

# POPEDOM

## FROM INCEPTION TO THE DEMISE OF POPE JOHN PAUL II – ITS NATURE AND PURPOSE

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[We are, again honored to have this insight from Richard Bennett, a former priest in the Roman Catholic Church. He was Jesuit trained in Ireland by the Dominican Order and later at the Angelicum University, Rome, Italy. He finished his studies in 1964. After a life-threatening accident, he spent 14 years contrasting Biblical truth with Catholicism. In 1986 he made the step, by God's grace, to leave the Roman Catholic Church because of what he discovered. He is articulate and a deep thinker, evangelist, writer and apologist, now working at Dayspring Fellowship, Reformed Baptist Church in Austin, Texas. [www.bereanbeacon.org](http://www.bereanbeacon.org/); [www.the-highway.com](http://www.the-highway.com)]

### Part 2: The Claim and Boast to have the Keys of the Apostle Peter

A holdover of medieval tyranny, the Papacy is the bulwark and foundation of the Church of Rome. It also is the pride and joy of devoted Catholics, giving them, they are assured, a direct link to Jesus Christ. And in these latter days, it appears that the world has rekindled its love of the Papacy. Against the voices of Scripture, history and reason, the Papacy declares its Church to be founded on the Apostle Peter alone, stating that he was the first bishop of Rome thus bequeathing all of his authority to subsequent Popes and Bishops. This is the lynch pin of Roman Catholicism. Officially the Church of Rome states,

“The Lord made Simon alone, whom he named Peter, the ‘rock’ of his Church....This pastoral office of Peter and the other apostles belongs to the Church’s very foundation and is continued by the bishops under the primacy of the Pope.”<sup>[1]</sup>

The whole Roman Catholic structure is based on three false presuppositions:

1. That the text of Matthew 16:16-20 means that Peter was the foundation of the Church; that the Church was built on him;
2. That Peter went to Rome and was the first bishop in Rome;
3. That Peter’s successors are the bishops of Rome under the primacy of the Pope.

(It is worth mentioning here, that the list of Popes concocted by Rome is a fable. In its humble beginning, the church at Rome was guided by a plurality of elders, and not one single bishop. Then throughout its latter history, as two, even three, concurrent Popes vied for the throne, intrigue and deceit crowned the victor.)

“And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. 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. 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. 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. Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.” (Matthew 16:16-20).

Here we are taught that whatever contemporaries apprehended Christ to be, plainly the disciples had a distinct knowledge of Him, expressed without hesitation by Peter on their behalf. The Lord attributes this intuitive knowledge that He was “the Christ” (Anointed-Messiah) and “the Son of the Living God” (Co-eternal with the Father and therefore likewise God) to be a revelation from His Father in heaven. It is this revelation, the Lord declared, that would become the rock, or foundation stone, upon which He would build His Church. This cannot be argued against, as it is the very concluding subject of the Lord’s charge to the disciples, “Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.” To hold the view that Peter himself is the rock is to deliberately pervert the plain sense of the Lord’s own words. To infer that the Church was built upon a mere man, and not upon God’s revelation of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God, is to insult Christ’s doctrine and corrupt God’s Word. Peter could be the foundation for nothing, being called “Satan,”<sup>[2]</sup> or adversary, by the Lord Himself, and later, formally rebuke by the Apostle Paul for compromising the Gospel message.<sup>[3]</sup>

The Holy Spirit confirmed the true meaning of the verse by having it written in Greek. The word for Peter in Greek is petros. It is masculine in gender and signifies a piece of rock, larger than a stone. In contrast, the word for rock in Greek is petra. It is feminine in gender, describing bedrock, massive in size, and immovable. The Church was thus founded upon a massive bedrock, not a mere chip of granite. That bedrock is the God-given revelation by the Father in heaven. Congruent with this revelation is the distinct commission given to Peter in verse 19. “Unto thee,” that is, to Peter personally, was given the “keys of the kingdom of heaven.” This prophetic declaration of the Lord was literally fulfilled when Peter was made the first instrument of opening the same revelation to the Jews, “God hath made that same Jesus...both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36), and to the Gentiles, (Acts 10:34-44). The power of the keys was concerning this same revelation of the Person of Christ, actuated by the initial proclamation of this revelation to the Jews and to the Gentiles and was fulfilled by the Apostle Peter, and by him alone. Succession to this prophetic commission cannot be countenanced, since there was but one first opening of the kingdom for the Jews as for the Gentiles. The second part of verse 19 was a commission for the responsibility of binding and loosening. This is concerning Church discipline and was given as well to the other Apostles, as is seen in Matthew 18:18. The whole focus, therefore, of the Matthew 16:16-20 text is on the divinity of Jesus as “the Son of the living God,” and His role as Messiah or Christ, this is the rock on which the Church is built.

### **The Preposterous claims for a Pontiff Chris**

The Roman Catholic Church abuses Matthew 16:16-20, twisting it to say that Peter, as first Pope, had the divine attribute of infallibility and that he also is the Christ, having the title of “the true vicar of Christ.”<sup>[4]</sup> What is such absurdity but understanding the Lord’s words to mean that

Peter was also “the Son of the living God” and “the Christ.” “Nay!” Rome will say, “We claim not such.” But logic will endure no other path for their folly. She may not have worded it thus, but reasoned understanding of her doctrine does. To take the doctrine of Jesus being “the Son of the living God” and “the Christ” and to apply it to Peter and his self-styled successors, the Roman Pontiffs, is at once, a most ludicrous and horrendous assumption of the offices of the Lord. This is precisely what the Roman Catholic Church does. Further, she not only claims the divine attribute of infallibility for her Pope, her equivalent to being “the Son of the living God,” she also decrees that the Pope is rightly called “Most Holy,”<sup>[5]</sup> and the “Holy Father,”<sup>[6]</sup> usurping the very title of the first person of the Trinity.

### **Christ’s power and the Pontiff Christ’s power**

Jesus as the Christ has full, supreme, and universal power. This prerogative is His alone and any pretension by another is heinous and despicable. Yet the Church of Rome does not blush to claim the same power which is solely Christ’s, for her Pope, “[T]he Roman Pontiff...as pastor of the entire Church has full, supreme, and universal power over the whole Church, a power which he can always exercise unhindered.”<sup>[7]</sup> Consequent to Christ Jesus being the very Son of God is the necessity for every human creature to be entirely subject to Him in faith and practice. This is what Rome also holds for her Supreme Pontiff, the Pope.

“Furthermore, we declare, say, define, and proclaim to every human creature that they by necessity for salvation are entirely subject to the Roman Pontiff.”<sup>[8]</sup>

The very fullness of grace and truth belongs to Christ Jesus, who by nature is Divine. “Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ,” the Apostle John proclaims, “and of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace.” Believers receive grace for grace but the very fountain – the very fullness of grace and truth – belongs to Christ Jesus alone. All that went before Christ Jesus was but typical and in representation, and all that comes after Him is but a reflection of the glory that is His alone.

The Pontiff’s lust for control is not satiated by usurping supreme, and universal power over the whole Church, for he alleges further that the Church, his Papal domain, has been allotted the very fullness of grace and truth. “...[T]he very fullness of grace and truth entrusted to the Catholic Church”<sup>[9]</sup> is the official wording of Catholic dogma which settles the issue, and none may contest. Well might the Pharisees have chided our Lord, “Who can forgive sins but God . . . and the Roman Catholic Church!” The Pontiff Christ has willed it so – “There is no offense, however serious, that the Church cannot forgive.”<sup>[10]</sup>

Outrageous and pretentious as these claims are, the Pontiff goes further still, claiming the power to judge in the temporal sphere, even those who hold the highest civil office in a state. Present Catholic law asserts without apology, “It is the right of the Roman Pontiff himself alone to judge...those who hold the highest civil office in a state....”<sup>[11]</sup> This is in antipathy with Christ who declared emphatically “my kingdom is not of this world.” There was another that claimed the kingdoms of the world were his to do with as he pleased; we would do well to dismiss Papal pretensions with Christ’s words – “Get thee hence, Satan!”<sup>[12]</sup> The end result of the Church of Rome’s interpretation concerning what Christ said to Peter is the creation of a Pontiff Christ who is also claimed to be “The Holy Father,” with inerrant infallible teaching

authority, and power, and that over all creatures in both spiritual and temporal realms. Such an absurd office was foretold by the Apostle Paul when he prophesied, “The son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.”<sup>[13]</sup> In place of “the Christ, the Son of the living God” has been erected the Pontiff Christ, the son of perdition. The Papacy at its core office and institutional essence, professes to be an entire substitute for the true Christ and His work. It must therefore be identified and denounced in accordance with Holy Scripture as the seat of Antichrist.

**Presupposition 1:** That the Lord made Simon alone, whom he named Peter, the “rock” of his Church, is not only a proven lie, but also the superstructure of infallible Pontiff Christs, with full, supreme, and universal power reigning sovereignly, is shown to be the age old pretense of Satan. This is the Antichrist as represented in Revelation 17:4-5, as seated in Babylon, the spiritual seat of arrogance, oppression, and pride.

**Presupposition 2:** That Peter went to Rome and was the first bishop in Rome.

The Scripture is utterly silent about the Apostle Peter going to Rome. His visits to Samaria, Lydda, Joppa, Caesarea and Antioch were carefully recorded. But there is simply no mention made of his going to Rome, which is essential to establish the Roman Catholic position. Certainly the Holy Spirit would not have passed over an event so significant and essential. In his letter to the Romans the Apostle Paul offers no salutation to Peter, as he greets many in the Church at Rome. The same Apostle Paul, being at Rome in the reign of Emperor Nero, never once mentions Peter in any of his letters written from Rome to the churches and to Timothy, although he does remember very many others who were with him in the city. While these two Roman Catholic presuppositions are conjectural, they are not the fabric on which faith is based, which is the Written Word of the Lord. The second presupposition of the Roman Catholic Church is therefore a deception, pure and simple.

**Presupposition 3:** That Peter’s successors are the bishops of Rome under the primacy of the Pope.

In Scripture there is no mention of successors to Peter or the Apostles. The criteria for apostleship are given in Acts 1:21-22. The position of the Apostles was unique to them and to Paul, all directly chosen by Christ Jesus with no hint of succession. In the New Testament, the Apostles appointed elders and deacons, and not a line of Apostles.<sup>[14]</sup>

Nonetheless, the Roman Catholic Church attempts to defend her position in the name of personal succession from the Apostles. But if we are constrained to conceive an “apostolic succession,” then the true successors of the Apostles are those who continue “steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”<sup>[15]</sup> If that doctrinal foundation is destroyed, speak not of “apostles” but rather of “apostates.” “Apostolic succession” without apostolic doctrine is a fraud. The real roots of the Papacy are those of the Roman Emperor and not the Lord Christ Jesus. The Lord commanded, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so.”<sup>[16]</sup> Christ absolutely proscribed all domination in his kingdom. The same condemnation of worldly ways was repeated by the Apostle Peter,

“Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being examples to the flock.”[17] The Roman Catholic Church is not the successor to St Peter, but rather to the Roman Empire, as her hierarchical and totalitarian control demonstrate.

## **Conclusion**

In the book of Revelation the Apostle John portrays the fourth, or ten-horned beast as representing the Roman Empire, and so the angel interprets it. The Papacy belongs to the second or ecclesiastical stage of the Roman Empire. In Chapter 17, this ten-horned beast bears a mystical woman, dressed in purple and scarlet, decked with gold, precious stones, and pearls, a harlot, and the mother of harlots and abominations. She is the guilty seducer of kings, the cruel persecutor of saints, intoxicated with the blood of the saints and of the martyrs of Jesus. We strive in vain seeking such explicit fulfillment in any but the Pontiff’s Rome. She is the only Church that is also a City, a Civil State and that sits also on the Seven Hills.[18] Her official colors are scarlet and purple.[19] For 605 years the fires of her Inquisition scorched every country in Europe. Such years of cruelty and torture bespeak her and none else. She has made war with the saints, overcome them, worn them out, and would have totally crushed and annihilated them, but for the sustaining hand of the Lord upon them. History corresponds to prophecy as deep calls to deep. Throughout history here has been only one apostate Mistress of the world; the one Babylon the great, the one City is that which is also a Harlot.

The Papacy is about to have John Paul II retire or die, so that a new head may reign on which she can continue to seduce the religious world. Now is not the time for furtive whispers, but rather shouts from housetops ascribing to her, “MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.” The Pontiff’s power, however, is also temporal and political with ambassadors, civil concordats, with civil rights and power in real estate, education, medicine, and commerce, menacing the very political freedom of a Nation.[20] Believing on Christ and believing on the Pontiff Christ are antithetic, and incompatible positions. Wherever is found an “altar” instead of a communion table, a “priest” instead of a preacher, ceremonies instead of sound doctrine, sacraments instead of saving grace, traditions instead of the Written Word of God, this is not in the Church of the living God but the tangled, twisted web of the Pontiff. And when this Harlot announces to the world that the Pontiff’s throne is vacant and awaits election of a new Pope by her cardinals, it is but to fill Satan’s seat.

“Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth. Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths. For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.”[21]

Those persons or nations submitting themselves to her and her Pontiff Christ, know neither life nor freedom, for only in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, is found freedom and Eternal life. Believe on Him and Him alone “and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness”[22] but rather expose the Pontiff Christ for that which he is, “the son of perdition”[23] and the woman who rides on him to be none other than “that that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.”[24]

## **References:**

- [1] *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1994) Para. 881. Catechism hereafter.
- [2] Matthew 16:23
- [3] Galatians 2:11-14
- [4] Henry Denzinger, "Unam Sanctum", Nov. 18, 1302, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, Tr. By Roy J. Deferrari, 30th ed. of *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, rev. by Karl Rahner, S. J. (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder Book Co., 1957) #694. (Hereafter Denzinger). See also *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994) #882 & #936.
- [5] Denzinger, #649.
- [6] *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Robert Broderick, ed. (Nashville, TN: Thos. Nelson Inc., 1976) p. 217.
- [7] *Catechism*, Para. 882.
- [8] Denzinger, #468-469 (Decree of Pope Boniface VIII).
- [9] Declaration "Dominus Iesus", *On the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church*, Sect. 16, Sept. 5, 2000.
- [10] *Catechism*, Para. 982.
- [11] *Code of Canon Law*, Latin-English Ed. (Washington DC: Canon Law Society of America, 1983) Canon 1405, Sec. 1.
- [12] Matthew 4:10.
- [13] II Thessalonians 2:3, 4.
- [14] The terms overseer and elder/pastor are interchangeable. See Acts 20:17, 28; I Peter 5:1-4.
- [15] Acts 2:42.
- [16] Luke 22:25-26.
- [17] I Peter 5:3.
- [18] Broderick, pp. 528-529.
- [19] Broderick, pp. 95-96.
- [20] See John Cornwell, *Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1999) and John Robbins, *Ecclesiastical Megalomania: The Economic and Political Thought of the Roman Catholic Church* (Unicoi, TN 37692: The Trinity Foundation, 1999) ISBN 0-940931-52-4.
- [21] Proverbs 7:24.
- [22] Ephesians 5:11.
- [23] II Thessalonians 2:3.
- [24] Revelation 17:18.

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