

UPON THIS ROCK!

Category : **TEACHINGS IN ENGLISH**

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Upon This Rock Â©

“Study and be eager and do your utmost to present yourself to God approved (tested by trial), a workman who has no cause to be ashamed, correctly analyzing and accurately dividing [rightly handling and skillfully teaching] the Word of Truth.” 2 Timothy 2:15

“I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.” 2 Timothy 3:1-4

Introduction

I pray from my heart, that your love for Jesus Christ and His Word will drive you to read this letter and prayerfully consider its content in light of The Holy Bible “The Eternal unchangeable Word of God.

This letter is written with love without having the truth that is holy to God, compromised!

May the Truth and Love of God found in this letter bless you and challenge you to walk a closer walk with the Jesus of The Bible and drive you to love His Word more than ever!

“we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head-Christ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.” Ephesians 4:14-16, NKJV.

1. Hungry for The Truth!

I just want to start by letting you dear reader that this letter is especially written for those who have a hunger and a genuine desire to please God and walk according to His written inspired Book “The Bible.

If you are a person who loves Truth, than you will appreciate this letter more than many others.

I am one who has come from a religious background, namely Roman Catholic. I still thank God for what I had been taught in my childhood, that is, raised as a Roman Catholic. God has transformed

my life with His Love and Truth in a dramatic way, and it is with this sincere Love and Truth that I pray that you dear reader will also be transformed. His truth is first and foremost a person, "Jesus Christ" the Son of the Living God and second to that, The Truth is "His Word", and these two are one and the same and in many ways inseparable.

"Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." John 14:6, NKJV.

Jesus said, "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth." John 17:17-18, NKJV.

As I grew up and started to think independently from the status quo, I gave myself to study, and in particular the religion in which I grew up all through my childhood and youth. As I began to study I came up against some very challenging findings, some of which at first challenged my faith greatly though eventually God used them to re-shape and change the course of the rest of my life!

I truly believe that God loves every one and He really loves you too, dear reader. His desire is to have His love experienced by all in the same way, but the reality is far from that. God loves even those who don't love Him and He loves those who don't know Him. He has done everything for humanity to get to know Him, and be saved from an eternity separated from Him in Hell, by sending prophets time after time, so that people will turn back to God and His word, and finally He even sent His one and only Son (Luke 20: 9-18) to save us from Sin, Satan and Hell.

I am persuaded that God's love is so great and awesome, otherwise how could He send into the world to die for our sins, His only beloved Son, Jesus?! Certainly God loves Roman Catholics and I'm sure that there are many Roman Catholics who have had a genuine Born Again experience and have begun a relationship with Christ Jesus. I know that these people will one day be in heaven along side many other Christians of various denominations like Evangelicals, Pentecostals, Protestants, Baptists, Orthodox, Lutherans, Anglican, Presbyterians, Methodists, Charismatics, and Protestants etc!

My personal conviction, as a man of God and as one who has been touched by the divine love of Christ, is that God is merciful and patient with all of us. I also believe that God has His people in every Christian denomination, including Roman Catholicism.

I also believe that denominational walls hurt the very loving heart of our Lord Jesus and beloved Heavenly Father. God has only one church and it is not distinctive by location, power, wealth, fame, papacy or any particular denominational name. (Please see 1 Corinthians 1: 10-15; 3: 1-5).

The true Church of Christ is not built with stone. It is not distinctive by location or worldly goods and riches. It is built with 'love and truth' (see 1 Peter 2:1-10, Ephesians 4: 14-16) and certainly above all it is distinctive by the God kind of Love that dwells in the hearts of all those who have put their genuine trust in Christ as Lord and Savior, through The Holy Spirit (See Romans 5:5). It is a Spiritual Church and It is a Supernatural Church! It is a church which is being supernaturally built by the Holy Spirit of God and it is built on Jesus Christ Himself "The Son of The Living God!

I strongly believe that every one who has a genuine relationship with the person of The Lord Jesus Christ is part of that Church and Family!

"Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the

saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.•Ephesians 2:19-22, NKJV.

2. Making history or HIS-Story!

In this letter I wish to discuss a question that split Christendom over 1000 years after Christ and about 1000 years ago. To be exact this issue brought the first major split in the Christian world in the year 1054.

Not many Roman Catholics are told that Roman Catholicism started around 1000 after Christ. For the first thousand years, the Church was essentially one. By this I mean, that it operated as a church with one and the same identity, mainly just Christian. It had five historic Patriarchal centres. Each centre was ruled by a bishop. These centers were Jerusalem, Antioch, Rome, Alexandria, and Constantinople- who formed a cohesive whole and were in full communion with each other. There were occasional heretical or schismatic groups going their own way, to be sure; but the Church was unified until the 11th century. Then, in events culminating in A.D.1054, the Roman Patriarch pulled away from the other four, pursuing his long-developed unscriptural claim of universal headship; that of Papal authority over all the Church.

When one takes a serious look at this undeniable historic event, we can conclude that this in actual fact is the first time in history that we see a church movement pulling away from the other Patriarchs, and protesting to form its own independent church government so to speak!

Pope or Bishop?

I think one needs to have a clear understanding that the word Bishop and Pope are not the same. Bishop is a Biblical term while Pope is not.

Well, you may ask, "What's the big deal?" Well truthfully speaking the word Pope is neither found in text or in concept. Since Pope is a word only applicable to Roman Catholic doctrine, its meaning signifies someone with total rule and headship over the (Universal) Catholic Church. He is not head over the other Christian Churches and Christian denominations.

Just a side note: Please know that there are other Catholics who do not consider themselves Roman Catholics. The word Catholic simply means Universal. There are Orthodox Catholics, Coptic Catholics, and Lutheran Catholics etc! Only Roman Catholics and Coptic Catholics come under the rule of a pope, however each having their own pope.

(The official title for the Coptic Orthodox Pope of Alexandria is Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of All Africa on the Holy See of St. Mark).

According to E. W. Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, BISHOP means OVERSEER or someone who oversees a group of people. You can say that a Bishop is someone who is responsible for a church group. His responsibilities are clearly described in 1st and 2nd Timothy and 1st and 2nd Thessalonians and Titus as well as in some places in the book of Acts and the Epistle of the Apostle Peter. 1st and 2nd Timothy as well as 1st and 2nd Thessalonians

are called the pastoral letters. A Bishop is someone who ONLY has oversight and authority over a particular region of a particular church or churches – which scripturally speaking, he would generally have had direct involvement in building those communities. In other words, a bishop's job is leading people to the knowledge of Christ and training them to be disciplined; i.e. DISCIPLES and raises them to be leaders for Christ. In essence, they are to teach the Word of God (not their own opinion or church tradition, or some "new revelation" that would go against the teachings of Christ) and do the work of an Evangelist and of a Pastor at once. In essence this is the work of Jesus Christ duplicated! (See 1 Peter 2:25).

In another sense and in some Christian circles, the word for Bishop can be replaced by Apostle, which in modern days we call a 'missionary'. (Just a side note: Not every missionary is an Apostle, and definitely not every one who goes on a mission trip is an Apostle. The difference is: a missionary sees the need and goes. An Apostle only goes if sent by God).

The corresponding verb is 'episkopeo', which, in reference to the work of an overseer, is found in 1 Peter 5:2, RV, "exercising the oversight," for KJV "taking the oversight" (From Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright (c) 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers). So, I repeat, Bishop is a Biblical term both in text and concept but "pope" is not! In actuality, pope comes from the word "papa" which means "Father" and Jesus makes it abundantly clear, with all due respect to our Catholic friends, that we are not to call anyone on this earth, when speaking in a spiritual/religious sense, "Father" or even worst "Most Holy Father". Why? Well, let us allow Jesus Himself to answer that. "You must call no one on earth your father, since you have only one Father, and he is in heaven." Matthew 23:9 (NAB). (Jesus addresses His Father as "Holy Father" in John 17:11).

So, now we turn back to the original question:

3. Was Peter the first Pope?

Was he ever a pope at all?

Without any doubt this question is probably the most important one to answer when we speak about the claims of the Roman Catholic Church. It is easy to see why, since a lot of the doctrine and practice of the Roman Catholic Church rests in the belief that the Pope speaks for Christ, (this is not to say that he cannot; anyone can speak for Christ – anyone who chooses to, or rather, everyone who God calls to speak for Him) (see 2 Corinthians 5:18-20). However this can become serious for a sincere seeker, because to disobey the Pope is made to be viewed as if to disobey Christ or God Himself. If, on the other hand, Peter was not the first Pope or had never been a Pope, then Christians could make the legitimate claim that the Pope has usurped (that is "use something without the right to do so") the authority of Christ and has claimed more authority that was given him.

Two important points that one has to discuss are:

1: Was Peter Biblically and historically ever made Pope, and

2: If he was the first pope, was his office intended to be perpetuated and continue throughout church history?

Of course, to simply say that Peter was the leader of the early Christians does not automatically and

necessarily imply that there would be a leader for each successive age with the same authority of Peter. In the Gospels we see three other prominent leaders from the 12 Apostles who often spoke out. Peter was one of the ones close to Jesus. The other two would be James and John. (See Matthew 17:1, Mark 5:37, Mark 13:3, Luke 8:51; 9:28 etc.)

â€¢ Matthew 17:1-2, **After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. 2 There he was transfigured before them.**â€•NIV

â€¢ Mark 5:37-38, **And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James.**â€•NKJV

â€¢ Mark 13:3-4, **Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, [b]Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately, tell us, when will these things be?**â€• [b]NKJV

â€¢ Luke 8:51, **When he arrived at the house of Jairus, he did not let anyone go in with him except Peter, John and James, and the child's father and mother.**â€•NIV

â€¢ Luke 9:28-29, **About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray.**â€•NIV

If we assume that Jesus ever made Peter to be â€˜the Popeâ€™™ the head of all Christians then He might have intended to continue the role throughout church history.

When one diligently and intelligently studies scripture (without any religious bias) and history alongside archaeology, we discover that the office of a pope was never intended to be, nor was it ever established by Jesus. If this was so, then that would lead us to believe that the other claim of the continuity of that same office should continue, would automatically fail.

That was a very hard and humiliating thing for one faithful Roman Catholic man like me to discover back around the year of 1995. After all, if Peter was not the Pope, then there is no legitimate office of the papacy, and all my religious pride that I had for being a Roman Catholic all my life, faded away in an instant. (ouch!!)

So, what we see in the Holy Scriptures is that Peter was one of the 12 Apostles of Jesus Christ and Jesus called him along with the other eleven (11) to become a â€˜fisher of menâ€™™ catch fish for The Lord, so that they may be saved and redeemed for Him, through Him and by Him. (Matthew 4: 18-20).

4. Upon this Rock!

â€˜Line upon lineâ€™ precept upon preceptâ€•
Isaiah 28: 10-13.

Let us carefully take a diligent and Biblically mature look at the following passage of Scripture. It is from here that many Catholics I meet miss-quote that famous scripture, which roughly one out of 10 Roman Catholic people I have talked to quote it incorrectly. This is what I usually ask many well-meaning Roman Catholics, â€˜What did Jesus tell Peter that makes you believe that He was the Rock upon which Jesus was going to build the Church?â€•

They normally are quick and eager to answer me, saying what they have been led to believe, which unfortunately is incorrect. It is here that I often realize that once again we have someone who doesn't read their Bible and for many years they have believed something "blindly" without ever having checked what the actual text really says.

Let me explain. Almost without fail, the majority of sincere Roman Catholics tell me that Jesus told Peter, "You are Peter and upon you I will build my church". Okay dear reader, hold it there. Have you noticed anything yet? You can go ahead and use this example and ask any Roman Catholic you meet and see if you will not get the same reply; if not 100% of the time, then close! (That alone should alert one immediately that in the Roman Catholic Church, the vast majority never read their Bible and often lack the encouragement to do so.)

What is the primary source that the Roman Catholic Church points to in demonstrating that Peter was made Pope? They use Jesus' statement in Matthew 16. Here is the entire passage of scripture so that nothing is quoted out of context!

Matthew 16: 13-20 says this, "When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say the Son of Man is?' They replied, 'Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets. But what about you?' he asked. 'Who do you say I am?' Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Jesus replied, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. 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.'" Then he warned his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.

Now any serious students of the Bible have to know three or four very basic rules when it comes to understanding and interpreting the Bible.

No 1. Find out who is talking?

This means, basically, find out if it is Jesus, Moses, Elijah, Saint Peter, Saint Paul etc...

- a. Check also, as an important notification, if it is in the Old or New Testament!
- b. Is it addressed under the Law of Moses or the Law of Christ and Love? (Ref: (Read Galatians and Romans especially) (Romans 13:8-10 and Romans 8:2).

No 2. Find out to whom is it addressed?

- a. Is it addressed to the Jewish people (Jews), to the World, known also as the heathens or Greeks in the Bible or is it addressed to the Church of God "Christians-all those who have put their faith in the Messiah and Saviour, Jesus, Son of God!

"Never be a cause of offence, either to Jews or to Greeks or to the Church of God" (NAB) 1 Corinthians 10:31-33.

This scripture shows clearly that in the Bible there are three distinct people groups addressed. Some times they are addressed two at a time, e.g.: Jews and Christians or Jews and the World (Greeks)

etc...

NB. If either a Jew or a gentile (Greek or heathen) receives Jesus Christ, he or she is no longer in the original category. For example after I gave my life to Jesus I became a part of the Church of God which I repeat, is composed of all those who have put their trust in the Lord Jesus!

No 3. Find out what is the subject about?

a. e.g: When Jesus says, "I am the gate" in John 10, the subject is not the gate, it is Jesus Himself!

b. When Jesus asked, 'who did people say that I am?' in Matthew 16, the answer that came through Peter by revelation given by The Father had nothing to do with Peter. The subject was still about, Who was Jesus?

Now let us look very close to this scripture:

“When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” So;

A. The subject here is a question about who was Jesus? It is not about who is Peter?

B. The question is asked by Jesus!

They replied, 'They', is referring to the disciples, who were all Jews at this point. "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets. (Only Jews were familiar with the names of these prophets mentioned here). But Jesus asked them, “What about you? Who do you say I (JESUS) am?” (Once again notice carefully that Jesus wanted to know if they actually knew who He really was?) Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." (This is the correct answer to Jesus' question, which, once again, was about who Jesus was. Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.” (Notice here something very interesting, that Jesus just called Simon with a different name which is the same name that He gives to every one, according to the very words of The Apostle Peter.)

See 2 Peter 2:4-8, that we are now living stones all being built into a holy temple by God Himself: “you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ”

“And I tell you that you are Peter, (Now notice very attentively according to * Strong's concordance of Greek words: Petros (pet'-ros); apparently a primary word means a (piece of) rock as a name, or Petrus) and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

(Let's break this one down for clarity):

“**and on this rock**”; Jesus did not tell him, like many have been so wrongly made to believe, that “Upon you Peter’, [little rock-or stone]. But Jesus said, **and upon THIS Rock, which means: petra** (pet'-ra); a (mass of) rock (literally or figuratively). **This is referring to Jesus “ God Himself who has always been the Rock!**

Therefore the whole sentence in detail would read something like this:

“And I tell you that you are Peter, (pet'-ros) a (piece of) rock, a little stone, that comes out of Me-Jesus The True Rock, and on “THIS Rock”™, (pet'-ra); a (mass of) rock, The Corner Stone (Ephesians 2:20); the Foundation Stone (1 Corinthians 3:11); the Boulder, which is Myself (2 Samuel 22:47), The Spiritual Rock (1 Corinthians 10:4); The Eternal Rock (Deuteronomy 32:15/33:27), The Only ONE Rock there is (Psalm 18:31/ Isaiah 44:8), I “ Jesus “ will build My (own) Church”•

(See Genesis 49:24, Exodus 33:22, Deuteronomy 32:31, Deuteronomy 32:4, Deuteronomy 32:18, 2 Sam 22:47, Psalm 18:2, Psalm 18:31, Psalm 18:46, Ps 18:46, Ps 19:14, Isaiah 26:4, Isaiah 44:8, 1 Corinthians 10:1-5 etc..)

This is what some times the scriptures calls, The Corner Stone, or the Foundation Stone that the whole building is built upon“one stone at a time! It is the large stone or as it is sometimes called, the Boulder. It is of the same material of the other small stones and vice versa, with the difference that it is the larger stone and it can hold a whole structure on it! And that my friend is definitely talking about Jesus not a human being, Peter! (Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary. Copyright (c) 1994, Biblesoft and International Bible Translators, Inc.)

1. I will build My [who’s church? - Jesus' Church. It is not Peter’s church!] "I (Jesus) will build MY church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome IT "-“ He did not say that the gates of Hades will not overcome you, Peter). Take a good look and read the Word of God for yourself. These are famous scriptures, however unless one reads the Bible they remain unknown him/her.

All these scriptures, and more, apply to Jesus, the Eternal God “ The Eternal Rock!

Deuteronomy 32:4, “He is the Rock, His works are perfect, and all His ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is He”•.NIV

Deuteronomy 32:18, “You deserted the Rock, who fathered you; you forgot the God who gave you birth.”•NIV

2 Samuel 22:47, "The LORD lives! Praise be to my Rock! Exalted be God, the Rock, my Saviour!”•NIV

Psalm 18:2, “The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.”•NIV

Psalm 18:31, “For who is God besides the LORD? And who is the Rock except our God?” NIV

Psalm 18:46, “The LORD lives! Praise be to my Rock! Exalted be God my Saviour!”•NIV

Psalm 19:14, “May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.”•NIV

Psalm 21:1, “To you I call, O LORD my Rock; do not turn a deaf ear to me. For if you remain silent, I will be like those who have gone down to the pit.”•NIV

Isaiah 26:4, **“Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD, is the Rock eternal.”**
NIV

Isaiah 44:8, **“Do not tremble, do not be afraid. Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me? No, there is no other Rock; I know not one.”**NIV (I Love this one!)

1 Corinthians 10:1-5, **“For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.”**NIV. BINGO!!!!

As we have just seen in the above, even in the Old Testament, when it is talking about The Rock it is referring to Jesus Himself eternally One with The Father! (See also John 1:1-4, Colossians 1:16-18). I am sure that Peter was not the one being talked about! If as we have seen so far, God alone is the Eternal Rock and there is no other, than it is obvious that Jesus, who is God, is the Only ONE True Eternal Rock!

5. Loosing and Binding!

Another unscriptural claim that Roman Catholic doctrine claims is that of **“loose and binding”**. They claim that Jesus only gave Peter the authority to loose and bind! Ok, let us look at what the Holy Scriptures really tell us.

Matt 16:19-20, **“And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven (Not just one key only, but many), and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Then he warned his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.”**NKJV

The argument made by the Roman Catholic Church is this: Jesus only gave Peter the keys of the kingdom of Heaven! Not so, Jesus gave the same exact and equal authority to bind and loose to everyone of His disciples, to all those who would believe in Him. The word **“Key,”**™ in the Bible, represents 'authority' and in many places in scripture you often read where Jesus has given His disciples and all those who believed in Him and followed Him this same **“authority”**™ which He had while He was on earth. More accurately, He delegated this same 'authority' to all those who are true Christians! See Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:14-20.

The word **“loose”**™ means, (KJV)- break (up), destroy, dissolve, (un-) loose, melt, put off. NT:3089, luo (loo'-o); a primary verb; to "loosen" (literally or figuratively): (Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary. Copyright (c) 1994, Biblesoft and International Bible Translators, Inc.) This same word is mentioned in Matthew 16:18, 18:18, 21 etc!

Two great examples are in (1) Luke 13:15-17, **“The Lord then answered him and said, "Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it? So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound “ think of it--for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?”** NKJV

and

1 John 3:8-9, "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. This word used here says "to destroy" is in actual fact, in the original Greek text, the same word that is used elsewhere in the New Testament "to loosen". Therefore in essence we can say it this way, "The reason the Son of God appeared was to "loosen-people" from the works of the devil."

In actuality that is what we constantly see Jesus do in the Scriptures and commissioning all His followers to do the exact same thing! John 14:12-13, Matthew 9:1-2, Luke 9:1-2 and Luke 10:1-21 etc!

"for this was the Son of God manifested, that he may break up the works of the devil." 1 John 3:8 (Young's Literal Translation).

"The reason the Son of God was made manifest (visible) was to undo (destroy, loosen, and dissolve) the works the devil [has done]." (Amplified Bible).

We also see, the word "to bind" means: "deo" (deh'-o); a primary verb; to bind (in various applications, literally or figuratively): bind, be in bonds, knit, tie, wind. (Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary. Copyright (c) 1994, Biblesoft and International Bible Translators, Inc.) This same word "bind" or "bound" is also found in many places in the Bible like Matthew 13:30; 16:19; 18:18, Mark 5:3, Luke 8:28, Luke 13:16!

Mark 3:27-28, **"But no one can enter the strong man's house and plunder his property unless he first binds the strong man, and then he will plunder his house."** NAS

Matthew 18:18-19, **"Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."** NKJV

Mark 5:2-4, **"And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains, because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him."** NKJV

Luke 4:18, **"The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free."** (New Living Translation) (originally from Isaiah 61)

Luke 4:18, "The Lord's Spirit has come to me, because he has chosen me to tell the good news to the poor. The Lord has sent me to announce freedom for prisoners, to give sight to the blind, to free everyone who suffers." (Contemporary English Version) (Originally taken out of the Old Testament from Isaiah 61)

Luke 4:18, "The Spirit of the Lord [is] upon Me, because He has anointed Me [the Anointed One, the Messiah] to preach the good news (the Gospel) to the poor; He has sent Me to announce release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to send forth as delivered those who are oppressed

[who are downtrodden, bruised, crushed, and broken down by calamity." (Amplified Bible) (Originally from Isaiah 61)

So, practically and scripturally speaking, "to bind and to loose"™ had all to do with setting people loose from the clutches of the enemy the devil and to bind the power of Satan off from poor innocent souls whom God loved and had sent His Son to deliver them through Him!

It would be a wonderful thing to see all Catholic clergy "given the license"™ to cast out demons, heal the sick and loose the power of the devil from off many poor innocent and hopelessly lost people! (Just like we see all the Apostles and Disciples of Jesus Christ in the Bible do!) However as of now, this privilege seems to only be given to just a handful of priests and not all of them! Have you ever wondered why?

6. Was Authority only given to Peter?

The issue with the Roman Catholic argument is this: Jesus gave not only Peter the power to bind and loose but He gave this same power to all His disciples. Look carefully two chapters later. As I stated above, Jesus said the same thing, "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" (Matthew 18:18). Who was Jesus speaking to when He made this statement? Matthew 18:1 reveals He was speaking to all His disciples: At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" From this question Jesus gave a lengthy explanation of the role of leaders and there He repeated what He said to Peter earlier that they can bind and loose, thus this proves that all the disciples had the same power that was given to Peter.

In response to this the Roman Catholic Church argues that the bishops and cardinals represent the other disciples who have the power of 'binding and loosing', so their argument is that bishops and cardinals have "similar" powers of the Pope, for they point to the fact that the Pope is elected by the cardinals and so they give the Pope its powers through election, and so in that sense they have powers to bind and loose. However, if this is so we would argue that Jesus did not only give the disciples "SIMILAR" powers, but He gave the disciples "EQUAL" powers. Not only equal to the apostles™ power but even the same and equal power that Jesus Himself walked in! (John 14:12-13, Luke 10:17-19, Matthew 10:24, etc!)

None of the apostles were to use their authority over the rest of the apostles. In Roman Catholic practice the Pope uses his authority over all the cardinals and bishops.

Look at this scripture and see if the words of Christ were not clear enough with the disciples, "And hearing this (talking about who is going to be the greatest and get to have the place of favour and authority beside Christ), the ten began to feel indignant with James and John. And calling them to Himself, Jesus said to them, "You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them." But it is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." Mark 10:41-45. (NAS)

This argument is not new at all, nor does it originate with Protestants, or Orthodox. It goes back to 2000 years when Jesus chose and appointed His Apostles and Disciples. It is in the Bible, for all to

read and study! The Western Roman Catholic Church split from the Eastern Orthodox Catholic Church over this same issue. (a few hundred years later.) According to the Orthodox Church, the major bishops in their provinces have always shared equal power together, until the Bishop of Rome declared himself the Vicar of Christ and demanded submission from the other Bishops. The four leading Bishops broke away from the Roman Bishop over this heretical issue. So you can see this claim by the Roman Catholic Church is divisive.

One can possibly accept that the Pope claims headship over only the branch of Christianity he serves, (even though it still raises many Biblically unanswered questions) but he claims universal headship of all of Christianity. And more than that, he claims sole mouthpiece to speak infallibly in matters of faith and practice. It is these claims we cannot accept, and there is nothing in Matthew chapters 16 and 18 that gives the Pope the right to make these claims.

7. Church begins in Jerusalem.

Let's look at the historical development of the early church. It is interesting that the Roman Catholic Church claims headquarters in Rome with Peter's chair there when in fact the early church's original headquarters were in Jerusalem with James as the leader and first bishop.

In the book of Acts chapter 15, we have records of an important issue that came up amongst the Apostles and the early church believers. How were they to deal with Gentiles becoming Christians? Paul and Barnabas begin by sharing their wonderful stories of the conversion of Gentiles. After much discussion Peter gets up to offer his opinion that Gentiles should not have to follow the Law of Moses and so he agrees with Paul and Barnabas. But in the end, it is James who has the last word: "When they finished, James spoke up: "Brothers, listen to me" (Acts 15:13). James then explains that Scripture foresaw the Gentiles (that is all the people of the world who were not part of the Jewish race) becoming Christians and so they should not make them follow the Law of Moses.

From this incident we see that the first Church council did not take place in Rome with Peter as the head, but in Jerusalem with James leading the first original church group. Paul confirms that James was the main leader at the time, for he writes, "James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me" (Galatians 3:9). It was the custom in those times and even to a certain extent in our times to place the most important person first on the list. Peter is placed first when it comes to the list of the twelve original apostles; however, James becomes a believer after the resurrection just like Paul did who was originally named Saul. Interestingly in scripture, historical records show that James must have been the leader, and Paul affirms it by placing his name first on the list. The Roman Catholic Church cannot scripturally make a claim that Peter was the first Pope when the scriptural evidence clearly demonstrates that he was not even the chief apostle, although indeed one of the founding apostles.

Not only does the scripture show that Peter was not "a pope" or the chief Apostle, but Paul feels no threat to exercise his right to correct Peter. "When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong" (Galatians 2:11). Wow, could it possibly be, that someone who is, as the Roman Catholic Church claims, to be the first pope, be in error about some wrong doctrine? It doesn't appear any where in scripture that just because Peter said something, it would have to be passed and accepted as "certainly inspired by God."

I believe that would have easily been a great way to sabotage the church of Christ at large had they taken that route! This is especially because one can notice that when the New Testament writers wrote the New Testament, even then, they did not write their writings and inspirations based solely upon their experiences but very often you find both Paul and Peter, quoting the writings of the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms stating, "As it is written!" (See Acts 1:20, 7:42, 13:29-33, Romans 1:17, 2:24, 4:17-23, 9:13-33, 1 Peter 1:16, etc!)

The Apostle speaking here in 2 Peter 1:17-20, "For when He received honour and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased" and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. And so we have the prophetic word (Word of God through the Prophets) made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts." NAS

Wow, what a different "spirit" ran through the leaders of the early church, than what is commonly seen nowadays! It's not the first time that in the first stages of my new found faith in the Risen Lord Jesus Christ back in 1995, while I was still very ignorant of Scripture and in all honesty, searching for truth without bias, I used to ask many questions!

I am sad to say, I'm telling the truth in this, that often when I used to ask some simple and sometimes thought provoking question to a priest I was often greeted with a subtle arrogant scoff, which left me feel bad and perplexed, wondering "why" and "how come" just because I had simply made sincere enquires on matters of "Faith". I have even been told, "You are not to ask those kinds of questions". "We can't know these things". "You shouldn't be asking those questions. Who do you think you are?" It was insulting to my intelligence. Apparently by their estimation I was expected to believe everything I was told and not to ask questions, as if I was sinning if I asked! Wow, how different to the true Spirit of Christ Jesus, who always told us to ask and seek! (Matthew 7:11)

How insulting it is to one's intelligence when one is subtly manipulated with intimidation and expected to believe everything one is told other - wise one is made to feel wrong for asking, and sometimes looked down upon! The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth and anyone who speaks the Truth has nothing to hide or be ashamed of in revealing it; unless there is something which is hidden behind it and does not want one to know it!

I love these people and I know that God loves them, but I only serve ONE Lord and His name is Jesus! I am not advocating rebellion, because I do believe in submission to my Authorities in Christ but they are ones who are themselves submitted to God and have made the distinct radical decision in their life that they are not going to be pleasers of men but rather pleasers of God! To those kinds of authorities, yes, I am willing to submit joyfully as the scriptures encourage us to do! (Hebrews 13:17, 1 Peter 2, Romans 13, 1 Timothy 3 etc)

This is what the Apostle Peter (the assumed first Pope by the Roman Catholic Church says to us today and to every generation): "Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than men!" Acts 5:29 (NIV)

This is what the Apostle Paul says to us and to all generations yet to come, "You can see that I am not trying to please you by sweet talk and flattery; no, I am trying to please God. If I were still trying to please men I could not be Christ's servant [and please Him at the same time]" Galatians

1:10 (TLB)

To all of this, all I have to say is this; I let the Word of God judge. I much rather rely upon the Word of God than on someone's traditions, that flatly contradict the Word of God and its core principles! This is some thing that every person must do for himself or herself! I am commanded to love every one and that I do! But I am not commanded any where to believe every thing I hear, just simply because someone has a "title" or because of what one thinks or just because the tradition of our church (or any church) says so! (Well Jesus preferred the Word of God over "church tradition" with no sweat so I shouldn't be concerned either. (Read Mark 7:4-13)

Colossians 2:8, "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ." NAS

1 Thessalonians 5:19-22, "Do not put out the Holy Spirit's fire; ... Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil." NIV

1 John 4:1-2, "Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world." NIV

1 Timothy 4:1-2, "But the Holy Spirit tells us clearly that in the last times some in the church will turn away from Christ and become eager followers of teachers with devil-inspired ideas. These teachers will tell lies with straight faces and do it so often that their consciences won't even bother them." TLB

2 Timothy 4:3, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires." NASU

We could easily reason, "How dare Paul rebuke the Pope, if indeed he was the Pope?" From this passage I see clearly that Paul did not consider Peter "above" him. In fact, in this epistle he says, "For God, who was at work in the ministry of Peter as an apostle to the Jews, was also at work in my ministry as an apostle to the Gentiles." (Galatians 2:8). They saw themselves as "equals" for the apostles in Jerusalem gave Paul the right hand of fellowship.

In speaking of the Pillars of the church, he writes, "they agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews" (Galatians 2:9). This is a very important scripture. It shows clearly that every apostle had a limitation to their authority. Their authority was not universal. Paul did not usurp the authority of the apostles in Jerusalem, but he expected them not to usurp his authority over the Gentile churches that he established. This passage proves beyond a reasonable doubt that there was no "universal and total supreme" leader. They ruled where they worked. If they did not work in a certain region, they did not exercise authority in that region. Just that simple!

Let us look briefly from the notes of the archives of the 'Early Church Fathers'.

8. What the Early Church Fathers taught on this subject

It is very interesting to note what the church fathers used to believe concerning the matter of 'on

whom was the true church built'. None of the early church fathers understood this passage in Matthew 16 as the Roman Catholic claims it to mean today!

A sincere Roman Catholic nowadays soon will find himself running into a serious problem when it comes to having to choose what to believe. Will he hold to the teaching of the Holy Bible - The Word of God and the early church fathers on this splitting issue or not? If a sincere Roman Catholic chooses to believe that the Bible and the early church fathers are in one accord and in total agreement on this important issue, he runs the risk of being rejected and excommunicated from the Religion of his childhood! Well, that is what countless thousands have had to face for many years, but the good news does not finish there. While on one side religion may reject you, you are sure to find that there will always be the open loving arms of Jesus eager to receive you unto Himself!

Here are undeniable facts in his own words, written by a well known and devout Catholic historian, von Dollinger:

"Of all the Fathers who interpret these passages in the Gospels (Matthew 16:18 and John 21:17), not a single one applies them to the Roman bishops as Peter's successors. How many Fathers have busied themselves with these texts, yet not one of them whose commentaries we possess - Origen, Chrysostom, Hilary, Augustine, Cyril, Theodoret, and those whose interpretations are collected in catenas of Rome is the consequence of the commission and promise to Peter!

Not one of them has explained the rock or foundation on which Christ would build His Church as the office given to Peter to be transmitted to his successors, but confession of faith in Christ; often both together."

Another highly respected devout Roman Catholic historian, Peter de Rosa, has no problem at all agreeing with the other non-Roman Catholic Christians that the teaching of the Roman Catholic Religion on the issue of the papacy is false:

"It may jolt them (Roman Catholics) to hear that the great Fathers of the church saw no connection between Matthew 16:18 and the pope, Not one of them applies "Thou art Peter" to anyone but Peterâ€"Not one of them calls the bishop of Rome a Rock or applies to him specifically the promise of the Key. This is as staggering to Catholics as if they were to find no mention in the Fathers of the Holy Spirit or the resurrection of the deadâ€"For the Fathers, it is Peter's faith - or the Lord in whom Peter has faith - which is called the Rock, not Peter. All the Councils of the church from Nicaea in the fourth century to Constance in the 15th agree that CHRIST HIMSELF IS THE ONLY foundation of the Church, that is, The Rock on which the church rests."

**CHRIST HIMSELF
IS THE ONLY foundation
of the Church, that is,
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"â€"not one of the early church Fathers speaks of a transference of power from Peter to those who succeed himâ€"there is no hint of an abiding Petrine office."

"So the early church did not look on Peter as Bishop of Rome, nor, therefore, did it think that each Bishop of Rome succeeded Peterâ€"The gospels did not create the papacy; (or this heresy) the papacy, once in being, leaned for support on the gospels (though it was not there)"

Clearly when one takes an honest good look at the history of how and why the papacy was established it becomes clear that the office was created much longer after the true church of Christ was established—and it's main reason was not a burden to see the lost saved and to share the love of Christ with the hurting and the needy, but much to the contrary, to control the masses with governmental and political power!

9. Peter as Bishop or Pope?

When you read carefully you can understand that Peter was well intended by Jesus Christ to be a Bishop (over seer or a sent-one) over the specific work that He appointed for him to accomplish, however as Pope with total rule over other Bishops or in other words Apostles, this is not visible in scripture anywhere.

We would say simply that if Roman Catholicism wants to have their Pope then let them have one. According to the Biblical research, facts, and evidence, there is no valid evidence that Jesus appointed Peter as Pope nor was he the Rock that Jesus built and is continuing to build His church upon! It is acceptable, yes, that Peter was one of the founding apostles of the early church just as the scriptures say in many places, however, the Corner stone and the Cap stone of the Church is beyond any shadow of a doubt, The Eternal Son of The Living God, Jesus Christ Himself! Peter would have, therefore, been considered as an important part of the first layer of the foundation of the church still being built upon the Cornerstone for these last 2000 years.

Ephesians 2:19-22, “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets [Peter being one of them], Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.” NAS

1 Corinthians 3:11-12, “For no-one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.” (NIV)

My word of encouragement and of love to all my brothers and sisters in Christ, across denominational lines all over the World, is this: Pray for the Roman Catholic people and let them see in you the love of Christ and the power of the Resurrected and Victorious Savior! (a good majority of these precious people have never been shown any thing else apart from a bunch of life less dead rituals).

Pray also, as the Lord leads you, for their Pope that God may keep His hand over Him and use Him to bring Christ to a dying and hurting world most especially where no other Christian can go! After all if Bible believing Christians believe that no church saves you, than that would not apply only to the Roman Catholic Church, but any and every other known (denominational) Church! (Romans 13, 1 Timothy 2:1-5)

“Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will; the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defence of the gospel; the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, rather than from pure motives...What then? Only that in every way, whether in simulation (make believe) or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice, yes, and I will rejoice.” Philippians 1:15-19 (NAS)

10. A word from Peter the Apostle!

(â€ˆor the Roman Catholic assumed Pope)

â€œAnd this is the word which was preached to you."

â€œTherefore, putting aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, (According to the Apostle Peter, he is saying here clearly that it is The Word of God that enables one to grow in maturity with Christ and not a church affiliation) if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord."

[Peter admonishes us:]

â€œAnd coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected by men, but choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

â€œFor this is contained in Scripture:" â€œBehold I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious corner stone, and he who believes in Him (The Precious choice corner stone) shall not be disappointed. This precious value, then, is for you who believe. But for those who disbelieve, the stone which the builders rejected, this became the very corner stone, and, a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense"; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvellous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."

1 Peter 2:1-10. NAS

May all the true believers in Christ recognize (and put their denominational prejudice aside) that true Christians are all those who truly walk after Christ in their life, and this, irrespective of any Christian denomination!

When God looks down from Heaven He only sees one thing, one Family, one Bride, His Church, The Only One Church - which is composed of all those who call on the name of Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Saviour.

This true church is built upon this Rock â€ˆ Jesus Christ!