

Chapter Thirteen

Peter and the Papacy

The Roman Catholic teaching regarding the Apostle Peter is foundational to the authority structure of the Roman church. It is taught, in no uncertain terms, that Peter was the first Pope, that he was given the “keys to the kingdom” representing absolute authority given by Yeshua Himself, and that Peter was the “Rock”, meaning the origin of authority and the “head of the church”. In the modern symbol for the Pope, one can see the image of the keys clearly represented.

Let us examine the written Word of God to learn the truth. In Matthew 16:15-19 it says, “He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God. Yeshua answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood, has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. I also tell you that you are **Peter**, and on this **rock**, I will build my assembly, and the gates of Sheol will not prevail against it. I will give to you the **keys** of the Kingdom of Heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will

have been bound in heaven, and whatever you release on earth will have been released in heaven.”

In Greek, Peter's name, “Petros”, refers to a single rock. The next word for rock in the text is “Petra”, which refers to a rock mass or bedrock. The play on words here refers to Peter's confession of Yeshua as Messiah being the bedrock of faith.

In Matthew 18:18-20 the same power is given to the other disciples as well, “Most certainly I tell you, whatever things you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven, and whatever things you release on earth will have been released in heaven. Again, assuredly I tell you, that if two of you will agree on earth concerning anything that they will ask, it will be done for them by my Father who is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the middle of them.”

The “keys” represent the gospel message all the disciples were to proclaim. Peter did proclaim this in Acts 2:21 “It will be that whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.” Peter also proclaimed in Acts 10:42, 43, “He commanded us to proclaim to the people and to testify that this is he who is appointed by God as the Judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him, that through his name everyone who believes in him will receive remission of sins.”

Did Yeshua appoint a fallible man like Peter as the head of His congregation? Peter himself disclaimed such a position as he wrote in 1 Peter 2:4-8, “Come to him, a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God, precious. You also as living stones are built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Yeshua the Messiah. Because it is contained in Scripture, “Behold, I lay in Zion a **chief cornerstone**, chosen and precious. He who believes in **him** will not be disappointed.” For you who believe therefore is the honor, but for those who are disobedient, “The stone which the builders rejected has become the **chief cornerstone**.”

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:10,11, “According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another builds on it. But let each man be careful how he builds on it. For no one can lay **any other foundation** than that which has been laid, which is **Yeshua the Messiah**.”

The foundation is Yeshua the Messiah, not a fallible man like Peter. We see Peter’s frailty in faith when he denied that Messiah should be crucified and he received the stinging rebuke from Yeshua in Matthew 16:23, “But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me, for

you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of men.”

We see the fallibility of Peter again when he denied Messiah in Matthew 26:75, “Peter remembered the word which Yeshua had said to him, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.” Then he went out and wept bitterly.”

Once again, after the resurrection, we see Peter struggling with serious error and hypocrisy and was rebuked by Paul in Gal 2:11 “But when Peter came to Antioch, I resisted him to his face, because he stood condemned.”

Peter himself, in 1 Peter 1:1 only applies the title Apostle to himself, not Pope: “Peter, an **emissary** of Yeshua the Messiah”.

Yeshua is the foundation and cornerstone and the head of His congregation, not a fallible, mortal man like Peter. Colossians 1:18 says “He is the head of the body, the assembly, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he might have the preeminence.