get the idea that Peter was the successor of Christ? That Peter became the sole ruler of the Church? That Peter was given the authority to forgive sins in his own name? And that he was the first Pope, and handed down this authority and power to all the Popes who have succeeded him?

A. Matthew 16:15-18: “(15) ‘*But what about you?*’ Jesus asked. ‘*Who do you say that I am?*’ (16) Simon Peter answered, ‘***You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.***’ (17) Jesus replied, ‘*Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by My Father in Heaven. (18) And I tell you that you are Peter (petros), and on this rock (petra) I will build My Church.*”

(1) The Catholic Church claims that since “*Peter*” is translated “*rock,*” in the Greek, Jesus was promising to build His Church on Peter, making him the foundation of Christ’s Church (or the first Pope). However, ***I Corinthians 3:11*** says: “*For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.*”

(2) **Answer?** The Greeks had two different words for “*rock;*” and Jesus uses both of them here in ***Matthew 16:18!*** He calls Peter “*Petros,*” which means a stone that can be moved. Then He tells Peter that on this “*rock*” (“*petra:*” a rock that cannot be moved), He would build His Church. And, as ***I Corinthians 10:4*** makes very clear: “*...and the rock (petra) was Christ.*”

(3) In other words, Jesus told Peter that he was a moveable stone (petros), but He would build His Church on the confession (petra, immovable rock) that God revealed to Peter in ***Matthew 16:16***: “*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.*”

3. Then Jesus continues to say in *Matthew 16:18*: “...and the gates of Hades will not overcome it (His Church).” It must be pointed out that the King James Version translates “hades” as “hell.” This seems to imply that Hell will never overcome the Lord’s Church. But, in the original Greek, the word here is “hades,” and not “hell.”

A. The Bible has three different words that the KJV translates “hell:”

(1) Hades — the unseen abode of the dead; death; the grave.

(2) Tartarus — the intermediate state of punishment to await Judgment.

(3) Gehenna — the place of eternal punishment

(4) The Roman Catholic Church adds Purgatory — a temporary holding place for the wicked where they will stay until they have paid for their sins, and then allowed to go on to Heaven. PURGATORY IS NOT IN THE BIBLE ANYWHERE!

(5) SEE “THE THREE HELLS OF THE BIBLE”

B. Jesus didn’t say here that “hell” or Satan could never *overcome* one of His churches. Satan took over many of the early churches and controls most of the churches of today. Jesus said here in *Matthew 16:18* that *Hades*, or *death*, or the *place of the dead*, or the *grave*, could not overcome **His Church (meaning His people, or Christians)**.

(1) Death can no longer overcome a Christian. Individual Christians are the Church according to *I Corinthians 3:16,17*, and *Ephesians 2:19-22*, and the same Holy Spirit that makes Christian people His Church, guarantees those Christians a place in Heaven according to *II Corinthians 5:1-5*, when their earthly body dies, and is transformed into a “*spiritual*” or “*heavenly body*,” according to *I Corinthians 15:1-54*, that no longer goes to Hades, but instead, according to *II Corinthians 5:8*: “*home with the Lord*.”

(2) According to *Acts 2:31*, Jesus went to Hades (not Hell) when He died. As He told the thief on the cross in *Luke 23:43*, He went to the Paradise side of Hades (or the place of the dead), NOT THE FIRE OF HELL SIDE (as He explained in *Luke 16:19-26*). According to *I Peter 3:18*, and *4:6*, He went there so that “*the Gospel was preached even to those who are now dead*.”

(3) After Jesus conquered death (three days later) when He rose from the dead, He explained in *Revelation 1:18*: “*I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades (place of the dead)*.”

(a) He then took the Paradise side of Hades to Heaven according to *Ephesians 4:8,9, and II Corinthians 12:2-4.*

C. SEE “WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DIE?”

4. Matthew 16:19 then tells us that Jesus promised Peter: “*I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in Heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in Heaven.*”

A. To the Jews, the word “*bind*” meant to “*forbid something.*” The word “*loose*” meant to “*allow something.*” The Apostles were going to be the only “*keys*” to running the Lord’s Church (telling the first Christians what Christ would have them do, and not do in order to get into the *Kingdom of Heaven*).

(1) According to *Acts 2*, Peter (and the other Apostles) began unlocking the “*Kingdom of Heaven*” on the Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit spoke through them, telling the first 3,000 Christians that would make up the Lord’s first Church what they must “*bind*” (repent of, or were “*forbidden*” to do as Christians), and what was “*loosed*” for them (or, what they were “*allowed*” to do as Christians)

B. Does this mean Peter was infallible (whatever he said was right was right, and whatever he said was wrong was wrong)? Was he given complete power (as the first Pope) to make up the rules or doctrine (later to become the New Testament) governing the Lord’s Church? Does Peter alone hold the “*keys*” to Heaven, and he alone the power to forgive, and save those who would like to become part of the Kingdom of Heaven?

(1) As soon as Jesus finished speaking to Peter in *Matthew 16:16-20* (supposedly building His Church on Peter, giving him the keys to Heaven, and the infallible power to “*forbid*” or “*allow*” whatever he thought best for the Church), *Matthew 16:21* goes on to say: “*...Jesus began to explain to His disciples (Apostles) that...He must be killed...(22) Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke (“bind” or “forbid”) Him. ‘Perish the thought Lord!’ he said (as the new infallible Pope). ‘This shall never happen to you’ (Remember, Peter is now the new infallible Pope, whom Jesus, Himself, just promised to build His Church upon, turned over the keys to him, and the power to “bind” or “forbid” whomever or whatever he wanted)! So, in response to the new infallible Pope’s command, verse 23 continues: “Jesus turned and said to (Pope) Peter, ‘Out of My sight, Satan!’ You are a stumbling block to Me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men!’”*

(a) Remember, according to *Matthew 26:69-75*, Peter later denies three times that he ever even knew Jesus!

(b) Furthermore, long after Jesus supposedly appointed Peter as the infallible Pope of His Church, the Apostle Paul tells of an unusual encounter with (Pope) Peter in *Galatians 2:11-14*: “When Peter came to Antioch, **I opposed him to his face, because he was wrong** (can the Pope be wrong?). *Before certain men came from James* (Jesus’ earthly brother who was at this time leading the Church in Jerusalem), *he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group* (Jews). *The other Jews joined him in his **hypocrisy** so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas* (Paul’s missionary partner) *was **led astray***. *When I saw that they were **not acting in line with the truth of the Gospel...***” (Does this sound like an infallible Pope who decided what the truth of the Gospel or New Testament was? Sounds like he was “binding” the Jews from associating with Christian Gentiles; just like he tried to “bind” Jesus from dying on the cross!)

(c) It is also note-worthy to point out that here in *Galatians 2:9*, Paul said that “James, Peter and John” were the “pillars” of the Church (not just Peter).

(2) When Jesus told Peter (and the other Apostles) that whatever they “bound” and “loosed” on earth would be “bound” and “loosed” in Heaven, He used the following two Greek words: *dedemenon* (“having been bound”), and *lelumenon* (“having been loosed”).

(a) Jesus, therefore, literally told Peter in *Matthew 18:19*: “whatever you bind on the earth shall be **having been bound** in the heavens, and whatever you loose on the earth shall be **having been loosed** in the heavens.”

(3) For as Peter, himself, later declares in his old age in *II Peter 1:21*: “*prophecy never had its origin in the will of man (like Peter), but men (like Peter and the other Apostles) spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*”

C. It must be also noted that Jesus gave all the Apostles this power to “bind” and “loose” according to *Matthew 18:1,18*: “(1) At that time the Disciples came to Jesus...(18) ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in Heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in Heaven.’”

(1) Remember, on the Day of Pentecost, *Acts 2:4* says: “**All of them** (not just Peter) *were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues (languages) as the Spirit enabled them.*”

(2) In other words, as Jesus explained to His Apostles in *John 16:13*: “But when He, the Spirit of Truth, comes, He will guide you (Apostles) into all Truth.”

(3) So, on the Day of Pentecost, it was not just Peter and the Apostles making up rules for the first 3,000 Christians who made up the Lord’s Church (binding and loosing as they saw fit). According to *Acts 2:4*, all the Apostles were “filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak.” The Holy Spirit had already “bound” and “loosed” in Heaven what the Church should and should not do; and was now speaking through Peter and the Apostles to tell the Church what was “bound” (things they could no longer do as Christians) and “loosed” (things they were should do as Christians).

(4) This is why the Apostle Paul explained that Peter and the other Apostles only wrote what the Holy Spirit told them, they did not make up the rules as they thought best. *Ephesians 3:3-5* says: “ the mystery made know to me (Apostle Paul) by revelation (Holy Spirit speaking to him), as I have already written briefly...as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God’s holy Apostles”

D. The Roman Catholic Church teaches the doctrine of Apostolic Succession — that is, the continuous transmission of ministry from the time of Jesus until today. This doctrine is found as early as the **Epistle to the Corinthians (about AD 96 after the last original Apostle John died)**, traditionally attributed to **Pope Clement I**. The claim is that **the Pope is the successor of Saint Peter**, who was chosen by Jesus as head of His Church (*Matthew 16:16-18*).

(1) Apostolic Succession is the belief that the Roman Catholic Church has the right and duty to teach Christian doctrine and morals authoritatively and that the substantial correctness of this teaching is guaranteed by the continued presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church. **Catholic theology locates this authority in the bishops, the Pope, and the ecumenical councils (convocations of all the bishops of the world); and acknowledges this teaching as infallible.**

(2) In other words, the Roman Catholic Church (through the Pope) can continue writing or changing Scriptures even after the last living Apostle (John) died. Even though that Apostle warned (before he died) in the last book and page of your New Testament in *Revelation 22:18,19*: “I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: **If anyone (including the Pope) adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone (including the Pope) takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the Tree of Life and in the Holy City, which are described in this book!**”

(3) It is interesting that the Apostle Paul (who wrote to the Corinthians years before Pope Clement I did), warned those who would succeed him (other Popes?) in *Galatians 1:6-8*: “I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting

*the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel — which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the Gospel of Christ. **But even if we (Apostles or Popes?) or an angel from Heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we (original Apostles) preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!***”

(4) It is also interesting to note that the Apostle Paul told the Corinthians in ***I Corinthians 1:12***, that he had been informed that **there was already a group in Corinth that was following Peter**, and others who were following himself, instead of Christ (the beginnings of the Catholic Church?).

(a) **And then in his second letter to them, in *II Corinthians 11:12,13*, Paul warned:** “*And I will keep on doing what I am doing in order to cut the ground from under those who want an opportunity to be considered equal with us (Apostolic succession?)...(13) For such men are false apostles (like Pope Clement I who wrote to them years after Paul died, just after the last Apostle John died, claiming to be the successor to Peter?), deceitful workmen, masquerading as Apostles (or Popes?) of Christ!*”

(5) As Paul said in ***Galatians 2:8***: Peter was “*an Apostle (Pope?) To the Jews,*” and he (Paul) was “*an Apostle (Pope?) to the Gentiles.*”

(6) So, after Peter and Paul died, and years later the last living Apostle died; the Jewish and Gentile Christians merged under the Apostle’s so-called successor — Pope Clement I — sometime after AD 96, to form the Roman Catholic Church?

E. The Catholic Church emerged out of a mix of Jewish and Gentile Christians.

This is why when Paul visited the original Church in Jerusalem he was told in ***Acts 21:20***: “*You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed, and all of them are zealous for the Law (Old Testament).*”

(1) Jews had a High Priest, who dressed in sacred attire. The Catholics have a Pope who dresses very similarly.

(2) Jews had priests, the Catholics have priests (both dress similarly).

(3) Jews had a supreme court of 70 members called the Sanhedrin, comprised of Pharisees. The Catholics have a supreme court formerly limited to 70 members called the Sacred Congregation of Cardinals, comprised of Bishops (again, they all dressed very similarly).

(4) Jews added their own rules and regulations to the Old Testament that was called the Mishnah. The Catholics added their own rules and regulations to the New Testament called the Canon Law.

(a) Remember Jesus' warning in **Matthew 15:9**: "*They worship Me in vain: their teachings are but rules made by men.*"

5. Other interesting questions:

A. If the first Pope was Peter, and according to **Matthew 8:14 and I Corinthians 9:5**, he was married; why do the Catholics forbid the Pope to marry now?

(1) **I Timothy 4:1-3**: "*The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods.*"

B. Why is the Pope referred to as "Holy Father," and the priests as "Father," when Jesus clearly said in **Matthew 23:9**: "**And do not call anyone on earth 'Father,' for you have one Father, and He is in Heaven.**"

C. Why is the Roman Catholic Church sometimes referred to as "The Holy Mother Church," or "The Church of the Virgin Mary," instead of the "Church of Jesus Christ"?

(1) Pope John Paul II made an appeal for Catholics to be devoted to the Virgin Mary, and often prayed through her instead of Christ. Yet, according to **Matthew 12:46-50**, when Jesus was told His mother (Mary) was standing outside waiting to speak to Him, Jesus replied: "*Who is my mother?*" Then "*pointing to His disciples, He said, 'Here are my mother...For whoever does the will of My Father in Heaven is My mother.'*"

(2) **I Timothy 2:5** says: "*For there is one God and one mediator (not two) between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (not Mary, or any saint).*"

(3) As Jesus told His disciples in **John 16:24**: "*...My Father will give you whatever you ask in My name (not Mary, or any saint)...*"

(4) **Acts 4:10-12**: "*It is by the name of Jesus Christ...Salvation if found in no one else (including Mary); for there is no other name under Heaven given to men by which we must be saved.*"

6. On the Day of Pentecost, Peter (the first Pope?) using his "keys of the Kingdom of Heaven," told the first 3,000 Christians who made up Christ's original Church exactly what they must do in order to become Christians and be saved, thereby "binding" them to

the following command in Acts 2:37,38: “When the people heard this (that they killed the Son of God), they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other Apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’ Peter replied: ‘Repent and be **baptized**, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”

A. The word for “*baptized*” that Peter used was the Greek word “*baptizo*,” which translates “*to dip, or immerse.*”

(1) Peter could have used the Greek word “*rantizo*” (to sprinkle), or “*cheo*” (to pour), or “*hundriano*” (to immerse, sprinkle, or pour). But he (and all the other Apostles) only used the word “*baptizo*” (immerse) when referring to baptism. In fact, “*baptizo*” (immerse) is the only word used for baptism in the entire New Testament!

(2) *Ephesians 4:5* says there is only “...*one Lord, one faith, one baptism...*” (and the word is “*baptizo*” — to immerse)!

B. Yet, In 753 AD (after all Christians — including Catholics — had been obeying Peter’s command to be baptized by immersion for almost 700 years), one of the so-called successors to Peter, **Pope Stephen II**, changed Peter’s command, and told the monks of Cressy in Brittany that they could **pour water on the heads** of infants as a substitution for immersion.

C. Then, in 1311 AD (about 550 years later), the Roman Catholic Church held an Ecumenical Council (including the Pope, and Cardinal Bishops) in Revenna, and **legalized sprinkling as a substitution for immersion**. In other words, they changed the “*binding*” command of their first Pope, Peter, who was given the “*keys of the Kingdom of Heaven!*”

(1) If Peter was the first Pope, and possessed the “*keys of the Kingdom of Heaven,*” why would his successors change the first “*binding*” command of this first infallible Pope upon whom they say the Church was built?

D. SEE “DID JESUS COMMAND ME TO BE BAPTIZED IN WATER?”