

## **Did The Catholic Church Exist In The Bible?**

### **I. The “Rock” Of Matthew 16:18.**

A. Many Catholics say that the church was built upon Peter who, in their eyes, was the first Pope, or universal bishop. They turn to Matthew 16:18-19 in an attempt to prove their assertion. Was Peter the foundation of the church?

1. Jesus said in verse 18, “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church,” and in verse 19, “And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.” Was the Lord ordaining Peter as the first Pope, or the leader of the church? No.

B. The rock mentioned by Christ was not Peter, but rather the confession of Simon Peter in verse 16, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” After all, Jesus Christ is the ONLY foundation, as seen in 1 Corinthians 3:11, “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

C. What did Jesus mean when He told Peter, “I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven?” As seen in Acts 2:14, Peter was one of the twelve apostles, and he preached the gospel of Christ to the lost. According to Acts 11:14, the words that Peter spoke were able to lead people to salvation (See also Romans 1:16; 10:17). All of the apostles had this ability, and we today have that same ability. It is by the words of Christ, which were taught by Peter and the apostles and evangelists in the beginning, that we learn how to access the kingdom of God (by obeying the gospel plan of salvation, i.e. Col. 1:13-14).

D. Furthermore, Peter was married, which according to Catholic doctrine was impossible, as Popes and priests are to be celibate. It says in 1 Corinthians 9:5, “Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?” Not only was he married, but he was certainly fallible. Not only did he deny the Lord (Jn. 18:15-18, 25-27), but he was also rebuked openly by Paul in Galatians 2:11.

E. To conclude this point, consider the following facts:

1. The only foundation is Christ. The “rock” of Matthew 16:18 was not Peter himself.
2. Peter was given the keys of the kingdom in the sense that he was equipped, along with the other apostles, to spread the gospel to the lost.
3. Peter was married and he was certainly fallible.
4. He was never called a Pope, nor did he have any kind of supreme authority.

### **II. The Bible Never Mentions Certain Catholic Terms.**

A. We are told in 1 Peter 4:11 to, “Speak as the oracles of God.”

B. The Bible is silent about:

1. Popes
2. Cardinals
3. Monks and Nuns
4. Friars
5. Vatican
6. “Vicar of Christ”
7. Cathedrals
8. Laymen
9. Catechism
10. Rosary beads
11. “Purgatory”
12. Sign of the cross
13. Mass
14. Christmas, Easter, Lent, Ash Wednesday, etc.
15. Diocese

### III. The Bible Never Teaches Certain Catholic Doctrines.

#### A. Catholic doctrines that oppose the scriptures:

1. The Bible condemns clerical dress (Matt. 23:5-6).
2. The Bible teaches against the adoration of Mary (Lk. 11:27-28).
3. The Bible says that ALL Christians are priests (1 Pet. 2:5, 9).
4. The Bible condemns the observance of special days (Gal. 4:9-11).
5. The Bible teaches that ALL Christians are saints (1 Cor. 1:2).
6. The Bible condemns the making and adoration of images (1 John 5:21).
7. The Bible teaches that baptism is immersion instead of pouring (Col. 2:12).
8. The Bible forbids us to address religious leaders as “father” (Matt. 23:9).
9. The Bible teaches that Christ is the only foundation, not Peter (1 Cor. 3:11).
10. The Bible teaches that there is one mediator instead of many (1 Tim. 2:5).
11. The Bible teaches that a bishop must be a married man (1 Tim. 3:2, 4-5).
12. The Bible is opposed to the idea of purgatory (Lk. 16:26).
12. The Bible does not teach papal infallibility (Rom. 6:23; 1 Jn. 1:10).
14. The Bible alone is our authority, not oral tradition (1 Pet. 4:11; Mk. 7:6-9).
15. The Bible is completely silent about infant baptism, instrumental music in worship, indulgences, confession to priests, the rosary, the mass, etc.

#### B. Notice the following passages:

1. Galatians 1:8, “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”
2. Romans 16:17, “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses *contrary to the doctrine* which ye have learned; and avoid them.”
3. 2 John 9, “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.”
4. NOTICE 1 Timothy 4:1-3, “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; *forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats.*” This passage foretold an apostasy; that some would depart from the New Testament pattern. Certain Catholic doctrines are specifically named.

### IV. The Organization Of The New Testament Church.

A. The Catholic church is organized unscripturally. As mentioned above, the Bible never speaks of the Vatican, Popes, Cardinals, Bishops (in the sense Catholics use the term), or diocese. So what does the New Testament say about church organization?

B. The local churches in the New Testament were self-governing. No congregation ruled over another, nor do we find any one man governing multiple churches in a region. As seen in Acts 20:28, the appointed elders of the Ephesian church were told to “take heed unto (themselves) and to all *the flock*, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made (them) overseers,” and it says in 1 Peter 5:2, “Feed the flock of God *which is among you.*”

C. We also find that in each congregation, elders are to be appointed. There is always a plurality (Acts 14:23; 20:17). There was never just one elders governing a church. Furthermore, these elders, or bishops, had to meet certain qualifications. These qualifications are outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Especially notice that a bishop is to be the “husband of one wife.” Were they to be celibate? Certainly not! In fact, they HAD to be married, or they couldn’t serve as a bishop.

D. History confirms the apostasy that occurred, initially in church organization. Small steps were taken until eventually we find the Catholic hierarchy as it exists today.

## V. The Revelation Of God Was Complete In The First Century.

A. This is an extremely significant point. Catholics believe that the Pope can set forth new doctrine, as in their minds, he is infallible, and they depend heavily on church traditions. If we can show that the entire revelation of God was completed in the first century, then we destroy the system of Catholicism.

B. Notice the following passages:

1. Acts 20:27, "For I have not shunned to declare unto you ALL the counsel of God."
2. 2 Peter 1:3, "According as His divine power *hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness.*"
3. Jude 3, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith *which was once delivered unto the saints.*"

C. Furthermore, Christians are told to obey the supreme authority of Christ's word:

1. Colossians 3:17... "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.
2. 1 Timothy 1:3, "That thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine."
3. 2 Timothy 3:16-17... "All *scripture* (written word) is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."
4. 1 Peter 4:11, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God."
5. Revelation 22:18-19, "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

D. The revelation of God was complete by the end of the first century.

## VI. What About Oral Traditions?

A. What we find in the New Testament is a recorded pattern. If it is not found in the pages of the New Testament, then it must be rejected. Oral traditions and church traditions do not qualify as authoritative. The Catholic denomination is steeped in oral tradition. If we can show the error of oral tradition, then we can show the vast error of Catholicism.

B. It is wrong to make human traditions authoritative in religion:

1. Mark 7:7-8... "Howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandment of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do."
2. Colossians 2:8, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in HIM dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

C. While the Bible speaks of "tradition" in religion, it is not referring to oral traditions that are passed down through history along with the written word. Something can be found in the scriptures and be considered a tradition. We are told in the Bible to follow the traditions of the apostles, but to say that we are bound to the traditions of a human denomination is an entirely different proposition. Do the scriptures support the many Catholic traditions? No. In fact, the Bible speaks against a majority of Catholic doctrines.

1. 2 Thessalonians 2:15... "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle."
2. 2 Thessalonians 3:6... "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord

Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received from us.”

D. The Catholic denomination is so opposed to the scriptures. As we pointed out earlier in this study, a majority of Catholic terms are foreign to the scriptures, and a good amount of their doctrines go against the scriptures. Who are we going to believe? Are we willing to humble ourselves to be Christians only? Are we willing to be content with the word of God?

#### VIII. The Plan Of Salvation.

A. One of the most powerful points to make regarding the error of the Catholic denomination, and really, all human denominations, is to compare their teachings on salvation to the Bible’s teachings on salvation.

B. Catholics teach that in order for a person to be saved, they must make the choice to accept the grace of God and to become a follower of God. They do not teach any elaborate process of salvation, but rather teach that it occurs completely in the mind of the individual. According to Catholicism, once a person decided to serve God, they must then proceed to justification which involves baptism and/or repentance.

C. In the Bible, however, let us notice several conversion accounts:

1. On the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, the crowd responded to Peter’s powerful sermon in verse 47, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” to which Peter replied, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” In this conversion account, the people were instructed to repent and be baptized in order to receive the remission of sins. They were not told to do this because they were already saved, but rather in order to be saved. Catholics deny the necessity of baptism, and even when they do baptize, it is done improperly, as baptism is an immersion, not a sprinkling or pouring (John 3:23; Acts 8:38; Romans 6:3; Colossians 2:12)

2. The same is found in the conversion account of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8. Once the eunuch heard the word of God preached by Philip (v35), he desired to be baptized (v36). Philip first requested that the eunuch confess his faith in Christ (v37). Once the confession was made, he was immersed, following which he went away rejoicing (v38-39).

3. Countless other conversion accounts could be provided, but here is the conclusion. In the scriptures, in order for a person to be saved, they first had to hear the word of God preached. Then they chose to respond to the gospel by believing it, repenting of their sins, confessing their faith in Christ, and finally, being immersed for the remission of sins. Salvation is a five step process. This is not what Catholics teach.

#### IX. Conclusion

A. The Catholic denomination is false for the following reasons:

1. It is never found in the New Testament.
2. So many Catholic terms and doctrines are never mentioned in the Bible.
3. Countless Catholic doctrines contradict the teachings of the New Testament.
4. The Catholic denomination is organized unscripturally, and contains a hierarchy that is foreign to the scriptures, and in fact, blasphemous.
5. Their dependance on oral traditions and new revelations given to the Pope.
6. Their plan of salvation is wrong.

B. Let us recognize the vast error of Catholicism.

C. Jesus says in Matthew 15:13, “Every plant, which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.”