

SPURIOUS CLAIMS

PAGAN ORIGINS

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By

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ISBN No 1 902817 007

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All biblical quotations are from the
King James Version

Printed in the United Kingdom

First Edition 1999

**Published by
Our Inheritance Publications
Protestants Today
South Coast Road
Peacehaven, Sussex**

***Is the Apostle Peter the
Rock on which
the Church of Christ is built?
Was he the first Pope?***

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pacy was established is about as far removed from the Apostle Peter as it is possible to get. The claims of the Roman Catholic are spurious and pagan in origin.

WHO IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH

There can be no doubt in the minds of every Bible Christian, who this person is, for there is only one head of the church and that is the Lord Jesus Christ. As He Himself said "*No man cometh unto the Father but by me,*" not by Peter, not by some human monarch, but by the very Son of God Himself. Salvation is found only in Him and in no other. Christ is the very foundation upon which the church is built, as Paul confirms in his first letter to the Corinthians: "*For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid which is Jesus Christ,*" (1 Corinthians. 3:11.) In the eleventh chapter of the same book and verse three he says "*I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ,*" not a mention of Peter or any other man, Christ and Christ alone is the head.

Who is it that is supreme head over everything? Again Paul answers the question, "*all things are under His feet, and gave Him (Christ) to be the head over all things to the Church. Which is His body,....*" (Ephesians 1:22-23.) If there is any lingering doubt about this then turn to Colossians 1:18 where we read "*And He (Jesus Christ) is the head of the body, the church.*" Let no man deceive you, there is but one head of the church and that is Jesus Christ, who is truly, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and to Him be the glory for ever and ever amen.

Amen and Amen

FOREWORD

The ever-increasing influence of the Roman Catholic Church which permeates each area of life today, makes it imperative that Christians should be instructed in the claims of that organisation and its origins. For, far from being a Christian church, it will become apparent that its claims are spurious and its origins pagan.

This little book explores two main areas, the claimed place of Peter the Apostle in the foundation of the church, and the false authority and power assumed by it' Using biblical and historical material, the author provides evidence which the open-minded reader will recognise as conclusive. This will surely give added impetus to the task of the Protestant churches today to stand firm upon the foundation of Scripture and to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to the salvation of deceived erring souls.

John Westmacott

Peter, the interpreter of their well-known mysteries."

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WHO WAS THE FIRST POPE OF ROME?

There can be little doubt that such a person did exist, there always has to be a first. From what we have seen in the forgoing pages, the obvious candidate is Simon Magus, for without any doubt the papacy has its roots firmly embedded in him. This man is at the very least the moral candidate for the title "The First Pope." This man, despite his great power and influence in Rome, was never acknowledged as bishop of Rome, at least not in the Christian sense of the word. Indeed for the Church of Rome to acknowledge such a connection, would undermine any integrity that she may have as having any association with Christianity.

Whilst morally and even spiritually Simon Magus may rightfully be called the first Pope of the Roman Catholic Church, the reality is that another is credited with that title. This man was (according to Irenaeus, who lived and wrote about 180 AD), a man by the name of Linus. A man who, if he is the same, is mentioned by Timothy in his second letter "*Do thy diligence to come before winter, Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens and Linus, and Claudia and all thy brethren.*" 2 Timothy 4:21. If this is the Linus mentioned by Irenaeus, then history tells us that he was the son of the British King Caractacus; this however is another story.

The fact is that there is nothing to substantiate the claims of Rome that the Apostle Peter was the first Pope, indeed as we have seen, the Peter of Rome, upon whom the pa-

without any doubt to be a forgery and to have been written in the Middle Ages, but it was used effectively to secure the papal position and power.

The Peter whom the Popes claim to succeed, is not the Peter of Scripture, not the Apostle Peter, but the ancient Peter Roma, who when he spoke, seated in Peter's Chair, spoke infallibly, or so it was claimed. The Popes of Rome are in fact direct successors of the ancient pontiffs of the Babylonian religion having a very thin disguise of Christianity. Their claims of supremacy, of headship, of being the only one who can interpret the mysteries have their roots firmly implanted in the paganism of the ancient religions of Babylon. This religious system is of itself a corruption of the pure faith given by revelation to the godly antediluvian saints.

It must be abundantly plain to any student of Scripture, that the claims of the Roman Catholic Church that the Apostle Peter was the first pope and the head of the church is utterly without biblical foundation, but is based on half truths, perversion and man-made ideas and traditions. Furthermore, if Peter was the first Pope, why have there not been any more Jewish Popes? If the tradition is so important, then would it not be consistent to have had other Jews as pope? The fact is Peter, a Jew, was never a pope in Rome, but the Peter the church of Rome is built upon was a true gentile, and unbeliever.

In order for the Popes to claim this pagan yet prestigious office, it was necessary to teach that the Apostle Peter had been to Rome. It is for this reason that the numerous legends were spread about that the Apostle Peter was the first Pope. These untruths being published from the fourth century onwards and not before as Alexander Hislop explains "*And so, to the blinded Christians of the apostasy, the Pope was the representative of Peter the apostle, while to the initiated pagans, he was the representative of*

INTRODUCTION

One of the great problems facing the Christian church today is that of the growing power of the Roman Catholic Church, the Papacy in particular, and the seduction of the professing Protestant Churches by it. Over recent years the leaders of many of these churches, most notably the Archbishops of Canterbury, have been engaged in dialogue with Rome, seeking to further the cause of organic church unity.

Now whilst no Christian holds a grudge against individual Roman Catholics, we do have a grudge against the system that seeks to bring the Christian Church into unity with Rome. Amongst many of the issues that divide the two religions, and let us not be misguided into thinking that Romanism is the same religion as Christianity, has been the problem of Papal Supremacy; this claim is exemplified by the Vatican II document *Lumen Gentium*, which declares "*For the Roman Pontiff by reason of his office as Vicar of Christ namely, and as pastor of the entire church, has full, supreme and universal power over the whole church, a power which he can always exercise unhindered.*"

This power and authority is, so it is claimed, derived from the idea that Peter was the first pope and that all subsequent popes are his direct successors. This claim is based on Rome's interpretation of Matthew 16: 17-18, that the church is built on Peter, that he was the prince of the Apostles, the supreme leader of the church militant. The Council of Trent declared the following "*We define that the Holy Apostolic See and the Roman Pontiff hold the Primacy over the whole world, and the Roman Pontiff himself is the successor of the blessed Peter, Prince of the Apostles and the true Vicar of Christ, the*

Head of the whole church, the Father of all Christians, and that to him in the person of the blessed Peter, was given by our Lord Jesus Christ, full power to feed, rule and govern the universal church, as is contained also in the acts of the ecumenical councils and in sacred canon." This is the official position of the Roman Catholic church and an essential part of her dogma. This is confirmed by the Vatican Council of 1870 and as we have seen by Vatican II in the aforementioned document *Lumen Gentium*.

This booklet based on a lecture given by the author to the students of the Exeter Martyrs Memorial Theological Seminary, Devon is a brief look at some of the biblical and historical facts surrounding this idea, for if the claims of Rome hold up and are shown to be true then it is incumbent upon us all to submit to the pontiff's authority. On the other hand if such claims are shown to be false, then we are to stand in opposition to them, and bear witness to the truth, in other words become true Protestants, men and women who stand for the true testimony of Christ and His Church.

So we have to ask ourselves, was Peter the Rock upon which the Lord Jesus built His church? Is Peter our true foundation? If so what are we to do with such passages of scripture as 1Corinthians 3:11 that state very clearly that Christ is the foundation "*For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid which is Jesus Christ.*" Or chapter eleven verse three of the same book, where Paul says "*I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ,*" or again in Colossians 1:18 "*He (Jesus Christ) is the head of the body, the church.*" It is also of interest to note that Peter himself never once laid claim to any superior position among the Apostolic band, so we return to the question, was Peter the First Pope, is he the Rock, the foundation of the church? The answers given in this paper do not claim to be exhaustive, but do give

to open the gates of the kingdom for the adherents to their religion.

Let us stop and recapitulate; we have a Peter Roma, the interpreter of the pagan mysteries, we have the Pontifex Maximus, we have the keys of Cybele and Janus, the power of which is all now vested in the Bishop of Rome. The Interpreter would not be able to operate correctly unless he had his official Chair, the Chair of Peter. In Rome in St Peter's Basilica, is the chair, the famed chair of Peter. When seated on this chair, the Pope is said to be infallible in the doctrines and decrees he makes. There is no doubt that this chair is very ancient, it has been in Rome for centuries, and it has been said that this is the very chair that Peter the apostle sat on. However a closer look reveals that on the chair is carved the twelve labours of Hercules. This very chair is of pagan origin, and has nothing whatsoever to do with Peter of the New Testament. There are many stories told of this chair, but all we are concerned about is the fact that the Apostle Peter never had anything to do with it.

How have the Popes got away with this all these years? The short answer is they haven't; from the earliest times their claims have been seen to be fraudulent, but through clever public relations work and the general disinterest and even gullibility of millions of people, they have been able to deceive vast numbers of souls. At this point, one piece of documentation is worth mentioning and it was used with great effect in the Middle Ages to enforce papal supremacy; it is called *The Donation of Constantine*. It is said to have been written by Emperor Constantine, in gratitude for what the bishop of Rome, Sylvester I, had done for him. To the Popes this document bequeaths all Palaces, all authority, in fact all of the city of Rome and all the provinces and cities of Italy, and the claim is that it was because of this, that the Emperor moved to Constantinople. This document has been shown

that he fell heir to or rather laid claim to the Keys of Cybele and Janus. This raised him in the eyes of the pagan to a new high. Here he was the Pontifex Maximus, and now the Interpreter, the Peter of Rome holding the ancient Keys of Cybele and Janus. It was not until the year 431 AD however that he made public claim to these keys, when he asserted his pre-eminence, as being founded on the Keys of Peter.

We have already mentioned the College of Cardinals, but what we have not mentioned is this, that the term Cardinal is derived from the word *Cardo*, which means *Hinge*, Janus, whose Key the Pope bears, was the god of doors and hinges, he was known as the '*Opener and Shutter*.' Janus was recognised in the pagan world as "*The God of gods, in whose divinity there existed the father and the son, and no prayers could be heard at the door of heaven and would not be opened unless prayed through him, Janus was the mediator, between god and man*". The Cardinals are simply "the priests of the Hinge," they are the ones who through the authority invested in them at their ordination are supposedly able

enough material to show the error of such an idea and trace the source and origins of the claim.

Furthermore, the question arises, "is the church of Rome a safe church?" If it can be shown that the doctrine of the Apostle Peter, being the first pope, which is central to Roman Catholic dogma, is spurious and even pagan in origin, can a church that be safe? Is it safe to be a member of? Can it be trusted?

IS PETER THE ROCK THE FOUNDATION STONE OF THE CHURCH? Matthew 16:13-20

Peter's Chair

The Lord with His disciples had left Bethsaida and they were on their way to Ceasarea Philippi. During the journey the Lord Jesus had asked them who the people thought He was, to which came the confused reply, some thought he was John the Baptist, others Elias, some Jeremiah whilst others thought of him as a re-incarnated prophet. Jesus then asked the disciples "*But whom say ye that I am?*" (Matthew 16:15). Peter answering for the rest replies, "*Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God*" v16. Mark gives us a shorter answer "*Thou art the Christ,*" whilst Luke records the answer as being "*The Christ of God.*"

Although on the surface there may seem to be some differences in the recorded answers, there is in fact no contradiction, the answer is that Jesus is the Christ, that He is the Messiah. This is the great confession. Here we have for the first time the full public confession of the disciples as to whom they believed Jesus was. He was the long awaited Messiah, the Promised One of God. Others may have different opinions as to who He was, but they were settled in theirs, they were satisfied and were not ashamed to confess it. What they had seen and heard had convinced them beyond any doubt that Jesus was the Christ, the long awaited Messiah.

Now the response of Jesus to this answer, is only recorded for us by Matthew, the other evangelists continuing their records with the predictions Jesus makes regarding His forth-coming suffering and death. But Matthew tells us that Jesus replied in the following terms 16:17-19 "*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 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*

THE PAPAL CONNECTION!

The next question is how does all this apply to the Pope of Rome today, how did it all come about? We have seen how the bishop of Rome came to gain the title of Pontifex Maximus, making him the head of the pagan religion as well as bishop of Rome; this happened in 375 AD. Now there were dramatic developments taking place in the Church structure at this time as well in the Imperial government. The Church was developing a pyramidal form of government, with deacons, elders or presbyters, now being called priests, city bishops, diocesan bishops metropolitans or archbishops and bishops. Over them were the five Patriarchies, of Jerusalem, Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria and Antioch; these five had agreed among themselves that, as Rome was the Imperial Capital, the bishop of Rome should be considered to be 'Primus Inter Pares' that is, first among equals.

Politically things were changing. In the year 330 AD Emperor Constantine moved the capital of the empire from Rome to Constantinople, and five hundred years of traditional Roman rule was moved. Leaderless, the people of city of Rome began to look for a leader, and the man who emerged to be most powerful was the bishop of Rome. It was the diplomatic skill of the bishop of Rome that stopped Alaric the Hun, the first conqueror of Rome, from destroying the city in the year 410 AD

But let us go back a few years; the year 313 AD had seen the end of the persecution of the Church, and a few years later the Christian religion was to become the State religion. There was a great influx of pagans into the Church; they were admitted on the act of baptism alone, pagans who had been used to and knew all about Peter Roma. When the seat of Imperial Rome was moved to the east, the Bishop of Rome had to find some way of keeping up his prestigious position, and it was in 378 AD

The keys that are claimed by the Pope are also those self -same keys of Janus and Cybele. Now the power of the keys had for over one thousand years been attached to these two gods, and the two keys that are emblazoned on the papal coat of arms are these self same keys.

There is just one more thing to consider, and that is the organisation of the College of Cardinals, with the Pope at its head. This is again nothing new, for the ancient Babylonian religion had its exact equal, the College of Pontiffs, with the Pontifex Maximus at its head. This college had existed in Rome for many years before the birth of Christ.

whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

This is not only a very powerful statement but one that has caused a great deal of controversy throughout the centuries, so it is important that we look at it in some detail, and try and grasp exactly what it is Jesus is saying. Before doing so however, there is one general observation that needs to be made. This passage is used by the Roman Catholic Church as the basis for their dogma of papal supremacy, that to Peter was given all power and supremacy over the other disciples, that he was the first Pope and that the Pope of Rome is the direct successor of the Apostle.

The late Cardinal Gibbons in his book *Faith of the Fathers* sets this doctrine out clearly when he writes *"The Catholic Church teaches, that our Lord conferred on St Peter the first place of honour and jurisdiction in the government of His whole church, and that the same spiritual supremacy has always resided in the popes, or bishops of Rome, as being the successors of St Peter. Consequently, to be true followers of Christ all Christians, both among the clergy and laity, must be in communion with the See of Rome, where Peter rules in the person of his successor."*

There are many reasons why this cannot be the case. We shall be looking at the full papal dogma later and where it originated from, but consider first of all that was of such importance, if the whole Church was going to be built on the supremacy of Peter as opposed to anyone else, surely the other evangelists would have been inspired by the Holy Spirit, to place greater importance on this statement by Jesus. Both Matthew and Luke wrote their accounts of the Lord's life long after the Resurrection, long after the Church was established; Mark wrote his account somewhere around 65 AD whilst Luke wrote about 63 AD.

Sufficient time had elapsed to be able to determine if Peter had risen in the ranks to a place of supreme eminence. They would have been able to see if there was any seniority with Peter, but there was none. Let us look then in greater detail at this statement.

The term Simon Bar Jona, simply means, Simon son of Jona, and Jesus tells him that he is a truly happy man for that is the meaning of the word Blessed; today we would say "*You are a happy man Simon.*" Why is he? Because "*Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.*" Let us put this in simpler terms:- "Simon, this truth you have not learned from my modest appearance, or from my human nature, neither from my rank and standing in the world. You people were expecting to recognise your Messiah by His external pomp, splendour and power as a man. I have given you no such indication of these things, flesh and blood have not shown this. But in spite of my humble appearance, my want of resembling what you expected, you have learned the truth, for God the Father has opened your eyes and taught you."

How? by His miracles, His teachings and instructions. Like the others they had only seen and heard what Jesus did; the others did not believe, they did not comprehend who Jesus was, yet these men did. The disciples had their eyes opened, others had not: God the Father had shown them the Truth, to others He did not; they had all seen the same things, yet some believed and some did not.

Herein is the answer to the question that many ask today, "*Why can't these people believe? I have spoken to them in simple words, it is so obvious, yet I cannot get it through to them?*" The answer is, that they cannot believe that Jesus is the Messiah, anymore than could those who had actually heard and seen the Lord Jesus in the flesh. They need, as did Peter and the others, a revelation that is

Christianity. So successful was he that he became, and I quote "... *leader of a retrograde sect, perhaps nominally Christian and certainly using Christian terminology, but in reality anti-Christian and exalting Simon himself to the central position which Christianity was giving to Christ ... the amalgam of paganism and Christianity was obvious in the Simonian system ...*" The result was baptised paganism, that is paganism disguised as Christianity and in the second volume of Apostolic Christianity we read that "*The author or representative of this baptised heathenish is Simon Magus, who unquestionably adulterated Christianity with pagan ideas and practices.*" In some quarters this man was greatly revered.

What has this to do with Rome? After all we find Simon Magus at Samaria, not in Rome. However he did not remain in Samaria for in the year 45 AD he was to be found in Rome. We read in the Apology of Justin Martyr reference to the fact that the founder of the Simon sect, Simon Magus, came to Rome and made such an impression by the use of his magical powers that he was honoured like a god. Some claim that a statue found in Rome called *Simoni Deo sancto*, was raised to honour him though this has been disputed by some critics. In addition to the heresies outlined in Acts 8:10 he further claimed according to the church fathers, to be "*the word of God, the beauty of God, the comforter, the Almighty, the whole essence of God.*" With Simon Magus is found a woman, a prostitute by the name of Selene or Helene, whom he claimed was "*The mother of all things*", and that salvation was to be found in both himself and the woman, a co-redemptrix.

Simon Magus the sorcerer, was in reality a hierophant, one who celebrated the mysteries of the pagan Babylonian religion, one who would be called in today's terms Simon Peter, the interpreter of the Babylonian mysteries.

The old Babylonian Religion spread all over the world, with each country developing it in its own way, according to its own needs and desires, but there were two things they all had in common, one of which was the keys of Peter, that is the keys of the Interpreter. These keys were nevertheless always associated with Rome. One of those nations was Greece, and in the Eleusinian Mysteries of Athens, when a candidate came to be initiated, he was instructed out of a book called by the people the "*Book of Petroma*" or more specifically "*The Book of Peter of Rome,*" the book of the Grand Interpreter. Another name given to this was the Book of Stone; remember Petros = stone.

The thing that has baffled many people is how the name of the apostle Peter ever came to be associated with Rome. The answer is it wasn't; the Peter of Rome, is the ancient Interpreter of the Babylonian religion. We can, however, go a little further than this, because there is a persistent tradition that there was in the first century in Rome a person named Simon Peter. These traditions do not go away, therefore they need to be answered, because there is simply no evidence that Peter the Apostle was ever in the city.

In the Acts of the Apostles, chapter eight we read about a man called Simon Magus, he was a sorcerer, who falsely claimed conversion to Christ. This man was clearly an initiate of the ancient Babylonian mysteries, as his name indicates. Magus, the name itself is Babylonian, meaning Magi or wise men, indicated that this man was a member of the priestly caste of the ancient religion of the Medes and Persians. Furthermore the name is closely allied to the Greek 'magikos' which means magician. It is also plain that he practised his art, if such it may be called, in the heathen land of Samaria. This man was a Gentile, a pagan and a person of no mean ability and skill who saw the potential of joining his religion with that of

outside the realm of flesh and blood. They need God to open their hearts and make them receptive to the Word of Life. They cannot and will not believe otherwise, and no amount of argument on our part, will make them believe. If they are to believe, if they are to be saved, then the Lord must reveal the Truth to them. Our task is to preach the gospel and then to make disciples of them, that is to bring under the discipline of the Word, those who believe. The part in between the preaching and the disciplining is God's work.

Having shown Peter that he and the others had received this truth from the Father, the Lord once again addresses Peter verse eighteen "*And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter:*" The meaning of this is again very simple and is something like this:- "By saying that I am the Son of God, you have called me by a name that is expressive of my true character. Likewise I have given you a name that is expressive of your character, I have called you Peter."

It is the next clause that presents the problem "*And upon this rock will I build my church.*" What does Jesus mean? Does He mean that the Church was to be built on Peter, as the Confraternity Version of the Bible suggests, when it says "*The Rock was Peter*"? If so then we run into problems because on at least one occasion Peter was caught in the act of practising, if not actually teaching, error; he was adding to the work of Grace. The name Peter is a Greek word, whereas Simon is strictly a Jewish name but the meaning is the same in both tongues, that of a Rock or a Stone. It is interchangeable between the two words, meaning either a Rock or a Stone. And indeed that is very descriptive of Peter, sometimes he was a Rock, unmoveable, steadfast, unshakeable, whilst on other occasions he was like a small stone, easily picked up, easily moved, inconsistent. So the name is a very fair description of his character. Now would it be on such a flexible character that Christ was to build His Church?

The Lord Jesus then says, *"On this rock will I build my church and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it."* Well we know this: Peter was prevailed against in verse twenty-three where the Lord Jesus calls him Satan, and also in Luke chapter twenty-two verse thirty-one, where Jesus tells Peter that Satan was going to sift him. That brought about his denial of Jesus. Peter like all flesh was prone to fail. Can one possibly conceive that the Lord meant that the Church was going to be built on Peter. Indeed in the phrase before us, we have the answer; the word Rock as used here is the feminine Petra, which always means Rock. It means nothing else, and the change of gender is important.

The question however is to whom or to what does it refer? Is the Lord referring to Himself? Although in the Old Testament, God is referred to as a rock, this does not seem likely. There is no indication that Jesus is looking at Himself, and it is not likely that having spoken to Peter, and called him a Rock or Stone, he is going to say 'Sorry Peter, I am referring to myself.' Such is strictly out of keeping with the Lord. The only other thing that this can refer to is that body of Divine Truth which is at the centre of this whole conversation, that Truth which God Himself had revealed to Peter and the others, *"Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God."*

There are two things here. Firstly, there is the God-given Faith, that enabled Peter and the others to believe; then secondly, there is the confession itself, the body of divine truth, that Jesus is the Christ. Now both of these factors are unchangeable, they are both rock-like, both sure and both immutable, and it is upon this that the Church of Christ was and is built. In other words it is the Petrine or theological doctrine, that Peter expressed, that was revealed to him and the others by God, rather than Peter himself that is the foundation of the Church. [That rock

but in the language of the religion itself which was Chaldean, the title was Peter, which in that tongue means Interpreter. He was the revealer of the hidden secrets. In Bryants Ancient Mythology Volume 1 and page 354 the following statement can be found, *"Ancient history reveals that the pagan deities worshipped by the Baby-lonians and the Greeks were known as PETERS, not only the gods but the Hierphantal (special gods) in most temples and those priests who were in particular occupied in the celebration of mysteries were styled Patres"* or (Peters).

These priests claimed to have the sole power to interpret the pagan mysteries. Whenever this Peter made declarations he would sit in the Interpreter's chair, the chair of Peter. Furthermore this one also had the keys, the keys of Janus and Cybele. Janus is the Roman version of the Babylonian Nimrod, who is depicted as a two faced god, one old, the other young, holding in his hand the Key to the mysteries. The ancient pontiffs of Babylon carried the Keys as part of their religious regalia.

Christian, this title is still held by the present Pope. Now at the time of John's vision, the Revelation, the ancient Babylonian rites were practised in Pergamum even though their Sovereign Pontiff was residing in Rome. This then gives us a little of the background.

With this information in mind we return to Peter, the Peter upon whom the church of Rome is claimed to be founded. For there was in Rome a Peter; this name was well known in the city, but he was not Peter the Apostle. This Peter had been there for many years, was well established, well known and very popular among the people. In fact he was there long before the Christian era. He occupied the highest place in the ancient Babylonian priesthood.

The origins of this office can be traced back to Nimrod and the Tower of Babel. In Deuteronomy twenty-three and verse four we read of Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor in Mesopotamia. His mission was to curse the children of God, Israel. Pethor, from whence Balaam originated was, according to secular sources, a sacred place, where an oracle existed. It was seemingly this oracle temple that gave the place its name, meaning a place of interpretation, or a Peter-temple. In all probability a college of priests or prophets existed there, practising the arts of the Babylon mysteries. It is interesting to note that Balaam's name means "*conqueror of the people*" a position held by Nimrod who was a "*Mighty hunter before the Lord*," the one who captured and held the minds and hearts of the people, encouraging them to disregard the Word of God. Maybe Balaam, by having this name, saw himself as a direct successor to Nimrod.

This priest was the interpreter of the mysteries of the religion. He was the one who explained to the initiated the mysteries. He was called in the Greek "*The Hierophant*" meaning "*expounder of sacred mysteries*",

like faith, that rock like confession.]

With this in mind, and not forgetting that all of the disciples are in view here, for this confession was made on their behalf, Jesus says in verse nineteen "*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.*" Now we must be quite clear as to what Jesus is meaning by the Kingdom of Heaven. When Jesus began His ministry it is said in Matthew chapter three verse two, that He came saying "*Repent ye for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*" Whilst there is reference here to the future state of Glory, there is more specific reference to the present world, to the Kingdom of God or Heaven here on earth, to the Church on earth, the present day Church of the Blood redeemed comprising a colony of heaven on earth. We may not think so, as we look at the inhabitants and some of the things they get up to, but that is a fact of life. If you are a Christian, then you are a resident of heaven and not earth, "*you are in the world but not of it.*"

Now to Peter and the other disciples, Jesus gave the keys, but what are the Keys? What are these instruments given to Peter and the other disciples to open the door to the kingdom of heaven? The key is the gospel, which Peter and the others were the first to preach that gospel on the day of Pentecost. The fact that Peter was once again the spokesman is significant in that he confirmed all that the others had been preaching. The only pre-eminence that Peter had was the privilege on the day of Pentecost of being the first to publicly open the doors of heaven to the world, by the preaching of the gospel. Not only were the disciples given the instruments, the keys, but they were also given authority, as we read.

THE POWER OF THE KEYS

"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." This was an injunction given to the apostles, they were the ones who were given the Divine Authority, to either permit or forbid, the activities, practices and doctrines of the Church; their words were authoritative. It is upon the foundation of the Apostles that the church was established: Ephesians chapter two verse twenty.

Now it is the Lord's reply, as has previously been mentioned, that has been the bone of contention, or should I say, what seems on the surface to be one of the bones of contention between the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Church, for many centuries. Rome argues that Peter was given supremacy over the other disciples, that upon him the Church was to be built, that to him were given the Keys of Heaven, and also the power to bind or loose and to forgive sins.

Consider the source of this doctrine, for it does not originate from the words of the Lord. In the ancient pagan religions there existed many gods, one of the most popular being the Mother and Child, the Madonna and Child or Virgin and Child. The basis of this deity is found in the perversion of the promise given in Eden, when God said to Satan *"I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel"* Genesis 3:15. This is the root of Virgin and Child worship. After the Flood and in disobedience to God's command, man aligned himself with Nimrod, looking to this mighty

remnants of the ancient Babylonian religious system made their home in this place after Babylon itself was destroyed.

Pergamos became the home, the headquarters of this anti-god religion; here it once again thrived and prospered. This place, this city, was the home of the ancient Babylonian religion. We must remember that Babylon, was the chief seat of idolatry in the ancient world, a fact that we need to keep in mind. Consider the ancient title of the high Priest of this religion. In 487 BC when the land was conquered, the Babylonian priests and their religion were all expelled. This included their chief priest, whose title was "Pontifex Maximus."

Having settled in the city of Pergamum, the religious exiles set up and began practising their religious arts. It was here that they established their central college, and the title Pontifex Maximus was given to the King who resided over the religious rites and ceremonies. His religious attire comprised the Mitre head-dress of the fish god Dagon, the crozier of Nimrod, the keys of Janus and Cybele and a robe of purple, not so unlike the garb worn by the bishops and priests in the Roman church today. In 133 BC the last Pontifex Maximus of the original Babylonian Religion, Attalus III, the pontiff king of Pergamum, bequeathed his title and all his dominions to the Roman Empire. Along with everything else, this title was accepted in 63 BC by Julius Caesar, the first of the Roman emperors.

The title was subsequently passed on to all Roman Emperors, and the centre of the religious operations moved to Rome. It was not until 375 AD, when Emperor Gratian renounced the title, that it passed to another. The position of supreme pontiff was not vacant for very long for it was taken up by the then bishop of Rome, Damasus, thus making him the chief priest of the ancient Babylonian religion. Whilst still professing to be a

The fact is that Peter had no reason at all to disguise the name of the city from which he wrote this letter; he was in Babylon. So if Peter was not in Rome, and if as the saying goes there is no smoke without fire, what or who is the Peter in view? There is an answer, an answer that the Church of Rome does not like, which we may call the Pergamos factor.

THE PERGAMOS FACTOR

The city of Pergamos is mentioned by the Lord Jesus Christ in the Book of the Revelation, being a recipient of one of the seven letters. In the letter the Lord designates this place as being "*Where Satan's seat is.*" Initially this may not appear to have any relevance to the matter under discussion, yet there is a strong link between the two.

Pergamum, or as it was also known, Pergamos, was a very ancient city. It was in existence long before Alexander the Great (356-323 BC). It was however through one of his four generals that the city took on prominence. Lysimachus (355-281 BC), liked the place so much that he chose the acropolis as the stronghold for his treasure. On his death Philetaeros (343-263 BC) became the ruler of the city, developing the resources and establishing the royal house which later became known as the Attalid kingdom (282-133 BC).

It was in this place the Lord tells us in Revelation 2:13 that "*Satan's seat is.*" This city embraced all manner of idolatrous practices; it was the ancient home of occult healing; the great and impressive altar of Zeus dominated the skyline; idolatry in all its forms was practised here in great splendour and luxury. None of this will come as any surprise when we understand that when ancient Babylon fell to the invading armies of the Medo-Persians, the

man for help and protection, and it is from the reverence or even fear that they had of this man and his wife, that this evil doctrine was first formulated, he being seen as the promised Messiah of Genesis 3:15 and his wife as the woman. Deification of this couple, was only a matter of time.

The names given to the Madonna and Child have varied over the ages and the different geographical regions in which they have been worshipped. Today it is Mary and the child Jesus and it is interesting to notice that whatever dignity has been ascribed to the child is also ascribed to the mother. One of the many names given to this deity was Cybele, Cardea and Janus, although it was not until the second century after Christ that the name Cybele was used in Rome.

To Janus was given the power to open the gates of the unseen world, a power symbolised by the key which he carried. The mother Cybele was also ascribed this power, again being symbolised by a key. These two keys naturally became known as the Keys of Cybele and Janus. It is also worth noting that both mother and child were said to have the power to forgive sin and both held the position of mediator.

THE BINDING AND LOOSING

"Whosoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." Matthew 16:19. Notice first of all it is "Whosoever" and not "Whosoever". This has

nothing to do with persons, but with things; it refers to rites, to ceremonies, to discipline in the Church. The words, “bind” and “loosed” were often used by the Jews in the following way, “binds” having the application of prohibition, therefore it “forbids” something. To bind something meant that the thing could not be tolerated. Whilst the word “loose” had a more tolerant application giving it an acceptable meaning permissible or “permit”. This was the common usage and understanding. So the word, “bind” means to “prohibit” whilst the word “loosed” means to “permit”.

Knowing this we get a better understanding of exactly what authority it was that Jesus gave to His disciples. He gave them the Divine authority to act within His Church, which was built on the divine faith and Confession of the Apostles, to implement what they saw fit to be the correct methods and means. Whatever they permitted would get the sanction from Heaven and whatever they forbade would likewise be upheld. These men were to be guided infallibly in the organisation of the church, firstly by the teaching of Christ and then by the teaching and guidance of the Holy Spirit. If these men forbade certain Jewish customs then they were forbidden, there was no argument about it, because they acted with the full authorisation of Christ. This is of vital importance to us today, for the only things that are binding on us as Christians, are the rules, rites and ceremonies that Christ and the Apostles laid down for the good government of the Church in the books of the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles. These and these alone are the only things that are to be compulsorily observed by us.

The Lord Jesus then charged his disciples to tell no man, Matthew nineteen verse twenty, presumably, because the time for these revelations had not yet come. This fact we need to keep in mind. One other thing that needs to be kept in mind is that Jesus is speaking not only to Peter,

writes “*The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you.*” The church of Rome understands this as being a cryptic reference to the city of Rome. For them to do this is stretching things a little too far, because if they are prepared to employ such interpretation to this name, then for consistency’s sake, if nothing more, the same principle of interpretation must be applied to the other named places in chapter one. Babylon was an ancient city of Mesopotamia, and a city that was still, even in the days of the Apostles, occupied by Jewish migrants, many being descendants of the exile. Furthermore, why should Peter seek to disguise the name of Rome in such a way, if he were writing from there?

The truth is we know very little about the origins of Christianity in Rome, this being an acknowledged fact by historians on both sides of the divide. There is nothing to support the tradition that it was Peter the Apostle who founded it and that he was bishop there for twenty-five years. Although, the historian Eusebius wrote in Greek about 310 AD, his work being later translated by Jerome, a seventeenth century historian, William Cave, chaplain to Charles II commented “*It cannot be denied that in St Jerome’s translation it is expressly said that he (Peter) continued twenty-five years as bishop in that city: but then it is evident that this was his own addition, who probably set things down as the report went in his time, no such thing being found in the Greek copy of Eusebius.*”

In any case, if residence is to be a criteria for giving supremacy, then other cities also have the same claim. The same tradition claims that the Apostle Peter first resided in Antioch, which would then outrank the claim of Rome. Eastern cities, such as Jerusalem, Constantinople and Alexandria along with Antioch, were seen as having the greater influence. Rome did not come into the equation until centuries later.

title of bishop of Rome, that man was Paul.

The Scriptures make it clear that Peter was first and foremost the apostle to the Jews, whilst Paul was pre-eminently the apostle to the Gentiles. This is clearly defined in Galatians 2:7-8 where Paul writes that he had been entrusted with gospel of the uncircumcision, whilst Peter with the gospel of the circumcision “... *the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (For he wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mightily in me towards the gentiles).* Paul ministered primarily to the gentiles, while Peter to the Jews, who were in exile in Asia minor as he himself confirms in his first letter “*Peter an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father...*” (1Peter 1:1).

We must also remember that the titles given to the Church leaders, did not take on the significance they have today until many years after the Apostolic period. The term Elder or Presbyteros, and the term Bishop or Episcopos, were in the infant Church interchangeable. The writer is by virtue of his ordination a Presbyter, which means Elder, and by the same token he is an Episcopos, that is a bishop, there is no difference in the meaning.

Whatever legends may say, there is precious little evidence to support the claims of Rome as to Peter ever being an elder in the Church in that city. Some historic facts, (that can all be verified) clearly show that Peter the Apostle had nothing whatsoever to do with the Pope's claim to be his direct successor, in fact the Pope is the direct successor of another Peter.

The only real biblical evidence that Rome puts forward in respect of Peter ever being there, is verse thirteen of the fifth chapter of Peter's first letter, where the apostle

but to all of His disciples, the question is addressed to them all, and Peter is merely the spokesman for them all. When Peter made his great confession, “*Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God,*” he did so on behalf of all the disciples. How do we know this? Because Jesus asks the question. not to Peter but to all of them, Matthew 19:15 “*But whom say ye that I am?*” This little word “*ye*” is plural and means the collective body of disciples. If Jesus were speaking to Peter alone he would have used the word “*Thee*” as this is the personal pronoun, or of course the Lord could have simply used his name.

To Peter and the other disciples, was revealed the great truth that Jesus was the Son of God, the long awaited Messiah. To these men was entrusted the great task of preaching this wonderful news, of declaring the gospel, the key that opens the door to the kingdom of heaven. Furthermore, to them was also entrusted the authority to establish the principles and practices for the good government of the church. The outworking of this is to be found in the book of the Acts of the Apostles.

PETER IN ROME!

The Roman Catholic Church claims that the Apostle Peter was the first bishop of Rome, the first Pope, and as such he has handed down to all subsequent Popes these same powers.

It is therefore imperative that we investigate further, and we do so from an historical perspective. Now these claims are made by the Church of Rome, despite the lack of solid evidence that the apostle Peter was ever in Rome. Even giving the benefit of the doubt that the legends have some truth in them, as to Peter's being at some time in that city, there is still a total lack of firm evidence that he was ever bishop of Rome. If any man had the claim to the