

Was The Apostle Peter The First Pope?

According to Catholic doctrine the Pope at Rome is the earthly head of the Christian Church and successor of the apostle Peter, whom they believe that Jesus Christ appointed as the first pope, serving in that capacity for 25 years.

Does the Word of God, the Christian Bible, confirm this belief?

Can we find any scriptural authority for the office of a pope, a supreme pontiff?

Ephesians 5:23-24 [King James] *“For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.”*

Very plainly Jesus Christ is head of the true Christian Church and it is to His authority we should submit, not the human pope.

Mark 10:42-45 [NIV] *“Jesus called them together and said, ‘You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. **Not so with you.** Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.’”*

In this statement Jesus told His disciples that **none** of them would rule over others.

This clearly denies the principle of having a pope ruling over the church as Bishop of bishops!

Matthew 23:8-10 [NIV] *“But you are not to be called ‘Rabbi’, for you have only one Master and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth ‘father’, for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. Nor are you to be called ‘teacher’, for you have one Teacher, the Christ.”*

The idea that one of them was to be exalted to the position of pope is at utter variance with these words of our Saviour.

It was not until the time of Calixtus, who was Bishop of Rome from 218-223 that **Matthew 16:18** was used in an attempt to prove the Church was built on Peter and that the Bishop of Rome was his successor.

[For a clear understanding of this passage of scripture please download and study our article on ‘*Matthew 16:15-19*’ listed under heading of ‘*Bible Study*’]

Romans 11:13 [NIV] *“I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of my ministry”*

Paul was called “apostle to the Gentiles” and Rome was a Gentile city. [Acts 18:2]

Galatians 2:7-8 [NIV] *“On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, **just as Peter had been to the Jews.** 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.”*

Peter’s ministry was primarily to the Jews. This fact in itself would seem sufficient to show Peter was never a Bishop of Rome.

There is no proof to be found in Christian Bible that Peter ever went to Rome.

The Catholic Encyclopaedia in an article '*Peter*' points out that tradition appeared only as early third century for the belief that Peter was Bishop of Rome for twenty-five years. These years Jerome believed were from 42AD until 67AD.

What does the Christian Bible tell us about the movements of Peter?

About the year 44AD, Peter was in the council at Jerusalem. [**Acts 15:6-7**]

About 53AD Paul joined Peter in Antioch. [**Galatians 2:11**]

About 58AD Paul wrote a letter to the Christians in Rome in which he sent greetings to twenty-seven people [**Romans chapter 16**] but never mentioned Peter.

Who then was the "*Peter*" that the Catholic church say was the first pope in Rome?

When Rome conquered the world, the paganism that had spread from Babylon and developed in various nations was merged into the religious system of Rome.

This included the idea of a Supreme Pontiff [Pontifex Maximus].

This Babylonian paganism, which had originally been carried out under the rulership of Nimrod, was united under the rulership of one man at Rome, Julius Caesar.

It was the year 63BC that Julius Caesar was officially recognised as the "*Pontifex Maximus*" of the mystery religion, now established at Rome.

Old Roman coins bore the title "*Pont-Max*" around the image of the Caesar.

It is interesting to note that coins in circulation during the days of Jesus Christ's ministry bore this subscription! [**Matthew 22:17-22**]

Roman Emperors [including Constantine] continued to hold the office of Pontifex Maximus until 376 when Gratian for Christian reasons, refused it. He recognised this title and office was idolatrous and blasphemous.

By this time, however, the Bishop of Rome was elected the Pontifex Maximus, the official high priest of the mysteries!

Since Rome was considered the most important city in the world, some of the Christians looked to the Bishop of Rome as "*bishop of bishops*" and head of the church.

This produced a unique situation, one man was now looked to as head by both Christians and pagans.

By this time, and through the years that followed, paganism and Christianity flowed together, producing what is known as the Roman Catholic Church under the head of the Pontifex Maximus, the Pope.

This title Pontifex Maximus is repeatedly found on inscriptions throughout the Vatican.

In an attempt to cover this discrepancy, church leaders sought for similarities between the Christian and pagan religions, in an attempt to merge them into one.

The main desire was to increase numbers and political power, truth was secondary.

One striking similarity was the Supreme Pontiff of paganism bore the Chaldean title "*Peter*" or interpreter, the interpreter of mysteries. [*Parkhurst's Hebrew Lexicon*, page 602]

This was an opportunity to “*Christianise*” the pagan office of Pontifex Maximus, the office the Bishop of Rome now holds.

By associating the “*Peter*” or grand interpreter of Rome with Peter the apostle.

To make the apostle Peter the Peter-Roma, it was necessary to teach that the apostle Peter had been in Rome.

This is the real reason that since the fourth century [and **not** before] that numerous tales began to be voiced about Peter being the first Bishop of Rome. [*The Two Babylons*’ by Hislop, page 210]

According to an old tradition, Nimrod was “*the opener*” of secrets or mysteries, “*the firstborn*” of deified human beings.

Exodus 13:2 [King James] “*Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine.*”

The Hebrew word used that is translated “*openeth*” is “*Peter*” [*Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*’, No. 6363]

To what extent things such as this may have influenced traditions that have been handed down about Peter and Rome, we cannot say.

Since the apostle Peter was known as Simon Peter, it is interesting to note that Rome not only had a “*Peter*” an opener or interpreter of the mysteries, but also a religious leader named Simon who went there in the first century!

In fact, it was the Simon who had practised sorcery in Samaria [Acts 8:9-11] that later went to Rome and founded a counterfeit Christian religion there!

Quotation from ‘*The Catholic Encyclopaedia*’ [Volume 7, page 699] article ‘*Impostors.*’

“*Justin Martyr and other early writers inform us that he [Simon Magus] afterwards went to Rome, worked miracles there by the power of demons and received divine honours both in Rome and his own country. Though much extravagant legend afterwards gathered around the name of this Simon ... It seems nevertheless probable that there must be some foundation in fact for the account given by Justin and accepted by Eusebius. The historical Simon Magus no doubt some sort of religion as a counterfeit of Christianity in which he claimed to play a part analogous to that of Christ.*”

Perhaps this “*Simon*” being in Rome was later confused with Simon Peter.

The popes have claimed to be “*Christ in office*” on earth.

Apparently Simon the sorcerer made the same claim in Rome, but there is no record of the apostle Simon Peter making any such claim.