

Living in the Kingdom

Lesson 3: On This Rock I Will Build My Church

Peter and the Papacy



Mt 4:18, Jn 1:42

*Mt 16:18-19
CCC 551-553*

Isa 22:20-23

*Lk 22:31-32
Jn 21:15-17*

1. Jesus called Simon as one of the first disciples to become a "fisher of men," and renamed him "Cephas" (rock).
2. Jesus chose Peter to be the rock on which he would build his Church, giving him the keys of the kingdom of heaven: the authority to govern the house of God. The power to "bind and loose" means the authority to absolve sins, to define doctrines, and to make disciplinary decisions.
3. In the Davidic kingdom, the "key of the house of David" was given to the king's "prime minister" (Eliakim).
4. Jesus called Peter to strengthen the other apostles and to be the chief shepherd of his Church.
5. Peter led the early Church in proclaiming the gospel and making important decisions:
 - a. Peter is first when the apostles are listed (Mt 10:2-5, Acts 1:13).
 - b. "Peter and the apostles" (Mk 16:7, Luke 8:45, Acts 2:37).
 - c. The resurrected Jesus appeared first to Peter (Luke 24:34).
 - d. Peter leads the apostles in replacing Judas (Acts 1:15-26).
 - e. Peter preaches at Pentecost (Acts 2:14ff), in the temple (3:12ff), before the Sanhedrin (4:8ff).
 - f. Ananias and Sapphira lie to Peter = lie to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5).
 - g. Peter is told that gentiles can be joined to the Church (Acts 10).
 - h. Peter opens the Jerusalem council (Acts 15:7ff).
 - i. Paul consulted Peter before beginning his ministry (Gal 1:18).
6. The early Church Fathers witness to Peter's primacy in Early Church:
 - a. "If anyone disobey the things which have been said by [God] through us... they will involve themselves in transgression and in no small danger..." (Clement of Rome, *Letter to the Corinthians* 1, 58-59, 63 [A.D. 80]).
 - b. "Ignatius . . . to the church which holds the presidency, in the location of the country of the Romans..." (Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Romans* 1:1 [A.D. 110]).
 - c. "...the greatest and most ancient church known to all, founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul... With that church, because of its superior origin, all the churches must agree... and it is in her that the faithful everywhere have maintained the apostolic tradition" (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3:3:2 [A.D. 189]).
7. The bishop of Rome, the pope, is the successor of St. Peter and chief shepherd of the Church.
 - a. "The blessed apostles [Peter and Paul], having founded and built up the church [of Rome]... handed over the office of the episcopate to Linus" (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3:3:3 [A.D. 189]).
 - b. At that time [of Emperor Trajan, A.D. 98] Clement was still head of the Roman community, occupying in the same way the third place among the bishops who followed Paul and Peter. Linus was the first and Anencletus the second (Eusebius, *Church History* 3:21)
 - c. On him [Peter] [the Lord] builds the Church, and to him he gives the

<p><i>Jn 16:13</i> <i>CCC 880-884</i></p> <p><i>CCC 85-86</i></p> <p><i>CCC 889-890</i></p> <p><i>CCC 891-892</i></p>	<p>command to feed the sheep... If someone [today] does not hold fast to this unity of Peter, can he imagine that he still holds the faith? <u>If he [should] desert the chair of Peter upon whom the Church was built, can he still be confident that he is in the Church?</u>" (Cyprian of Carthage, <i>The Unity of the Catholic Church</i> 4; [A.D. 251]).</p> <p>8. Benedict XVI is the 265th pope since St. Peter.</p> <p>9. Jesus appointed Peter as head of the college of apostles (magisterium). The Pope is the source and foundation of the unity of the bishops and all the faithful. As Vicar of Christ and pastor of the Church, he has "full, supreme and universal power over the whole Church." The college of bishops only has authority when united with the Pope.</p> <p>10. The magisterium is the living teaching office of the Church, responsible for giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God. The magisterium is not superior to the Word of God, but is its servant.</p> <p>11. The magisterium is infallible when it teaches officially in matters of faith and morals because Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to guide the apostles and their successors "into all truth."</p> <p>12. Papal infallibility: The Pope speaks infallibly when he officially proclaims a doctrine pertaining to faith or morals (<i>ex cathedra</i>). Infallibility also extends to the bishops in union with the pope, esp. in ecumenical council; it guarantees the unity of the Church and requires obedience of faith. Infallibility is not the same as "impeccability" – and therefore there have been some morally bad popes.</p> <p>13. The teaching of the ordinary magisterium requires obedience of faith.</p> <p>14. The pope as teacher: oral teachings (homilies, audiences, messages) and written teachings (encyclicals, bulls, apostolic exhortations, letters).</p> <p>15. Recent papal teachings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Defense of the right of workers (Leo XIII) Equality between rich and poor nations (John XXIII, Paul VI, JP II) Chastity within marriage and openness to the transmission of life (Pius XI, Paul VI, JP II) Defense of the sanctity of human life (JP II, Benedict XVI) <p>16. The pope as leader and "servant of the servants of God." He must govern the Church, teach and protect her from error; celebrate the sacraments; meet with cardinals and bishops; call ecumenical councils.</p> <p>17. The Pope in the world: a reconciler leading the quest for unity, including dialogue with other Christians, with Jews, with other religions. The Pope is also the chief evangelist who shares the Gospel with all peoples.</p> <p>18. Choosing the pope: The conclave - a special meeting of the College of Cardinals to elect the pope.</p>
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Questions for Discussion

1. What role did Jesus give to Peter? How do we know this role was passed on to his successors?
2. What teachings of the pope are infallible? What teachings should Catholics obey?
3. If the pope is "infallible" how can it be that some popes led a poor moral life?
4. Why do you think many Christian groups (Orthodox, Protestant) reject the papacy?
5. What difference does it make to have a pope and magisterium leading the Church? How would the Church look without them?